

Street-Level Bureaucracy in Public Administration: A Systematic Literature Review

Ahrum Chang

PhD Student
Department of Public Administration and Policy
University of Georgia
406 Baldwin Hall
Athens, GA 30602
ahrum.chang25@uga.edu

Gene A. Brewer

Department of Public Administration and Policy
University of Georgia
204 Baldwin Hall
Athens, GA 30602
geneabrewer@uga.edu

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ABSTRACT

This study will contribute to our understanding of street-level bureaucracy by reviewing the literature on public service delivery on the frontlines, with careful attention to how relevant research has evolved in the field of public administration. The number of studies on frontline workers has soared since Michael Lipsky published his seminal study on street-level bureaucracy in 1980. Yet little effort has been made to assess its comprehensive impact on the field of public administration. This study undertakes a systematic literature review on the topic by examining street-level studies published in English-language outlets from 1980-2017 based on a referencing network analysis. Several pertinent questions are answered. What are the major trends in the literature, such as the number of articles published, the authors of those works, and the publication outlets? What research methods were employed? What were the major empirical findings and practical implications documented in these studies? Some more general questions are also addressed. How has research on street-level bureaucracy evolved in public administration? This study will thus advance research on street-level bureaucracy in two ways. It will provide the first comprehensive systematic literature review on the topic and then assess how the field of public administration has taken up the concept.

Research on frontline bureaucracy has flourished over the past several decades particularly in the 2000s. Numerous studies discuss discretion in public service delivery on the frontline (e.g., Garrow and Grusky 2013; Hill and Hupe 2003; Lipsky 2010; Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2000; Sandfort 2000) and its effects on public policy (e.g., Meyers and Vorsanger 2003; Tummers 2011; Tummers and Bekkers 2014). Simultaneously, increasing contacts between frontline workers and citizens raise questions about accountability (Hupe and Hill 2007) and control (Bovens and Zouridis 2002). Despite the accumulation of street-level studies, few scholars have probed the state of the field within public administration. In this regard, this study primarily aims to understand the state of street-level studies within the field of public administration.

The concept of street-level bureaucracy per se deserves scholarly attention¹. First of all, street-level bureaucrats work on the frontlines of the government and interact with citizens directly. To put it differently, people experience the government and public policy through these frontline officers. Second, street-level bureaucrats have substantial discretion in the execution of their work, which is different from other bureaucrats who may have wider berths of formal authority but little operational discretion. In most cases, bureaucratic organizations are expected to be efficient in their response to the needs of citizens. Max Weber (1978, 973) once stated,

“—precision, speed, unambiguity, knowledge of the files, continuity, discretion, unity, strict subordination, reduction of friction and of material and personal costs—these are raised to the optimum point in the strictly bureaucratic administration. —”

¹ Street-level bureaucrats are referred to in many different ways, such as street-level or frontline bureaucrats, workers, officers, or caseworkers.

Yet Weber's description does not adequately describe the characteristics of modern bureaucracy in the real world that street-level bureaucrats operate in.² Lipsky (1980, 147) even stated that policy professionals on the frontline are governed by their "own occupational or professional ideologies." This accounts for the paradoxical nature of street-level bureaucracy what is at once bounded by rules, but grounded on expertise.

The concept of street-level raises many questions for scholars of public administration. Some can be answered by mere description (e.g., what trends are apparent in the literature on the topic?) while others challenge our core understanding of the discipline (e.g., do street-level bureaucrats who exercise discretion in their work upend top-down models of the policy process). An ultimate goal of the study is to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding the interaction between citizens and the government by exploring published research on street-level bureaucracy in the field of public administration.

The overall aim of this study is to advance understanding of street-level bureaucracy in the field of public administration in twofold. First, it attempts to analyze the academic trends of street-level studies within the field of public administration. Toward this end, previously conducted studies are systematically reviewed based on a referencing network analysis. The second goal is to explore what has been neglected in examining frontline public service workers and thus to review the prospects for the field. It also suggests new directions for the future study of street-level bureaucracy.

The study proceeds as follows. It firstly introduces the methodological approach in this systematic literature review. This will specify how the sample is selected, collected, and sorted. Then, each characteristic of the paper is detailed in terms of methods, authors, origins of sample,

² Some scholars have noted the tension between bureaucratic authority and expertise (e.g. Gulick 1937; Bendix 1971; Hammond and Miller 1985; Waldo 1986).

lines of study, and implications of outcomes, etc. Based on the findings, the study concludes by reviewing the prospects of street-level bureaucracy informing the field of public administration and suggesting some future research directions.

Methodological Approach for Systematic Literature Review

This study seeks to conduct a systematic literature review of Michael Lipsky's (1980) concept of street-level bureaucracy for several reasons. First, the topic has long been important in the public administration community. Accumulation in the number of publications on a specific topic implies that it is dynamic. Systematically reviewing literatures provide some insights therein.

Such a comprehensive work can also integrate and consolidate studies on the topic. The systematic literature review, as a methodological approach, contributes to identifying both strength and weakness of the current state of knowledge by summarizing and highlighting not only the explicit findings but also some hidden implications. Assessing the state of the knowledge on the topic is also likely to stimulate future research.

A systematic literature review requires a thorough approach. It explicitly aims to limit systematic errors and to identify, appraise, and synthesize the past literatures (Pettricrew and Roberts, 2006). In this regard, a systematic literature review is different from narrative reviews and meta-analyses. It is less of a discussion of the literatures, and more of a scientific tool, compared to narrative reviews and meta-analyses. A traditional narrative review mainly focuses on presenting a series of studies, so it is likely to be a bias prone (Rosenfeld, 2003). Meta-analysis, on the other hand, can be used jointly with systematic literature reviews because both rely on statistical methods for analyzing the literatures. The systematic literature review is,

however, different from meta-analyses which often focus on a single variable relationship (Ritz et al. 2016).

