



Seminar Cities are back in town

Brokers and political mobilization in Brazil: Towards a representational approach

Wednesday 10th June 2020

5 – 6.30 pm

Sciences Po – Via [Zoom](#)

When it comes to analyzing the global South, most studies regarding the relationship between those who govern and those who are governed are carried out from the perspective of clientelism in its different theoretical approaches. However, such conventional notions of clientelism will frequently either overstretch the concept or produce aestheticized models of representation and of public policies leaving in blind spots important actors, interactions and informal institutions. I propose to study the activities that motivate groups of organized or unorganized citizens to undertake political action under the concept of political mobilization. Through an ethnographic research conducted in the city of São Paulo (Brazil) between March 2017 and August 2019, I followed a parliamentary mandate and its brokers as they build networks of relationships with bureaucrats and civil society actors and solved problems of neighborhoods in the peripheries of the city. Because of a theoretical linkage of representation to government apparatus and voting as the only mechanism of authorization, brokers received little attention to their representational nature, but an important part of political mobilization is carried out from the resolution or even construction of representational conflicts, shifting them from residual or unwanted effects of representation to a central focus of analysis. Such a conclusion has important consequences for state legitimacy, policy implementation and a redefinition of the arena in which representation takes place. This research aims at elaborating a non-exhaustive typology of brokers' repertoires of action. In addition, it seeks to identify how these interactions build stability of forms and procedures, following courses of action that are independent of electoral cycles.



Speaker

Telma Hoyley, University of São Paulo, DCP/USP

Telma is a visiting PhD candidate in political science at Sciences Po, CEE. Her research focuses on political parties influence on urban policies through an ethnographic approach. She is a member of the research project "Who governs - Comparing governance patterns in London, Paris, Mexico City and São Paulo". Before her PhD, she worked in Sao Paulo's City Hall in the Comptroller General Office and the Planning Secretariat.

Discussant

Charlotte Halpern, Sciences Po, CEE

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