P02 / Future of work in public policy and administration

Topic : POLICY IMPLEMENTATION, STREET-LEVEL BUREAUCRATS

Chair : Maria Gintova (McMaster University)

Second Chair : Mary Francoli (Carleton University)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted the way many public servants work. In a matter of days, many public servants had to transition to remote work and used technology to perform functions they would normally perform in person (for example consultations, policy development and in certain cases, public service delivery). In North America, the pandemic also highlighted existing issues within the public service: systemic racism (Blessett and Gaynor 2021), disproportionate impacts on front-line public servants who are mothers (OECD 2020), and institutional barriers for innovation (Clarke 2021). With governments coming out of the pandemic and being able to re-focus on longer-term initiatives, it is important to focus on the future of work in public policy and administration.

In Canada, much of the post pandemic debate focuses on transitioning to hybrid work arrangements and carrying on with the digital transformation initiatives (Lindquist 2022; Roy 2022). At the same time, there is a need for comprehensive analysis to understand systemic issues in the public service that hinder governments' transformation initiatives and public service reforms. It is also very important to look into the future of the public sector, post COVID-19 pandemic, to inform both government strategic and operational initiatives.

This panel will explore the future of public administration, existing transformation initiatives and their impact on public service, and will provide recommendations to inform government action. Specifically, the panel will discuss trends and developments (or lack of) in advancing digital government and other transformation agendas, systemic challenges and barriers faced by the public sector, and implications for policy-making and public service delivery.

References:

Blessett, Brandi, and Tia Sherèe Gaynor. 2021. "Race, Racism and Administrative Callousness: Using Critical Race Theory for a Race-Conscious Public Administration." Public Integrity, 23(5): 455–458.

Clarke, Amanda. 2021. One year into pandemic, federal government is largely business as usual. Policy Options: IRPP. Accessed online: https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/march-2021/one-year-intopandemic-federal-digital-government-is-largely-

Lindquist, Evert A. 2022. "The digital era and public sector reforms: Transformation or new tools for competing values?" Canadian Public Administration: 1-22.

OECD. 2020. Women at the core of the fight against COVID-19 crisis. Accessed online: https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/women-at-the-core-of-the-fight-against-covid-19-crisis-553a82

Roy, Jeffrey. 2022. "COVID?19, Digitization and Hybrid Workspaces: A Critical Inflection Point for Public Sector Governance and Workforce Development." Canadian Public Administration: 1-7.

CALL FOR PAPERS

This panel will only accept onsite presentations.

Governments find themselves at crossroads following the COVID-19 pandemic. On one hand, the pandemic highlighted that public sector jobs that do not require direct interactions with citizens can be done remotely and the public health crisis accelerated implementation of digital solutions and platforms that were not widely spread pre-pandemic. On the other hand, the pandemic highlighted systemic issues that have already existed within the public service. These include systemic racism and employment barriers for racialized and Indigenous public servants (e.g. Blessett and Gaynor 2021; Ontario Government 2022), mistrust between politicians and public servants (e.g. Craft and Halligan 2020; Dowding and Taflaga 2022), institutional barriers for innovation and top-down control (e.g. Clarke 2021), and lack of experience of senior public service executives (e.g. D'Aoust 2020).

This panel calls for papers that explore transformation initiatives that are happening within the public service

and beyond. There are no geographical restrictions: we welcome papers that focus on public policy implementation and public administration initiatives in any country and/or level of government. Research questions can explore (but not limited to):

· What is the impact of recent transformation initiatives on public service?

· Are there any lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic that will inform how governments will operate in future?

· What role does technology play in public sector transformation?

· What are the necessary competencies and skills that are public servants of the future are required to have?

· How public servants are engaged in planning for future of work?

· What are the existing barriers that racialized public servants' experience? Were these aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic?

· What are the ways of overcoming these barriers and meaningfully implement anti-racism initiatives within public service?

· What are the benefits, challenges and opportunities of remote and hybrid work in the public sector?

Papers can be theoretical or empirical in nature, and employ quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods. We aim to stimulate the discussion about existing barriers and opportunities in public administration post COVID-19 and how these could impact the future of public administration. This will be an onsite panel to allow for in-person and virtual presentations.

References:

Blessett, Brandi, and Tia Sherèe Gaynor. 2021. "Race, Racism and Administrative Callousness: Using Critical Race Theory for a Race-Conscious Public Administration." Public Integrity, 23(5): 455–458.

Clarke, Amanda. 2021. One year into pandemic, federal government is largely business as usual. Policy Options: IRPP. Accessed online: https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/march-2021/one-year-into-pandemic-federal-digital-government-is-largely-

Craft, Jonathan and John Halligan. 2020. Advising Governments in the Westminster Tradition: Policy Advisory Systems in Australia, Britain, Canada and New Zealand. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

D'Aoust, Robert. 2020. Federal Public Service Management Reforms Consolidated Views and Results: Improving Performance and Productivity. University of Ottawa. Accessed online: https://socialsciences.uottawa.ca/public-management-policy/sites/socialsciences.uottawa.ca.public-management-p

Dowding, Keith, and Marija Taflaga. 2022. "Procedural Rationality in Westminster Systems: How De?Separation Affects the Decision Premise." Public Administration Review : 82(5): 920–930.

Ontario Government. 2022. Ontario Public Service anti-racism policy progress report. Accessed online: https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-public-service-anti-racism-policy-progress-report

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Session 1

Wednesday, June 28th 10:20 to 12:20 (JOR440)

Adapting to Change in the Public Sector: A Study of Remote and Hybrid Work

Zachary Spicer (York University)

Understanding public servants' perspectives on return to office and the future of work in the public sector: lessons learned from Canada

Maria Gintova (McMaster University)

Upscaling towards more local digital capacity

Inke Torfs (Universiteit Gent)

Ellen Wayenberg (Universiteit Gent)

The Effect of Local Policies Interventions on Subjective wellbeing: Evidence from NRTC Program

David Okereke (Virginia Tech , United States)

The Digital Era in Public Health Sector

Rasleen Grover (University of Delhi)

Pragati Hebbar (University of Maastricht)