This study undertakes a systematic literature that consists of the following steps. First, a preliminary review was conducted by selecting 11 leading public administration journals³. Then, a systematic search was performed through the Web of Science, particularly relying on the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI). The time frame was set from 1980 to 2017, starting with Lipsky's (1980) seminal work of street-level bureaucracy. Even though Lipsky wrote some earlier paper on street-level bureaucracy in 1960s and 1970s, his book published in 1980 is considered the cornerstone of research on street-level bureaucracy and it is highly cited.

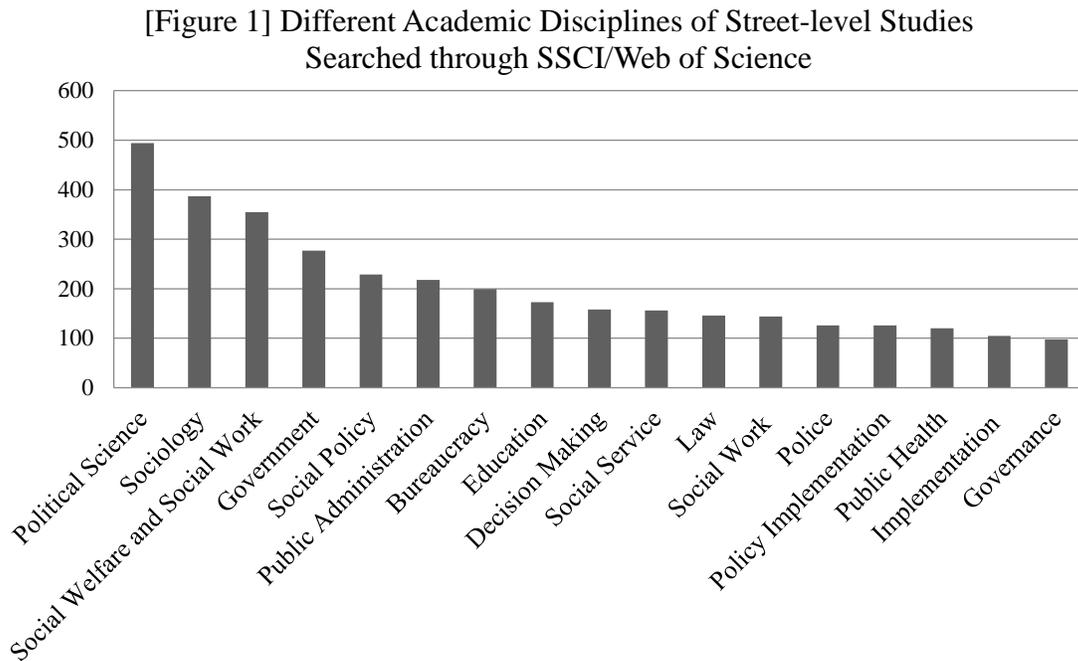
This study reviews the literatures that cite Lipsky's (1980) seminal work and address the topic of street-level bureaucracy. Thus, the keywords used for this search were "Lipsky" and "street-level." Even though there are a variety of definitions of street-level bureaucracy found in the literature, this study only relies on the two keywords. After numerous trials, we determined that these search terms produce the most representative and robust sample of published work on the topic. For example, only using the search term "street-level" substantially broadens the sample of the articles but far exceeds the scope of our inquiry. The present sample actually includes combinations of phrases such as street-level bureaucrats, street-level workers, street-level officers, or street-level bureaucracy that should be included in the sample.

In addition, these two key words enable us to identify the publications that at least once cite Lipsky's (1980) classic book on the topic. Articles meeting these criteria are explicitly relevant to the concept of street-level bureaucracy. Studies that use the terms *frontline worker* or

³ Following eleven public administration journals are included in this preliminary research: *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *Public Management Review*, *Public Administration Review*, *Public Administration*, *International Public Management Journal*, *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, *Journal of European Public Policy*, *American Review of Public Administration*, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, *Policy Studies Journal*, and *Governance*.

caseworker are also be included in the sample if they cite Lipsky’s book. This search strategy is intended to minimize any selection bias of the sample.

Only officially published journal articles are selected based on the SSCI in the Web of Science. This yields 1,618 English-language articles on street-level bureaucracy. Then, these 1,618 studies were categorized into 17 social science topics in the Web of Science⁴. The result of topic selection provided by the database is described in the figure 1. Multiple classifications are allowed in this topic selection, which implies that scholars have conducted interdisciplinary research in this area.



⁴ There are 17 topics in SSCI of the Web of Science: political science, sociology, social welfare and social work, government, social policy, public administration, bureaucracy, education, decision making, social service, law, social work, police, policy implementation, public health, implementation, and governance. Even though the topic selection is applied, the sample of the analysis still includes not only Public Administration(PA) journals but also non-PA journals such as Yale Law Journal, Columbia Law Review, American Journal of Political Science, Journal of Politics, Political Research Quarterly, Social Service Review, Social Policy & Administration, Journal of Social Work, Social Science Computer Review, Tax and Customs Administration, American Behavioral Scientists, Tourism Management, Society & Natural Resources and Third World Planning Review, etc. A detailed distribution of the articles and journals included in the sample is presented in Appendix A.

Figure 1 shows how the 1,618 street-level studies were broken down into different academic disciplines. Among these 17 topics given by the Web of Science, we narrowed the literatures to public administration. Such a process narrowed down our sample from 1,618 to 218 street-level studies. This procedure may raise an issue of sample selection bias in doing systematic literatures reviews. Such a sample selection method, however, is compatible to the present study in that our ultimate purpose is to overview the street-level studies particularly in the field of public administration. Also, making boundaries by topic will enable us to concentrate more on relevant street-level studies, especially focusing on how they have evolved in public administration.

In an effort to minimize the selection bias, we fully relied upon the database system not by arbitrary defining the topics of each literature but by selecting the topic through a database. This prevents researchers from making an arbitrary decision in sorting out the sample and furthers our intention to analyze the overall trends and to identify the state of knowledge in street-level studies, particularly within the field of public administration.

