W03 / Implementing Inequities – Street-Level Bureaucracy in the Weak Institutions

Topic : Policy implementation, Street-level bureaucrats

Chair : Rik Peeters (CIDE)

Second Chair : Taly Reininger (Universidad de Chile)

Third Chair : Gianinna MuñozArce (Universidad de Chile)

CALL FOR PAPERS

This panel seeks to contribute to decolonizing studies on street-level bureaucracy by questioning assumptions about the nature of North and South bureaucracies and the way weak state capacities, patchy service provision, contested state legitimacy, and social inequalities play out in street-level interactions between citizens and the state. Discussions and presentations in this panel are aimed at improving our understanding of the way social inequalities fundamentally affect state-citizen relationships and how the street-level bureaucracies reflect and often reproduce these inequalities. Specific topics of relevance include – but are not limited to – the variety of strategies street-level bureaucrats develop to cope with overdemand and resource shortages, how territorial differences in policy implementation produce inequalities, the informalization of street-level interactions with citizens, the consequences of street-level bureaucrats' embeddedness and the brokerage function of street-level bureaucrats in the communities they serve.

We welcome papers of all kinds of methods and approaches (public administration, ethnography, political science, etc.) in this panel. Although we aim primarily for scholars studying the Global South, we explicitly do not exclude papers presenting relevant research from other parts of the world. Paper submissions may be theoretical, methodological, or empirical. Relevant topics for this panel include:

- Street-level bureaucracy and social inequality
- Comparative studies of street-level bureaucracy
- Street-level bureaucracy in the Global South
- Contested citizen-bureaucrat interactions
- Political influences on street-level bureaucracy
- State and administrative capacity / institutional weakness and street-level bureaucracy
- Decolonial approaches to street-level bureaucracy

ABSTRACT

What laws formally guarantee, politicians promise, and public policies aim to achieve needs to be materialized in our daily interactions with public organizations. There, we often encounter street-level bureaucrats, low-ranking public servants, or frontline workers who process our applications for a social benefit, provide access to public services such as health care or education, and enforce traffic and safety regulations. What happens in street-level bureaucracies, however, when basic resources are not provided or are simply non-existing? Or when adverse working conditions limit the extent to which job expectations and client demands can be met? This panel is about those street-level bureaucrats and seeks to contribute to understanding how structurally adverse working conditions affect bureaucrats´ decisions and behavior and how these impact policy implementation and citizen-state interactions.

We build upon studies that draw attention to contexts where street-level bureaucrats commonly face adverse social and working conditions, such as precarity, instability, and endemic violence or corruption – common for the Global South or other weak institutional contexts. Specifically, the aim of this panel is contributing to decolonizing studies on street-level bureaucracy by questioning assumptions about the nature of North and South bureaucracies and the way weak state capacities, patchy service provision, contested state legitimacy, and social inequalities play out in street-level interactions between citizens and the state. Discussions and presentations in this panel are aimed at improving our understanding of the way social inequalities fundamentally affect state-citizen relationships and how the street-level bureaucracies reflect and often reproduce these inequalities.

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Session 1

Wednesday, June 26th 10:15 to 12:00 (AULA 4)

Serving citizens or serving the political machine? The implementation of a new social policy during elections in Mexico

Sergio A. Campos (Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económica (CIDE))

The differentiated take-up of state benefits by minority groups: a view from the literature of take-up and bureaucracy at the street level.

Adriana Ramirez Ruiz (Centro de Investigación y Docencia Economicas)

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Session 2

Wednesday, June 26th 14:00 to 17:15 (AULA 4)

Sostenibilidad de la vida e implementación de políticas sociales: propuestas en clave feminista.

Mitzi Duboy (Universidad Alberto Hurtado)

Analysis of primary school teachers' attention to cases of family violence, through the theoretical model of street-level bureaucracies

Cynthia Lucía Carpio Valencia (El Colegio de Sonora)

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Session 3

Thursday, June 27th 09:00 to 12:15 (AULA 4)

The reproduction of structural inequalities in Chile's Conditional Cash Transfer Program

Taly Reininger (Universidad de Chile)

Can public policies aggravate or (re)produce inequalities? Theoretical and methodological aspects

Cosmo Junior (Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul)

(Virtual) Allocating inequality: analyzing state violence against adolescents deprived of liberty in Brazil

Eduarda De Almeida (Fundação João Pinheiro)

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Session 4

Thursday, June 27th 14:00 to 17:15 (AULA 4)

Discussions

Rik Peeters (CIDE)

How to resist a “scientifically” validated program? Street Level Bureaucracy in the relationship of science, technology and society network based on a mental health program in Chile.

Cristóbal Villalobos (Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile)