

Explaining Public Service Outcomes

Katelyn Nutley

Summer Semester 2024

Wednesdays 12:00 -13:30

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Office Hours: Please send me an email if you would like to meet individually.

Course Outline

Government performance in the provision of public services is often assumed to be the basis of modern state legitimacy (McCullough et al., 2020). Governments which are responsive to the very human needs of their citizens are more easily justified than their less responsive counterparts. Much of the literature tends to stress electoral accountability and the role of Media in the political economy of state responsiveness. The underlying assumption here is that authoritarian or corrupt states cannot or cannot similarly provide public services to their citizens. And yet, China, an authoritarian state, has had comparatively more success than India, a partially democratic state, in improving overall population health and in managing the COVID-19 pandemic (Dummer and Cook, 2008; Freedom House, 2021; Our World in Data, 2022). Turkey, a definitionally corrupt state, has less than half the percentage of people living in extreme poverty – considered to be those below the International Poverty Line of \$2.15 per day – than Spain, a definitionally incorrupt state, has (Transparency, 2021; Our World in Data, 2022). In short, the rise in bureaucratic professionalism means that the type of government or perceived corruption within said government and the provision of public services are not as negatively linked as they once were. Disparities in public services may, therefore, be more closely aligned with an individual bureaucrat's *willingness* or structural *capacity* to provide positive externalities (Bozcaga, 2022). In attempting to explain asymmetric public service outcomes, this course covers traditional models of government responsiveness, evolving conceptualisations of state legitimacy, the advent of bureaucratic professionalism, the dichotomy which exists between willingness and capacity, and a number of variables which ultimately affect local governance.

Course Requirements

The course has the following two requirements:

1. A final paper (75%) that analyses a country-specific public service and its outcome. I will provide a few potential paper ideas and we will discuss in-class the methods for best analysing these.
2. A final paper presentation (25%) to be given at the final in-person class. It should be noted that you must have identified a topic, research questions, relevant literature, and method of analysis.

Points correspond with the following grades:

Points	Grade
100-96	1.0
95-91	1.3
90-86	1.7
85-81	2.0
80-76	2.3
75-71	2.7
70-66	3.0
65-61	3.3
60-56	3.7
55-51	4.0
50-0	5.0

Unexcused late submissions of final papers will equate to a 15% deduction for every day they are late. If you require an extension, please email me in a timely manner. An extra credit assignment will be made available and will be discussed in class.

Introduction

Week 1 (April 10, 2024): Course Introduction

Please Note: There is no reading assigned for this week, so I expect you to read the syllabus and come to class with any questions you may have. I will use the time at the end of this class to discuss the specifics of the final presentation and paper. If, for whatever reason, you are unable to attend this seminar, please ask your classmates for their notes or arrange to come to my office hours to discuss.

Part One: The Traditional Model of Government Responsiveness

Week 2 (April 17, 2024): The Democratic Model of Public Service Provision in Historical Perspective

Lake, David A., Baum, Matthew A. (2001). 'The Invisible Hand of Democracy: Political Control and the Provision of Public Services.' *Comparative Political Studies* 34:6, pp. 587-621.

Directed Reading Question(s): Do you find Lake and Baum's (2001) account – that democratic states have comparatively better public service provision – compelling? Why or why not?

Week 3 (April 24, 2024): Government Responsiveness and the Provision of Public Services

Binzer Hobolt, Sarah and Klemmensen, Robert (2008). 'Government Responsiveness and Political Competition in Comparative Perspective.' *Comparative Political Studies* 41:3, pp. 309-337.

Directed Reading Question(s): Having read Binzer Hobolt & Klemmensen's (2008) article, which suggests that it's a combination of electoral rules, systems, and political competition that dictate government responsiveness to public preference (and therefore public service outcomes), can you think of any non-structural factors that might be at play here?

There will be no class for May 1st, 2024 as it's Labour Day - a holiday recognised by the state of North Rhine Westphalia.

Week 4 (May 8, 2024): The Impact of the Media on Government Responsiveness and Public Services in Democracies

Erlich, Aaron, Berliner, Daniel, Palmer-Rubin, Brian and Bagozzi, Benjamin E. (2021). 'Media Attention and Bureaucratic Responsiveness.' *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 31:4, pp. 687-703.

Directed Reading Question(s): Up until this point, we have largely focused on how public preference translates into government responsiveness. Erlich et al.'s (2021) article explores how media attention impacts government responsiveness. Given both what we have discussed and Erlich et al.'s paper, what would you then expect the relationship between public preference and media to look like?

Week 5 (May 15, 2024): The Impact of Protest and Citizen Sanctioning of Government Responsiveness

Cleary, Matthew R. (2007). 'Electoral Competition, Participation, and Government Responsiveness in Mexico.' *American Journal of Political Science* 51:2, pp. 283-299.