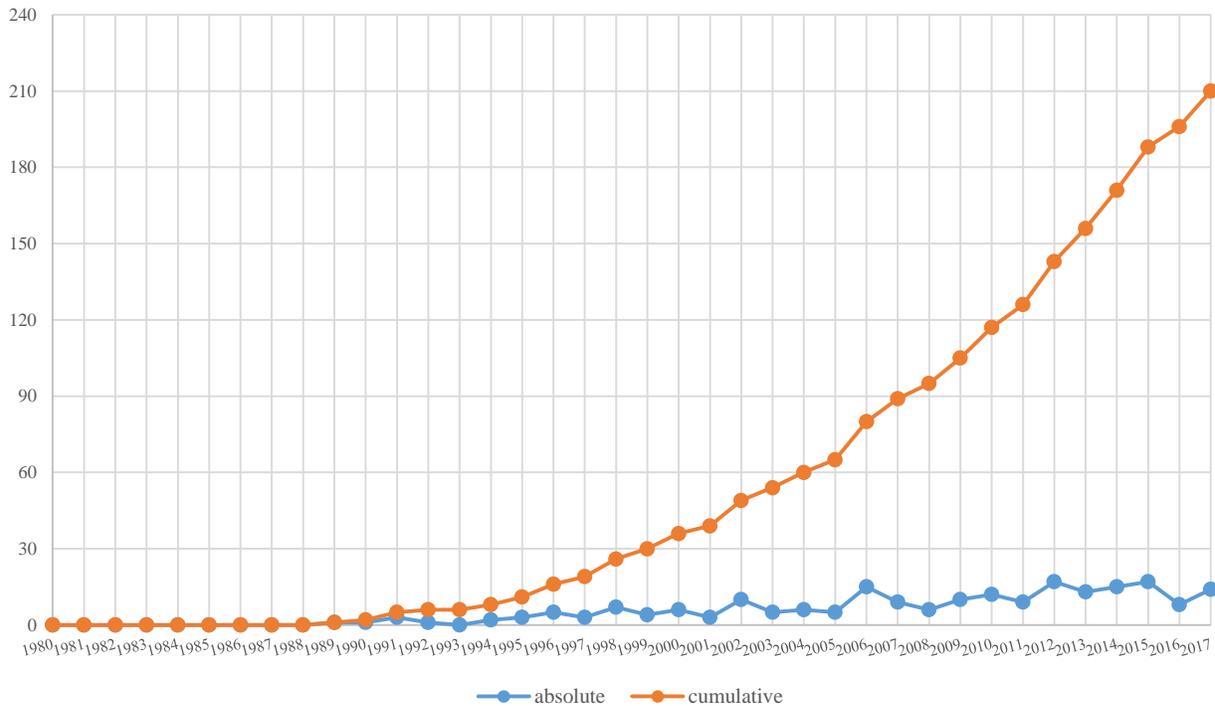
While our sample is drawn from a database, every single article is manually double-checked to see whether it actually cited Lipsky's (1980) book on street-level bureaucracy⁵. Such a final step supplemented some limitations of research, mainly relying on database. This search processes eventually yielded 209 English-written articles on street-level bureaucracy.

⁵This process is necessary to supplement the limitations of using database based on keywords. With two keywords, articles that cited Lipsky's paper on a different topic, but cited other's street-level publications at the same time can be included in the sample. Thus, this makes study exclude 9 articles from 218 publications on street-level bureaucracy.

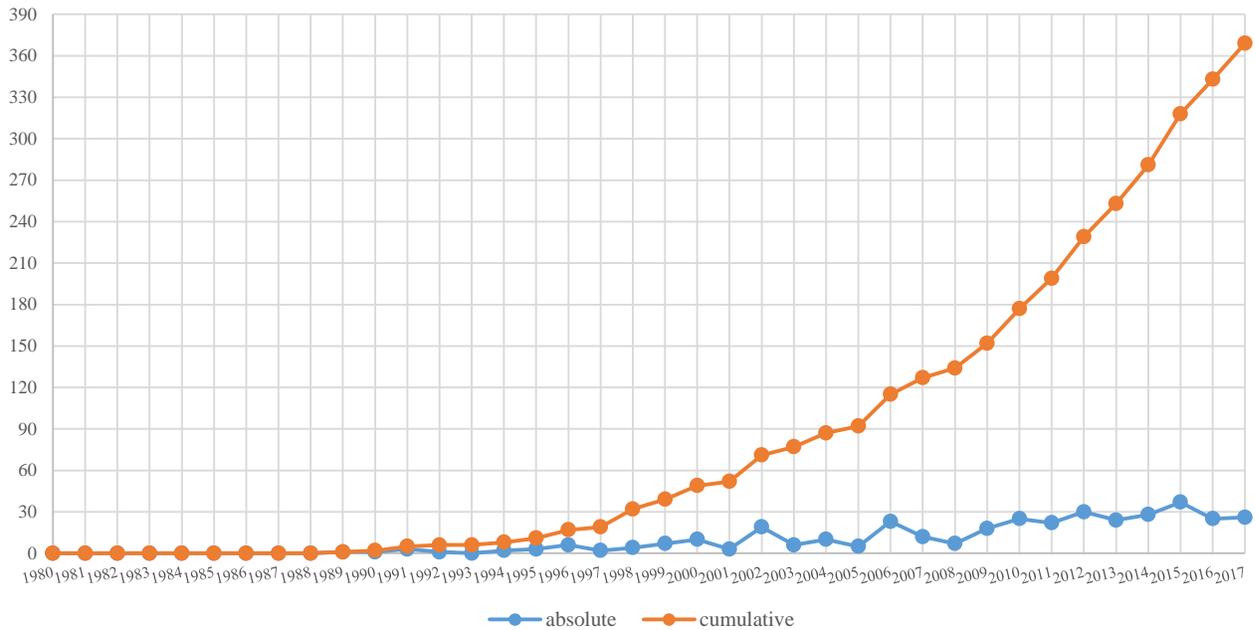
Findings and Analysis

Studies have accumulated on street-level bureaucracy since Lipsky published his pioneering book in 1980. The annual number of publications from 1980 through 2017 is shown in Figure 2. Only one article was published in the 1980s on street-level bureaucracy in our sample. Yet there has been growing interests in the topic since 1990s. A total of 29 publications were published in the second decade (1990-1999) but less than ten publications per year were recorded during this period.

