

T06P04 / Public Policy Implementation and Public Organizations Management. Bringing together research traditions and professional practice

Topic : T06 / POLICY EXPERTS, ADMINISTRATION AND POLICY KNOWLEDGE

Chair : Luciano Andrenacci (Universidad Nacional de General San Martín)

Second Chair : Michael Barzelay (London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London)

Third Chair : Mattia Casula (Università di Bologna)

Fourth Chair : Fritz Sager (University of Bern)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

The panel seeks to build on the work initiated at the Guadalajara workshop (IPPW 2024) focused on Implementation Studies. It aims to create a welcoming environment for dialogue on the significant research strands related to state action emerging from Political Science (specifically Policy Implementation Studies) and Public Administration (particularly Public Management Studies).

We view the policy implementation literature as a segment of policy analysis that primarily draws from political science, focusing on what occurs during the realization phase of policies. In contrast, we see public management as the aspect of public administration that emphasizes the design and organizational dimensions of policies as intentional artifacts. While both fields are undoubtedly offspring of 20th-century policy sciences, they have developed in distinct environments shaped by academic research and professional practice. Our goal is to create a platform for both traditions to engage in meaningful exchanges, potentially leading to the convergence of shared knowledge.

Both traditions share a foundational interest in policy sciences, particularly in exploring what occurs during the typical phases of the public policy process: problem identification, design, implementation, and the evaluation of effects. However, for reasons that have yet to be fully documented and understood, they have diverged since the late 20th century and have remained notably separate.

While Policy Analysis models focus on the comparative description, explanation, and prediction of public policies, Public Management has tended to emphasize understanding policies as design artifacts and examining their functional mechanisms.

Both traditions face certain challenges. Policy sciences often oversimplify complex issues, sacrificing uniqueness for the sake of comparability and, either explicitly or implicitly, neglecting the practical needs of professional knowledge. Conversely, professionally oriented disciplines tend to establish superficial research agendas based on standardized concepts, placing excessive emphasis on practice and treating practitioners' insights as privileged source of validation.

We believe that fostering dialogue between these traditions could provide a clearer perspective on key issues and open the door to new knowledge grounded in shared understanding. This could lead to policy analysis models with enhanced explanatory power, as well as professional design and implementation tools informed by scientific evidence.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The panel invites submissions in any of the following formats, or a combination of them:

1. **Conceptual Papers and Essays:** We welcome discussions on one or more approaches to studying public policy implementation and public management, especially those addressing the limitations and challenges identified earlier. Papers that propose ways to bridge the discussed "gap" are of particular interest.

2. **Literature Reviews/State-of-the-Art Analyses:** Comparative literature reviews that explore different approaches to public policy implementation and public management are encouraged. We seek analyses of their evolution within the intellectual history of these fields, along with their limitations and possibilities,

especially in relation to the identified "gap."

3. Scientific Research Papers: We invite papers presenting findings from single, multiple, or comparative case studies in public policy implementation and public management. We particularly value research that employs hybrid or heterodox methodological approaches.

4. Professional Evaluations: Submissions exploring evaluation methodologies and tools that effectively bridge the gap between impact and process evaluation are welcome. Papers aligned with the tradition of realistic evaluation will be especially appreciated.

5. Methodological Papers: We encourage analyses of the pros and cons of various approaches to public policy research. Papers that cross methodologies and discuss innovations arising from new information technologies are particularly welcome.

6. Draft Papers and Postgraduate Theses: We invite draft papers and postgraduate theses seeking the panel's space to revise or refine their conceptual and methodological approaches.

Format of the panel: On-site (online presentations also accepted)

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Session 1

Wednesday, July 2nd 13:45 to 15:45 (B2)

Gauging Good Governance: A Practical Tool for Implementation Studies

Mattia Casula (Università di Bologna)

Authors: Casula, Mattia (University of Bologna) - Shields P.M. (Texas State University) - Rangarajan Nandhini (Texas State University)

