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Short Course Proposal

University of São Paulo

COURSE DESCRIPTION

One of the core aspects of comparative social policy research is the empirical measurement of key concepts and theories. While most research in this area is cross-national, there is a growing awareness of the subnational complexity in social policy across national contexts, and a parallel increasing interest in examining and measuring social policy at the subnational level. In this course, we will examine the empirical measurement of social policy, explore how scholars operationalize various dimensions of policy, and engage with the technical aspects of collecting, cleaning/coding, and setting up comparative social policy datasets. We will spend two sessions examining the conceptual and theoretical background of measuring welfare states and social provision such as social expenditure-based measures vs social rights indicators, etc. One session will be devote to explore the types of questions that can be asked and answered with various kinds of social policy measures. One session will be devote to an in-depth example of measuring multiple dimensions of social policy at the subnational level over time (using the US case), and the last two sessions will be devoted to the technical aspects of creating a comparative social policy dataset i.e. finding the data, coding/cleaning the data, creating the measures, etc. A short list of required readings will be assigned for each session.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 July 29 – August 2


This day will be devoted to an introduction to the theoretical and conceptual background for how scholars measure national level welfare states and social provision. The day will consist of an overview lecture and a discussion of the assigned readings.

Readings


Danforth


**Day 2: Subnational or Multi-level Welfare States and Social Provision: Theories, Concepts and Measures**

This day will be devoted to an introduction to the theoretical and conceptual background for how scholars measure subnational or multi-level welfare states, examining the territorial and decentralized aspects of welfare state and social provision. The day will consist of an overview lecture and a discussion of the assigned readings.

**Readings**


This day will be devoted to an in-depth analysis of one case – the US State-Level Social Safety Net. The day will consist of a lecture overview, and a discussion of the assigned readings.

**Readings**


**Week 2 August 5 – August 8**

**Day 4: Subnational Social Provision: Case Studies and Recent Empirical Extensions**

This day will be devoted to examining a handful of specific case studies of subnational comparative social provision. The day will consist of a discussion of the assigned readings and a workshop on developing an individual research question, and identifying the key concepts and potential measures of these concepts.

**Readings**


**Brazil-Specific**


**Day 5: Engaging in Comparative Subnational Social Policy Research, Finding and Collecting Data**

This day will be devoted to understanding the complexities of research data management, focusing on finding and collecting the necessary data for comparative subnational social policy research. The day will consist of a lecture on these topics that provides specific examples and highlights the multiple decisions that go into this part of the research process, and time will also be devoted to finding and collecting data for individual research projects.

**Readings and Reference Materials**


**Day 6: Engaging in Comparative Subnational Social Policy Research, Organization, Documentation, and Coding Data**

This day will be devoted to understanding the complexities of research data management, focusing on the organization and documentation of these data, and the coding of the data to produce the desired measures for analysis. The day will consist of a lecture on these topics that provides specific examples and highlights the multiple decisions that go into each of these aspects of the research process, and time will also be devoted to organizing, documenting, and coding the data for individual research projects.

No assigned readings.