[Figure 2] Number of Publications on Street-level Bureaucracy by Year (1980-2017)



[Figure 3] Number of First-Time Authors Citing Lipsky's Street-level Bureaucracy by Year (1980-2017)



The number of publication significantly increased after 2000. The highest number of publications was in 2012 and 2015 with 17 publications in both years, respectively. Overall, the increasing numbers reflect the growth of street-level bureaucracy as a research topic. On the other hand, while the number of studies has amassed over time (above red line), the year-to-year growth has been minimal (below blue line).

Figure 3 reports the number of new authors who first published studies citing Lipsky's (1980) book on street-level bureaucracy. This data was collected by counting the number of new authors per year when their names first appeared in the sample of 209 publications. This implies that each author was only counted one time. Based on the chronologically ordered data, we identified that 369 authors who published on the topic. Only one author was found in the 1980s, but the average number of authors increased to 38 from 1990 to 1999. Similar to the number of publications, the number of authors also significantly increased after 2000s. The peak was in

2015 when 37 new authors started publishing on street-level bureaucracy and cited Lipsky's (1980) book. The same trends we noted on publications also apply to authors: the numbers have accumulated (above red line), but the annual or year-to-year increases are modest (below blue line).

Research Design and Methods

Publication Outlet. This study only includes journal articles published from 1980-2017. There are 56 scientific journals in the sample. Four of these journals published more than 20 articles on street-level bureaucracy each: *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* (37), *Public Administration Review* (33), *Administration & Society* (29), and *American Review of Public Administration* (23). The study sample includes articles published in journals from a variety of social science disciplines such as *American Journal of Political Science*, *Justice Quarterly*, *Stanford Law Review*, *Society and Natural Resources*, *Sociology of Health and Illness*, *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, *Journal of Social Work*, *Social Policy & Administration*, *Journal of Urban Affairs*, and *Policing*, etc. A detailed distribution of journals in the sample is shown in Appendix A. As expected, these results suggest that street-level bureaucracy has been widely studied across social science disciplines.

Origins of Studies. This study analyzed the geographical origins of the case studies or data analyzed on the topic of street-level bureaucracy. There are 24 articles (11.4 percent) that do not name specific points of origin. Otherwise, 185 studies do clearly indicate the geographical origins of case studies or empirical data used. Since some studies conducted comparative case studies or used data from multiple countries, multiple classifications are shown in Table 1.

[Table 1] Distribution of the Origins of Data Used in Street-level Bureaucracy Studies

Country (ISO ALPHA-2 Code)	Freq	%	Continent	Freq	%
US	101	50.0	North America	105	52.0
GB	17	8.5	Europe	48	24.0
NL	14	7.0	Asia	13	6.5
European Union	6	3.0	Oceania	7	3.5
AU	5	2.5	South America	3	1.5
CA, CN, KR	4	2.0	Africa	2	1.0
BR	3	1.5			
DK, FI, FR, ID, IL, NG, NZ	2	1.0			
AT, CH, MY, NO, SA, SE	1	0.5			
Not defined	24	11.5	Not defined	24	11.5
Total	202	100.0	Total	202	100.0

Note: A list of countries are followed by ISO Alpha-2 code except the European Union. Multiple classifications per study were possible. In case of multiple countries in a row, numbers are counted for each country.

These results show that the vast majority of studies were based upon the U.S. and European samples. Fully half of research was conducted on the U.S. samples (101 studies, 50 percent) and many of the remaining studies (48, 24.0 percent) were European in origin. Of the latter, scholars mostly used UK or Dutch data in their research on street-level bureaucracy. There have only been 13 (6.5 percent) studies employing samples from Asia, which includes China, South Korea, and Indonesia. Fewer studies employed samples from South America (3) and Africa (2). It should be noted that we intentionally investigated English-written publications only.

Types of Sample Collection. This study examines what types of sample collection scholars have used to collecting their data (see the Table 2). The most widely used methods for sample collection was interviews (70, 23.4%) of either street-level bureaucrats or clients who experienced the delivered public services. Also, many studies (60, 20.2 percent) relied solely on selective reviews of previously published journal articles and book chapters. This may stem from

the diverse nature of street-level bureaucracy, which resonates with many different intellectual streams and research questions. Other publications reported case studies (47, 15.8%), used registry survey data (44, 14.9%), conducted their own survey (32, 10.8%), analyzed archival data (26, 8.8%), or conducted a field study (13, 4.4%). Only a few studies conducted experiments (5, 1.7%).

Analytical Methodologies. This study also investigates the analytical techniques researchers have used (see the Table 3). Since most publications reported using several methods, multiple classifications were allowed. Many studies relied on qualitative analytic techniques (116, 44.4 percent) or descriptive statistics (67, 25.7 percent). Other studies used multiple regressions (35, 13.4 percent), measures of association or tests of difference (15, 4.7 percent), logistic regressions (12, 4.6 percent), and factor analysis (9, 3.4 percent). There were also studies that used structural equation modeling (3, 1.2 percent), bivariate ordinary least squares (2, 0.8 percent), network analysis (1, 0.4 percent), or Q-methodology (1, 0.4 percent). Table 3 shows that a fair amount of non-empirical methods has used in street-level studies, compared to empirical studies.

