ABSTRACTS

Society, Social Participation, and Public Policies

Soraya Vargas Cortes

This text presents the dossier Society, Social Participation, and Public Policies, which is divided into two major blocks. The first one includes four works that focus on public policies. Three of them seek to understand how those policies are constituted, what their nature is, and what actors, processes or structural or institutional aspects explain their nature. The fourth one differs from the others by approaching a particular aspect of a specific public policy: how, from the standpoint of students, characteristics of higher teaching curriculum might affect the future employability of graduates. The second block includes two works that approach the issue of social participation.

Key words: social participation, public policies

Public Policies: a Literature Review

Celina Souza

The article presents a review of the main concepts and models for making and assessment of public policies, seeking to synthesize the state of the art in the field, that is, to map how classic and more recent literature approach the subject. The article also seeks to discuss possibilities for application of distinct streams of neo-institutionalist theories to the assessment of public policies.

Key words: Public policies, Models for Making and Assessment of Public Policies, Neo-Institutionalist Theories.

Effects of decentralization on cross-government relations: Brazil from a comparative perspective

Tulia Falleti

This article analyzes the effects of decentralization policies on the evolution of the balance of power among presidents, governors, and mayors in Brazil after the demise of the developmental state. It compares the consequences of post-developmentalist decentralization in Brazil to those that the similar processes had in Argentina, Colombia, and Mexico. To explain the differences observed among countries, the article advances a sequential theory of decentralization, which is then applied to the Brazilian case.

Key Words: Decentralization, Intergovernmental Relations, Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, Administrative Decentralization, Fiscal Decentralization, Political Decentralization, Emenda Constitucional No. 15 of 1980, Emenda Constitucio-nal No. 23 "Passos Porto" of 1983, Decentralização Saúde.

Public management performance: which variables are included in approval ratings in small towns?

Cátia W. Lubambo

The analysis of public management carried out in this study focuses on explanatory elements associated to government performance in small towns. Differences found on *public management performance* in towns, defined according to some specific elements that we try to explain, reveal not only the variety of contexts and conditions but also the diversity of constraints that decentralization finds in local governments. In literature, some studies point out that structural elements such as government's tax performance would determine the higher or lower possibility for success of a given local government. Other works present elements directly associated to the level and nature of demands and the resulting form of local provision as being crucial for approval or not of the administration. Yet other studies suggest that investigations proceed in the perspective of effective political-institutional conditions of implementation of social policies at municipal level. In face of evidence of so many distinct elements that seem to be relevant for

the performance of the municipal management, we ask: is there any correlation between the administration's attributes and its approval ratings? This work examines a universe of 75 towns of Northeastern Brazil, distributed over the states of Pernambuco, Rio Grande do Norte, and Paraíba, during the 1993-1996 term. It discusses and elects the Approval Rating as the indicator of each *administration's performance* and it investigates the influence of specific factors, which allegedly explain such performance. After an analysis of "clusters", results of the study end up pointing out similarities and differences between groups of towns, with distinct levels of administration performance, stressing the prevalence of elements associated to the effective action of the administration as determinants for popular approval.

Key words: government performance, public administration, approval ratings.

Higher teaching and skill development for employability: exploring the students' view

Monika Zalauf

This article explores student attitudes towards employability skills development in higher education. The analysis draws on a questionnaire survey undertaken with 60 undergraduates studying for a single honours social policy degree and a combined honours social policy/sociology degree in one post-1992 University in London. The survey investigates students' perceptions of skills provision, and their preferences for the development and the assessment of employability skills. The findings show that the majority of students consider the development of subject knowledge and employability skills of equal importance. There is clear support for an institutional strategy and an integrated model for the enhancement of employability skills. The overall results support the development of employability skills within the situated learning approach.

Key words: Curriculum development, employability skills, social policy programmes, student perceptions

Civil society and democratic construction: from essentialist Manichaeism to the relational approach

Marcelo Kunrath Silva

This article aims at debating an "object" that has deserved little attention when traditional and authoritarian traits that block democratic construction in Brazil are examined: "civil society". Based on the theoretical-methodological support of Norbert Elias' "relational sociology" and the empirical foundation provided by comparative analysis between civil society and municipal governments in two cities of Porto Alegre's metropolitan area, we question an essentialist and unifying approach of social actors that sees civil society as a space for diversity, power relations and conflict, where actors marked by several orientations meet and keep distinct relations to democracy.

Key words: **Civil Society, Relational Sociology, Social Participation, Democratization**

Local public policies and participation in the Brazilian state of Bahia: the management versus politics dilemma

Carlos R. S. Milani

Fostering participation of distinct political actors and creating a network that defines priorities, exerts social control, and contributes to implement and assess public policies have become one of the core organizational principles in contemporary public management and in the processes of local democratic deliberation. In Brazil, the 1990s were marked by institutionalization of participation by "organized civil society", acclaimed by national and international agencies as a model in the processes of making local public policies. However, recent studies have demonstrated the geographic concentration of participatory public management experiences (especially in the case of participatory budgets) in the country's South and Southeast regions, showing that such institutionalization has not developed in a homogeneous way and that the practice of citizen participation presents major variations within the national context. In the particular case of Bahia, recent rates of economic growth above the national average and the process