Directed Reading Question(s): Cleary's (2007) article suggests that participatory politics can be quite effective in that they often have an interactive effect with electoral politics or have the ability to stand alone. Looking at the creative example of citizen sanctioning that you have brought in for extra credit, do you believe it: (1) impacted politics only when paired with

upcoming elections; (2) impacted politics in its own right; or, (3) did not impact politics at all? Please motivate your answer.

There will be no class for May 22, 2024 as it's Pentecost - a holiday recognised by the state of North Rhine Westphalia.

Part Two: Changing Conceptualisations of Legitimacy and the Rise of Bureaucratic Professionalism

Week 6 (May 29, 2024): Public Services: A By-Product or Foundation of Modern Legitimacy?

Cassani, Andrea (2017). 'Social Services to Claim Legitimacy: Comparing Autocracies Performances.' *Contemporary Politics* 23:3, pp. 348-368.

Directed Reading Question(s): Traditional conceptualisations of state legitimacy typically hinge on Weber's famous 'monopoly on violence' thesis, meaning that a state is considered legitimate insofar as it is the only entity within its jurisdiction with legal recourse to force. Cassani's (2017) article suggests that autocrats (leaders that likely already have a monopoly on violence) increasingly use the provision of public services to induce some feeling of legitimacy in state proceedings. Do you believe that public services are a by-product or a foundation of modern conceptualisations of legitimacy? Motivate your answer.

Week 7 (June 5, 2024): The Rise of Bureaucratic Professionalism

Anderson, William A. and Marten, Patricia Yanzey (1982). 'Bureaucracy and Professionalism in the Social Services.' *Journal of Social Service Research* 5:3-4, pp. 33-50.

Directed Reading Question(s): States create permanent bureaucracies in an effort to better administer general public goods and services. Shortly after being made permanent, a lot of bureaucracies are then 'professionalised'. Why might you want a professional bureaucracy? Why might you not want a professional bureaucracy?

Part Three: Willingness-Based Accounts of Public Services

Week 8 (June 12, 2024): Street-Level Bureaucrat Theory and Bureaucratic Motives

Maynard-Moody, S. & Portillo, S. (2010). 'Street-Level Bureaucracy Theory'. *The Oxford Handbook of American Bureaucracy*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Directed Reading Question(s): Lipsky's 'street-level bureaucrat' theory emphasises the discretion inherent to some bureaucratic posts, but who fills these posts? What would motivate you to become a public servant?

Week 9 (June 19, 2024): Partisanship and Ideology in Service Provision

There is no assigned reading for this week as I am relying on two working papers (one of my own and another from a colleague), which cannot be circulated.

Directed Reading Question(s): What are some instances, specific or general, in which partisanship or ideology may play a role in the provision of public services?

Part Four: Capacity-Based Accounts of Public Services

Week 10 (June 26, 2024): The Capacity-Based Account of Public Service Provision

Kyle, Jordan and Resnick, Danielle (2018). 'Delivering More with Less: Subnational Service Provision in Low Capacity States.' *Studies in Comparative International Development* 54, pp. 133-163.

Directed Reading Question(s): Kyle and Resnick's (2018) findings strongly support Lipsky's 'street-level bureaucrat' theory, in that they negate the idea that successful or good public service delivery is predominantly about the general capacity of the state. In reading this article, however, you will note that Nepal is a 'most likely case' scenario, i.e. the Nepalese state is poor and highly fragmented, so any positive public service outcomes would likely happen off the back of highly creative or motivated individuals. Acknowledging this, do you find these individual, willingness-based accounts or a broad, capacity-based account to be more convincing? Why or why not?

Week 11 (July 3, 2024): Social Fragmentation and Proximity in Public Service Provision

Bozcaga, Tugba (2022). 'The Social Bureaucrat: How Social Proximity Among Bureaucrats Affect Local Governance.' *Program on Governance and Local Development Working Paper No.* 35.

Directed Reading Question(s): Bozcaga's (2022) article suggests that social proximity – that is, the informal social ties between people which are rooted in ethnicity, hometown identities, and political cleavages – impacts state capacity. By contrast, a lot of older literature suggests that co-ethnicity (another term for social proximity, possibly) impacts individual bureaucrat's willingness to engage or engage fully with one another. Do you believe social fragmentation/proximity are better understood as an issue of capacity or of willingness? Why or why not?

Week 10 (July 10, 2024): The Impact of External Partners of Public Services

Barma, Naazeen H., Levy, Naomi, and Piombo, Jessica (2020). 'The Impact of Aid Dynamics on State Effectiveness and Legitimacy.' *Studies in Comparative International Development* 55, pp. 184-203.

Directed Reading Question(s): Barma, Levy, and Piombo (2020) introduce a typology of aid dynamics, can you think of any instances of aid disbursement that might match one or more of these typologies? Please bring your example(s) to class as we will discuss it.

Week 12 (July 17, 2024): Paper Idea Presentations

End of Lectures: 19.07.2024

Paper Deadline: 31.08.2024