



## EPP and Center for Climate and Energy Decision Making Sponsored Seminar

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Assistant Professor

Public Administration Division

Centre for Economic Research and Teaching

Presenting on:

### **“Analyzing conflict dynamics between waste pickers and municipal governments in Mexico and Spain”**

February 3rd, 2015

3:30pm

(Light refreshments will be served)

Wean 3701 Conference Room

Department of Engineering and Public Policy

#### **Seminar Abstract:**

Managing municipal refuse is usually a responsibility of local governments. However, complexity of institutional arrangements, diversity of organizational architectures and conflicting sociopolitical dynamics are often overlooked when designing policy options. One of my research strands focuses on the study of a sub-sector of the solid waste management system, informal waste pickers. I'm interested in understanding the formal and informal rules shaping informal waste pickers' use of a shared resource (garbage). I also seek to investigate various organizational architectures, resource collection practices and political interactions between informal waste pickers and their local governments. In this paper, I present preliminary results of fieldwork undertaken in León (Mexico), and Madrid (Spain). Rather than pre-establishing a particular hypothesis to be tested, I use an inductive, ethnographic approach to elicit variations in technology, wasteselection/sorting/picking/commercialization, picking location and choice, and the socio-political dimensions of government-agent relationships in informal waste pickers' practices. I use a cross-national comparison approach to explore whether the political climate in each country may have had an impact in how informal waste pickers self-organize, whether politics has played a role in shifting technologies and locational practices and if there has been any visible impact (positive or negative) on their welfare. In the paper I explore the relational elements of government and recycler interaction (in both conflict and cooperation form) as well as the development of formal and informal rules within the two groups of agents during the period 2009-2014. Both cities take a confrontational (and thus disempowering) approach to managing its relationships with waste pickers.

#### **Speaker Bio:**

I am an Assistant Professor in the **Public Administration Division of the Centre for Economic Research and Teaching, CIDE** (Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas, CIDE, AC) based out of **CIDE Region Centro** in Aguascalientes, Mexico. My research is interdisciplinary by nature, although I consider myself more of a political scientist and geographer, as those are the two major fields I studied during my doctorate. My research lies at the intersection of space, public policy, environment and society. I am primarily interested in understanding the factors that contribute to (or hinder) cooperation in natural resource governance. While my major focus has been sanitation, wastewater and pollution control, I am also interested in solid and hazardous waste management and urban/industrial restructuring. I am an Assistant Professor in the **Public Administration Division of the Centre for Economic Research and Teaching, CIDE** (Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas, CIDE, AC) based out of **CIDE Region Centro** in Aguascalientes, Mexico. My research is interdisciplinary by nature, although I consider myself more of a political scientist and geographer, as those are the two major fields I studied during my doctorate. My research lies at the intersection of space, public policy, environment and society. I am primarily interested in understanding the factors that contribute to (or hinder) cooperation in natural resource governance. While my major focus has been sanitation, wastewater and pollution control, I am also interested in solid and hazardous waste management and urban/industrial restructuring.