of modernization of public administration based on managerial principles take place parallel to the maintenance of old social and institutional structures that leave citizenry's relationship with the state suspended. That is, citizens' political participation and the development of participatory democracy are confronted with the contradictions of a contemporary history marked, *inter alia*, by clientelist practices, a patrimonialist conception of public goods, an individual view of power fostered by Carlism (as referring to local political leader Antônio Carlos Magalhães) institutional formalism, lack of transparency in the governmental public sector, weak tradition of support to civic infrastructures, generalized absence of public spaces for democratic deliberation, but also by the presence of cultural and religious factors that influence relations between the State and society. Nowadays, it is not possible to see Bahia's politics as the result of confrontation and diversity of interests between individual and collective actors around themes of public agenda and projects for society. It can rather be seen as a race for power that preserves the past, maintains structural inequalities and is based on the exercise of political mandate as an easy position to foster self-interest. Based on the description of four discourses on public management in today's Bahia, this article seeks to analyze the dilemmas and challenges of citizen participation in an attempt to build new ways to make, implement, and monitor Bahia's local public policies

Key words: Local Public Policies, Participatory Management, Democratic Limits, Bahia.

ARTIGOS

ARTICLES

Development and legitimation of Third-Sector organizations in Argentina: Towards defining a peripheral isomorphism

Pablo Forni & Lucimeire Vergilio Leite

In this article we intend to offer elements for an analytical framing to study third-sector organizations in peripheral countries, particularly by observing their idiosyncrasies. In order to do that, we have carried out a review of literature produced in Argentina in the 1990s in the light of isomorphic forces resulting from distinct actors involved in the process of constitution of the third sector. Those forces can be seen within a peripheral isomorphism that shapes structures, procedures, external relations, and themes approached by third-sector organizations.

Beliefs, values, and social representations of violence

Maria Stela Grossi Porto

The text describes the use of the notion of social representation as a possibility to understand the phenomenon of contemporary violence, therefore interrogating about meanings, values, and beliefs that structure and preside over social life, which are the content of social representations par excellence. It discusses the possibility to resume the debate on the once recurrent issue of beliefs and values as included in the range of devices available for the sociological explanation. Finally, it seeks to reflect upon the subjectiveness/objectiveness relationship within the theoretical context for production of valid knowledge.

Prison riots: new meanings after the Brazilian experience

Fernando Salla

The aim of this article is to examine the profile of riots in Brazil's prison system since the 1970s, reviewing what has been produced on those events in France, the United States, and the United Kingdom. The article's main argument is that riots in Brazilian prisons in the last fifteen years have been associated both to decaying prison conditions and the State's problems to exert control over the prison's everyday life, thus allowing organized crime groups to exert power over the mass of inmates, who use riots to remove enemies and strengthen their position of domination before prison staff.

INTERFACE
INTERFACE

Mexico's Geopolitics in Central America: Regional Hegemony?

Alberto Rocha

Mexico as well as Brazil (first decade of 2000) started to release geo-economic and geo-political projections about their unmediated surroundings (their region of belonging) and their mediated surroundings (their neighboring region), besides playing major political roles in their far surroundings (the Latin American and Caribbean region) and their remote surroundings (the American continent). As a result, we have proposed and developed the idea that such situations and realities are those of processes of constitution of States with "sub-hegemonic" roles, with their respective functions of "sub-hegemony". We therefore ask the following question: Why are both Mexico and Brazil defining "sub-hegemonic" roles? Are such roles and functions possible within a continental space where a "superpower" exerts unquestionable "supremacy" besides seeking to redefine its "hegemony" (the one now undergoing a crisis)?

In order to work on the theme of Mexico's geopolitical relations with Central America, we have carried out four approximations: Mexico's current stance; historical background of the relations; process of institutionalization of cooperation; and field of action of the relations. Besides, the work is concluded with some ideas about Mexico's geopolitical view. The approximation to Mexico's structural stance in the world and in the American Continent seeks to highlight realities in its condition of semiperipheral and "sub-hegemonic" country. The historical approximation leads to the 1980s and the 1990s, when the background for Mexico's cooperation with Central America is established and that cooperation is started and strengthened. The institutional approximation, focused on the 1990s and the early 2000s, approaches the field of action of Mexico's geopolitical and geo-economic relations with Central America. This is the core part of the work, since it is the Mechanism for Dialog and Concertation of Tuxtla-Gutiérrez and its four levels of operation: 1. The political level; 2. The development level; 3. The level of regional technical cooperation; and 4. The economical, comercial, and financial level.

Key words: Regional Integration, Hegemonic Countries, Sub-Hegemonic Countries, Hegemony, Sub-Hegemony, Foreign Policy, Geo-Economy, Geopolitics, Cooperation, Mexico, Central America, Mesoamerica, System of Integration of Central America, Brazil, United States.

RESENHAS
BOOK REVIEW

The abnormals
FOUCAULT, Michel. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2001.

Francis Moraes de Almeida

This review presents the course taught by Michel Foucault at *Collège de France* in 1975. The course deals with the analysis of psychiatric examination and its relationship to criminal law, from major cases of criminal monstrosity until the construction of diagnosis on "abnormal" delinquent in the late 19th century. Foucault presents three figures that represent the "abnormal delinquents" in distinct historical moments: the human monster, the individual to be corrected and the onanist. The transition role played by this course on the author's work is underscored, since it crosses previous (madness) and future (sexuality) themes present in his work.

Key words: abnormal, psychiatry, criminal law.