[Table 2] Distribution of Data Collection Methods Used in Street-level Bureaucracy Studies

Sample Collection Methods	Freq	%
Interview	70	23.4
Only based on reviewing previous literatures*	60	20.2
Case study	47	15.8
Secondary Analysis of registered survey data	44	14.9
Conduct its own survey	32	10.8
Non-survey-related archival data	26	8.8
Field study	13	4.4
Experiment	5	1.7
Total	297	100.0

* The 60 articles in this category did not utilize any other method. Otherwise, multiple classifications per study were conducted.

[Table 3] Distribution of Analytical Methods Used in Street-level Bureaucracy Studies

Analytical Methods	Freq	%
A qualitative analytic technique	116	44.4
Univariate: descriptive statistics	67	25.7
Multivariate: multiple regression (including multilevel, panel)	35	13.4
Bivariate: measures of association or tests of difference	15	5.7
Multivariate: logistic regression (including multilevel, panel)	12	4.6
Multivariate: factor analysis (and reliability assessment or measures of internal consistency)	9	3.4
Multivariate: structural equation modeling (including panel)	3	1.2
Bivariate: OLS	2	0.8
Network analysis	1	0.4
Q-Methodology	1	0.4
Total	261	100.0

Note: Multiple classifications per study were allowed.

Lines of Study and Empirical Findings

Lines of Study. Table 4 summarizes the lines of study in street-level studies in the sample. We divided the purpose of street-level studies into seven different categorizations. The basic line of study was determined from the main research question or hypotheses investigated in the article. In most of non-empirical studies, the sentences that clarified why the study was initiated were flagged and used for classification purposes.

According to the lines of study reported in Table 4, the vast majority of articles discussed general implications for public service delivery at the frontline (135, 47.7 percent). Scholars also established theoretical conceptualization, discussed conceptual dimensions, or integrated the street-level studies with other theories (59, 20.8 percent). Most empirical street-level studies used at least one street-level variable as an explanatory variable or outcome variable, or both (50, 17.7 percent). Of course, some studies that merely used street-level studies as an example (29, 10.2 percent). Even though all of these studies cited Lipsky (1980)'s work on street-level bureaucracy,

most used street-level bureaucracy as an example rather than analyzing the topic empirically. Five articles (1.8 percent) reviewed or overviewed specific subtopics related to street-level bureaucracy such as discretion or accountability. Few studies utilized comparative perspectives (3, 1.1 percent) or compared antecedents on the topic (2, 0.7 percent).

[Table 4] Distribution of Lines of Study in Street-level Bureaucracy Studies

Lines of Study	Freq	%
Implications for public service delivery at the frontline	135	47.7
Theoretical conceptualization, conceptual dimensions, integration with other theories	59	20.8
Empirical study by correlating outcome variables on street-level studies	50	17.7
Indicate street-level studies just as an example*	29	10.2
Review study/ research overview	5	1.8
International comparison of street-level studies	3	1.1
Comparing antecedents on street-level studies	2	0.7
Total	283	100.0

* 29 articles of this category were not included in any other six categories. Except this, multiple classifications per study were applied.

Key Outcomes Studied. Table 5 reports the outcome variables studied by articles in our sample. For this part of the analysis, 29 studies were excluded because they merely mentioned street-level bureaucracy as an example in one sentence or used it for a limited comparison of the topic they actually concentrated on (see Table 4). In other words, these omitted studies did not examine outcome variables that are directly related to street-level bureaucracy. This implies that Lipsky's (1980) concept of street-level bureaucracy is often mentioned in articles across the social sciences.

In this regard, we examined key outcomes in the remaining 180 articles. As expected the most frequently discussed outcomes was bureaucratic discretion (157, 66.8 percent), with most studies of discretion focused on policy implementation (138, 58.7 percent) and decision-making (19, 13.7 percent). We note that most street-level studies take aim at the policymaking or

implementation stages of the policy cycle. Some scholars have studied program effectiveness or performance (11, 4.6 percent) in their street-level studies.

[Table 5] Key Outcomes of Street-level Bureaucracy Studies

Outcomes	Freq	%
Discretion	157	66.8
Policy Implementation	138	58.7
Decision-making	19	13.7
Program effectiveness/performance	11	4.6
Perceptions (on its delivering public service or on clients)	9	3.8
Delegation	8	3.4
Coping behavior	6	2.5
Representation	6	2.5
Work efficiency	6	2.5
Accountability/ Managerial Responsibility	5	2.1
Citizen's attitude or evaluations toward public service	3	1.2
Personal Identity	3	1.2
Public Service Motivation	3	1.2
Responsiveness to clients	3	1.2
Emotional ties/ Loyalty to clients	2	0.8
Government realignment	2	0.8
Policy learning/ Training	2	0.8
Others*	1	0.4
Total	235	100

Note: Multiple classifications per study were allowed.

* This category includes variables as follows: empowerment, engagement in social process, legal entitlements to services, organizational cheating, participation in neighborhood, professional knowledge, trust in citizens, turnover, and value conflict.

In addition, both perceptions of street-level bureaucrats on the quality of public service or citizens (9, 3.8 percent) and delegation (8, 3.4 percent) were employed as dependent variables of some studies. Studies of street-level bureaucracy have also addressed bureaucratic theories/themes such as representative bureaucracy (6, 2.6 percent), bureaucratic accountability (5, 2.1 percent), public service motivation (3, 1.3 percent), and responsiveness (3, 1.3 percent). Several studies examined the street-level bureaucrats' coping behaviors (6, 2.6 percent), their personal identity (3, 1.3 percent), or their emotional ties to citizens (3, 1.3 percent).

Some studies first introduced a unique variable as an outcome of the street-level studies, including: street-level bureaucrats' empowerment, engagement in social process, participation in neighborhood, professional knowledge, job turnover, degree of trust in citizens, and value conflicts when delivering public service to clients (1, 0.4 percent each, respectively).

