

Abstract

Civil Society and the Convention of the Rights of the Child in Argentina

Investigator

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Aims and objectives of the research

The key aim of this project is to deepen knowledge about the changing strategies of non-governmental organisations on behalf of disadvantaged groups as a result of the emergence of regimes of global governance. Such regimes are premised upon liberal principles of citizenship and regulation and discursively legitimise spaces for non-governmental action in policy making. This research will contribute to furthering understanding of how global governance shapes advocacy through an in-depth case study of the impact of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child in Argentina. The project will also shed light on the ways in which non governmental groups perceive global governance. It aims to contribute to broad theoretical debate about non-governmental action, states and global governance and to provide a body of data that will enable comparison with other groups elsewhere. The theoretical frame for the research draws on insights from three distinct literatures: global governance; civil society activism; and childhood studies.

Key research questions

The overarching question that guides the research refers to the extent to which liberal global governance and the trend towards the global codification of rights and entitlements provide opportunities and constraints for local civil society activists. Specifically, the research examines whether the Convention of the Rights of the Child serves as a resource for local civil society organisations in Argentina; establishes the impact of the Convention on the discourses and practices of local groups; and analyses its impact on the relationship between non-governmental groups and the state. It will also examine how relevant non-governmental groups evaluate the Convention: do they regard it as an opportunity for non-governmental action; and do they view the rights enshrined within the Convention as appropriate for the children whom they seek to defend?

Relation to the programme

The research fits into Strand B of the programme by examining processes of non-governmental action in relation to the state and Strand C through its analysis of global regulation on the practices and discourses of civil society organisations. It has theoretical and empirical dimensions and will contribute to studies of civil society activism and global governance. Empirically, it will generate new data on non-governmental action in processes of 'societal accountability'. The project will provide children's advocacy groups with a space for the co-production of knowledge and will therefore contribute towards the three main objectives of the Programme.

Relevance of this research to user groups

The project takes very seriously the need to communicate with user groups, many of which will provide the raw data for the project. It is anticipated that two research seminars will be held in Argentina to provide opportunities for engagement with local civil society groups. Findings from the research will be published in Spanish and English, and in local publications as well as in user and academic journals in English.

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