Policy Areas of Studies. This study also analyzed which policy areas are studied by articles in our sample. 80 studies did not clearly mention the policy area studied. For the others, the most frequently examined policies were social welfare policy (37, 20.5 percent), including foster care, family policy, and other social services. The second most frequently studied policy area was education policy (12, 6.6 percent). Since teachers interact with students at the street-level, these 12 studies used school district data, especially focusing on teachers as street-level bureaucrats. Many other policy areas were also studied such as urban policy (10, 5.5 percent), public safety/crime (9, 5.0 percent), health policy (8, 4.4 percent), technology (7, 3.8 percent), employment (5, 2.7 percent), and environment/regulation (4, 2.2 percent).

[Table 6] Policy Areas of Street-level Bureaucracy Studies

Policy Areas	Freq	%
Social welfare	37	20.5
Education	12	6.6
Urban	10	5.5
Safety/Crime	9	5.0
Health	8	4.4
Information/Science technology	7	3.8
Employment	5	2.7
Environment/Regulation	4	2.2
Election	3	1.6
Tourism	2	1.1
Tax	1	0.5
Not defined	80	44.4
Total	180	100

Analysis of Referencing Network

This study analyzes the referencing network of street-level bureaucracy studies published in the public administration literature (for an example of the techniques, see Ritz et al. 2016). This is done by calculating centrality within a referencing sample, which has been a useful tool in social network analysis. There are several ways to measure network centrality in social networks (Freeman 1979; Bolland 1988).

In this study, the measurement of in-degree centrality was done by calculating the ratio of the number of times an article was cited by the other studies in the dataset to the total number of publications in the dataset minus 1. An adjusted in-degree centrality was also created to account for the fact that older studies may have a higher number of citations than recent publications because of their age alone. The adjusted in-degree centrality per study provides a more accurate metric for comparing cited work by including only literatures published in the same year or later.

Once again, 29 studies were excluded from this analysis because they only mentioned the concept of street-level bureaucracy and did not conduct a full bore study on the topic. That said, Table 7 identifies the ten most highly cited studies in our sample. The number of citations per study was collected from the Web of Science system. Hupe and Hill's research on street-level bureaucracy, published in *Public Administration* in 2007, was the most cited study in the sample. As for the authors, Kenneth J. Meier coauthored four of the highly cited articles. All other authors contributed one each.

[Table 7] Highly Cited Articles from the Sample

Author (year)	Descriptions	Times Cited	Rank
Hupe and Hill (2007)	This study explores the characteristics of the contexts in which street-level bureaucrats deliver public service and specifies the consequences of these characteristics for the way professionals are held accountable in public sector.	136	1
Bovens and Zouridis (2002)	In the context of the constitutional state, this study focuses on the transformation of street-level bureaucracy to system-level bureaucracy due to a growing use of information and communication technology.	128	2
Meier, Wrinkle, and Polinard. (1999)	This study investigates the relationship between organizational outcomes for minorities and non-minorities and representative bureaucracy which is measured at the street-level in 350 school districts over six years.	113	3
DeLeon and DeLeon (2002)	This study elaborates three generations of policy implementation theory research by highlighting its basic reliance on a top-down orientation and suggesting a bottom-up (or street-level) perspective as an alternative approach.	112	4
O' Toole and Meier (2003)	This study shows the impact of both stability and managerial quality of teachers on students' school-district performance by using data from Texas school districts for five years.	97	5
Bohte and Meier (2000)	This study raises the issues of goal displacement and organizational cheating in Texas public schools and suggests the first theoretical account for when and why organizations are likely to cheat.	97	6
Meier and Nicholson-Crotty (2006)	This study examines the relationship between female police officers and sexual assault reports and arrests in a theoretical context of representative bureaucracy.	93	7
May and Winter (2009)	This study focuses on how politicians, managers, and the dispositions of street-level bureaucrats shape bureaucrats' actions when they implement a policy on the frontlines.	84	8
Yang (2005)	This study examines the origin, nature, and consequences of public administrators' trust in citizens by using a survey of 320 public administrators. Since street-level bureaucracy provides services based on their clients' needs and worth, according to prior research trust is crucial element.	81	9
Hasenfeld (2000)	This study illustrates how changes in the moral assumptions about single mothers have transformed the organizational forms and practices by discussing the historical transformation of welfare departments. It assumes that moral systems emanate from some sources such as organizational street-level moral entrepreneurs.	79	10

[Table 8] In-Degree Centrality Scores from the Network Analysis

Authors (year)	Descriptions	Times Cited	In-Degree Centrality	Rank	Adjusted In-Degree Centrality	Rank
Meier, Wrinkle, and Polinard. (1999)	This study investigates the relationship between organizational outcomes for minorities and non-minorities and representative bureaucracy which is measured at the street-level by using 350 school districts over six years.	6	.0335	1	.0377	2
May and Winter (2009)	This study focuses on how politicians, managers, and the dispositions of street-level bureaucrats shape their actions at the frontlines when they implement a policy.	5	.0279	2	.0500	1
Bohte and Meier (2000)	This study raises the issues of goal displacement and organizational cheating in Texas public schools and suggests the first theoretical account for when and why organizations are likely to cheat.	4	.0229	3	.0258	7
Hupe and Hill (2007)	This study explores the characteristics of the contexts in which street-level bureaucrats deliver public service and specifies the consequences of these characteristics for the way professionals are held accountable in public sector.	4	.0223	3	.0363	4
Meier and Nicholson-Crotty (2006)	This study examines the relationship between female police officers and sexual assault reports and arrests in a theoretical context of representative bureaucracy.	4	.0223	3	.0322	5
Brodkin (2007)	This study reviews the political history of management reformism and discusses the issues of bureaucratic discretion.	4	.0223	3	.0363	3
Keiser and Soss (1998)	This study contributes to theories of discretion, particularly focusing on social welfare bureaucracies.	3	.0167	7	.0181	10
Riccucci (2005)	This study analyzes the how street-level bureaucrats influence the implementation of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Policies in the state of Michigan.	3	.0167	7	.0234	8
Sandfort (1999)	This study investigates the ability of human service agencies at the frontline in collaborating across organizational boundaries.	3	.0167	7	.0188	9
Soss, Fording, and Schram (2011)	This study examines the organization of discipline in the Florida Welfare Transition program. Performance management shows the limits of discretion in the work of local program managers as well as street-level bureaucrats.	3	.0167	7	.0375	3
Wilkins and Williams (2008)	This study tests the relationship between passive and active representation for race at the street-level.	3	.0167	7	.0285	6

Note: Citations were searched on April. 28. 2018.

Table 8 reports both in-degree centrality and the adjusted score, which controls for time. These two analyses only consider the articles in the dataset. The order of the highly cited articles and the in-degree centrality ranking do not always match (see the Table 8), however, the in-degree ranking and the adjusted centrality rankings are the same. Abstracts are provided for the top ten articles in each ranking. The article of Meier et al. (1999) and May and Winter (2009) were recorded as the top two highest publications within the dataset. Both Meier and Soss coauthored two of these highly scored studies, respectively, while all other authors only authored one each.

Discussion and Implications

Despite the large number of publications to date, few well-developed assessments of the state of street-level studies have been done by scholars in public administration. This study traces the past research on the topic from 1980 to 2017 by focusing on studies that cited Lipsky's (1980) seminal book. This study relies on SSCI in the Web of Science. This database may not cover the full range of street-level studies, but it enables the researchers to concentrate on a representative sample of public administration and closely related. Several implications on street-level studies can be drawn from the findings.

Both the U.S. and Europe have contributed more street-level studies than other regions of the world. Lipsky was an American political scientist and the idea of frontline works having substantial discretion emerged in Western Europe, and particularly in the Netherlands and UK, shortly afterwards. A sample also included only English-language publications, which may have

overlooked works in some other language. As a consequence, the large number of studies from the U.S. and some European countries is not surprising. Furthermore, many of the studies in our sample focused on discretion, but many focused on other phenomena such as coping, accountability, and professionalism. Thus, there are several promising streams of inquiry in the broader remit of street-level studies.

Research on street-level bureaucracy has blurred the boundaries of the field of public administration with other discipline in the social sciences. Even though this study specially selected public administration and closely related studies, many journals from other disciplines were included such as law, business, sociology, and political science. This diverse composition shows that the topic of street-level bureaucracy been popular across the social sciences, transcending the boundaries of disciplines.

The concept of street-level bureaucracy itself is hard to define. We limited our selection of articles to those that cited Lipsky's (1980) book on the topic. Perhaps there are many more articles on frontline workers that do not use Lipsky as a touchstone. In addition, many studies doubtless include street-level bureaucrats along with other public officials, such as middle managers and top executives, in their samples. Yet we could not systematically identify all of these studies because they mostly do not purport to study street-level bureaucracy, which is our main interest.

Notwithstanding its conceptual ambiguity, it is clear that the notion of street-level bureaucracy was popularized by Michael Lipsky. Nonetheless, his seminal work on street-level bureaucracy sparked some controversies. Lipsky's (1980) model has been challenged in some ways. Concerning the discretion of street-level bureaucracy as an example, Evans and Harris

(2004) pointed out that more rules may rather bring more discretion by arguing that both rules and regulations should not be regarded as same as the controls over professional discretion. Furthermore, Lipsky's model hardly specified how the discretion of street-level bureaucrats would structure the citizens' interaction with the government. Lipsky's work also received a criticism on his fluid use the concept of professional (Evans, 2016).

Even though these problematic issues on Lipsky's (1980) work, as noted previously, street-level studies have flourished over the past several decades. It might be useful to assess who well the articles resonate with the various paradigms or unifying themes of the field. For this purpose, we suggests seven implicit but unifying themes of public administration: (1) efficiency and administrative science; (2) representation and professionalism; (3) constitutional legacy and oversight by elected officials; (4) organizational theory and behaviors; (5) public choice and political economy; (6) managerialism and new public management, and (7) governance, networks, and citizens.⁶

These themes are drawn from notable institutional approaches that have emerged in the history of public administration, and each has generated a substantial literature and number of followers.⁷ There are several reasons for indicating these unifying themes to assess the state of the field, for they represent potential answers to the major questions posed in the field of public administration. Street-level bureaucracy may be more relevant to some themes, but on the whole,

⁶ There is no absolute consensus on the definition of paradigms within public administration. Academic compartmentalization rather brought the fragmentation of the field. Notwithstanding, globalization pressures sometimes require the convergence toward universal themes within public administration. A world, however, has witnessed a difference among each national culture, often apparent in how the study is perceived and how the theory is applied to reality (Raadschelders, 2011).

⁷ There is still an ongoing debate on whether there is a unified self-identity in the field of public administration. Some scholars even argue that it is unnecessary to seek out a paradigm in public administration.

it seems minimally relevant to all⁸.

Scholarship on street-level bureaucracy measured as a number of publications on the topic are unevenly distributed across the seven unifying themes. This may be partly expected. Since street-level organizations are growingly responsible for making policy, they have both discretion and constraints under new managerialism (Brodkin 2011). Frontline workers utilize discretion in rationing public services within institutional boundaries (Durose 2011). In other words, there are still some thematic areas that street-level studies have not made notable progress such as public choice or constitutional legacy.

With respect to constitutional legacy and oversight from elected officials, for instance, it is clear that law provides a foundation for public administration, and further frames for managerial accountability, equity, and procedural justice in street-level bureaucrats' contact with citizens. Even though some scholars are interested in these issues, public administration has increasingly moved away from its roots in public laws. Moreover, there is increasing polarization between elected and appointed officials. This incongruence causes frontline officers to experience conflict between delegation (implying obedience) and discretion (implying entrepreneurship). Researchers should focus more intently on the role of street-level bureaucrats in democratic governance and how they achieve the congruence between statutory responsibility and managerial initiative.

Street-level bureaucracy can also be analyzed in terms of governance, networks, and citizenship in that public policy at the frontlines is increasingly delivered not only by public bureaucracies but also by nongovernmental organizations, such as nonprofit organizations or

⁸⁸ This study intends to consolidate the current state of street-level studies by overviewing the literatures within unifying themes of public administration.

private arrangements.

The discretionary power of street-level bureaucrats is a focal point in the literature. Accordingly, early organizational studies analyzed the extent of variation and the nature of bureaucratic discretion (Kaufman 1960; Handler and Hollingsworth 1971). Such discretion lies on the tension between general and abstract rules. This feature of discretion traditionally motivated street-level studies that examined their bureaucratic behaviors and decision making process. From the viewpoint of public choice theory and political economy, the discretion on street-level bureaucrats should be several curtailed. This raises fundamental questions about how public services can be improved if not through initiative and innovation on the frontlines.

Conclusion

The public administration literature has long concentrated on how people experience public policies in their everyday lives. Such considerations marked a key role of frontline workers in public service delivery based on the discretionary nature of policy implementation. Since Lipsky's (1980) careful investigation of the conditions of work on the frontlines and how street-level bureaucrats respond to these pressures.

Street-level bureaucracy has consistently provided fertile grounds for scholarly progress in the field of public administration. Accumulated street-level studies have contributed to enriching the issues of public administration. Also, many analytical methodologies such as ethnographic studies have been conducted in the field of public administration. This study briefly outlines how the corpus of published studies has been generative in the field of public

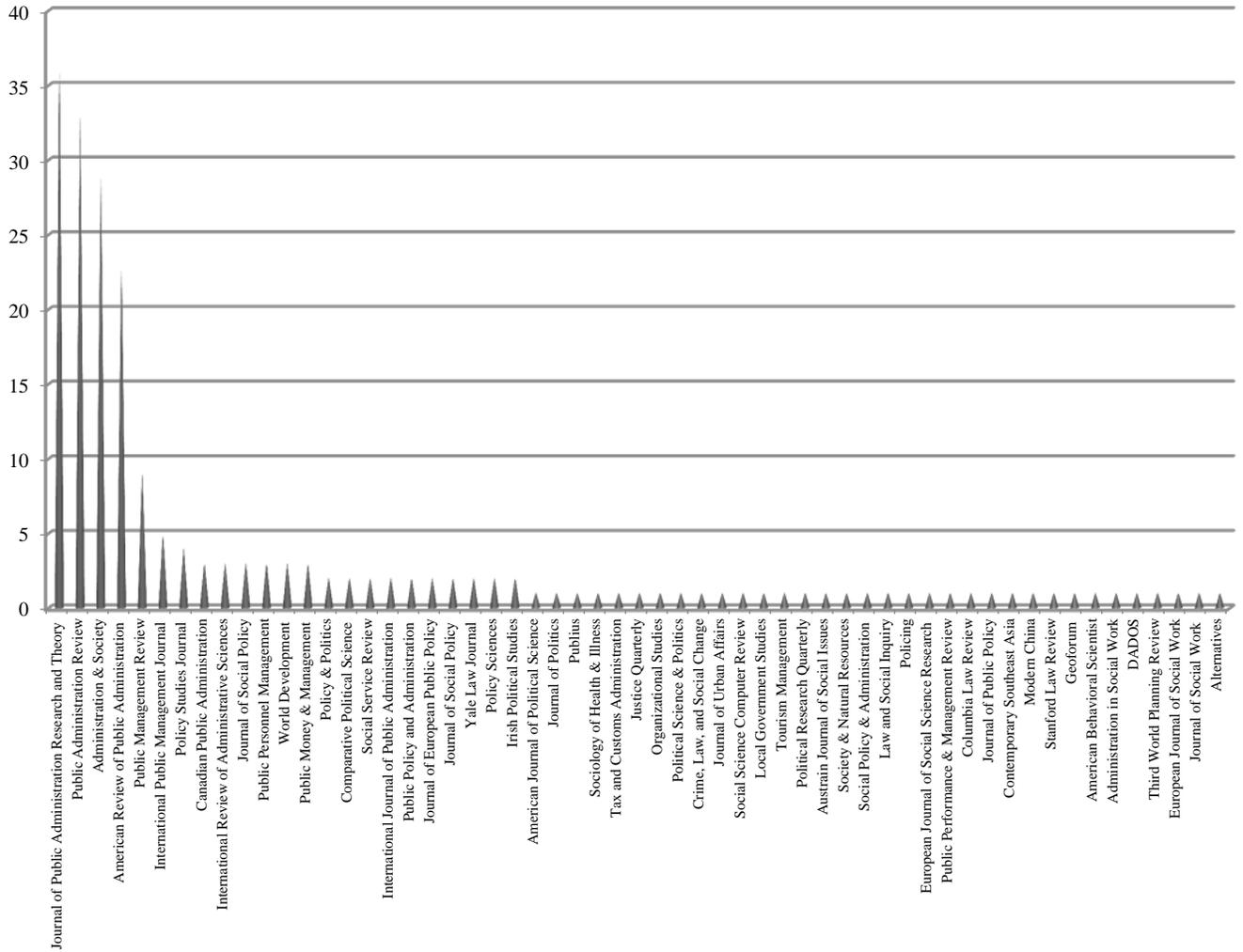
administration.

As noted, this study is an attempt to understand the current state of street-level studies and to assess the prospects of continued scholarship on the topic within the field of public administration. So far, overall street-level studies have been international and multi-sectored within the field of public administration. Research on street-level bureaucracy is a significant development in public administration and this study leaves much room for further inquiry.

Appendix A.

Distribution of Journals in the sample (N=209 articles in 56 scientific journals)

[Table 9] A Number of Street-level Studies in each Journal (1980-2017)



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