Public Administration uses outcomes and outputs to evaluate the important end products or impact of a policy. These evaluation systems use hypotheses-based evaluations to assess impact. But to pick-up-the-pieces of our fractured public service system, we also need tools that evaluate the implementation processes that lead to the outcomes we want. This paper bridges theory, methods and practice by introducing a practical tool that can be used in normative process evaluation. This tool - that we call the “Practical Ideal Type Framework” - is paired with a new research purpose “gauging” and applied to public administration program processes, especially when the effective implementation of specific administrative processes or programs has to be assessed. As a matter of fact, traditionally scholars have recognized three purposes for empirical research – exploration, description, and explanation. This paper advocates for a fourth purpose called gauging. The three dominant research purposes implicitly operate in the world of objectivity while gauging is a purpose nested in normative goals. Descriptive research asks “what” questions. Gauging instead asks “what should” questions such as, “What should be done to improve an administrative process?” We argue and show that this unnamed purpose is hidden in plain sight in common practices such as accreditation. Using pragmatism as a springboard, we introduce the practical ideal type framework to frame empirical research using the gauging purpose. The strengths and weaknesses of this design are examined and examples of its use are provided. The approach resonated with their experience and has produced research on topics such as urban wildlife fire mitigation, municipal housing affordability programs, use of social media by police, partnerships between local park systems and nonprofits, transitional programs for autistic youth, intergovernmental collaboration for domestic violence services, fire incident-command systems, non-profit board training, and intellectual and developmental disability services. In this paper, the role of normative research in good governance is explored, the practical ideal type framework (a type of normative design) is described, and it is compared to other (non-normative) frameworks such as hypotheses. Examples of applied research that gauge the implementation of administrative processes or programs are presented to illustrate the relevance of this research purpose and conceptual framework pairing for public management and policy research.

Policy Implementation and Program Delivery in Complex Multitiered Jurisdictions: The Case of Canada’s Agricultural Partnership Frameworks

Charles Conteh (Brock University)

At the most fundamental level, policy implementation intersects with public management in their shared focus on putting public policy goals into effect. The practice of policy implementation often involves breaking down vague and aspirational goals of policymakers into concrete programs, projects and plans and

executing them through a set of processes and activities. Similarly, public administration is about mobilizing the state's human, organizational, financial, and technical resources to accomplish its policy goals and objectives.

Since the 1970s, implementation research has undergone several generations of scholarship, with the most recent (fourth generation) marking a conceptual transformation in favour of focusing on concerted action across institutional boundaries in complex and dynamic political environments and policy subsystems (Sager et al 2024; Williams 2021; Hill and Hupe 2003). A similar trend is evident in public administration scholarship, where waves of public sector reforms since the 1980s have resulted in shifts from the Weberian bureaucratic architecture (traditional public administration) to market-like managerialism and, in more recent years, network-based models drawing on frameworks such as new public governance, new public service, Neo-Weberianism, public value management, and digital era governance (Krogh et al 2024; Osborne et al 2022; Klijn 2022).

The above shifts in policy implementation and public administration scholarships reflect broader seismic changes in the ideational frame, institutional structure and processes of the public sector from top-down technocratic approaches to more politicized, decentralized, devolved, partnership-driven and network-based models. Thus, over the past two decades, policy implementation research and public management have developed into multi-foci exercises investigating a multiplicity of actors, loci, and levels and seeking to understand and explain processes that transcend organizational and sectoral boundaries. Despite the shared trends and interests that have informed and energized the two research traditions, they have largely occupied separate worlds. The proposed paper seeks to advance the conceptual bridge between these two vibrant intellectual traditions by weaving together the policy implementation literature's rich analysis of the political complexities of the implementation phase of the "policy cycle" on the one hand and the public administration literature's accumulated insights into the inter-organizational and inter-jurisdictional structures and processes of joint action across institutional boundaries on the other.

Empirically, the paper will examine the case of Canada's multi-year intergovernmental Agricultural Policy Framework (APF) agreements jointly designed by the country's federal, provincial, and territorial governments and delivered in partnership with a constellation of nonstate actors. The paper will conclude with some inferences from the case study about the political, institutional, organizational and jurisdictional mechanisms of policy implementation and program delivery in complex multitiered polities. More importantly, it will highlight some theoretical, conceptual and practical implications of the convergence of shared knowledge that can result from integrating insights from policy implementation studies and public administration scholarship.

(Virtual) Resilient Implementation

Bettina Stauffer (University of Bern)

Resilient Implementation

We conceptualize and illustrate the phenomenon that implementation resists political and media pressure and remains committed to the goals of the policy as decided. We label this phenomenon as "resilient implementation". We argue that we can discern three conceptual pillars of resilient implementation: (1) organizational properties, (2) policy capacity, and (3) agency. We illustrate each strategy with a case from our empirical research.

Policy Implementation in Practice: A Praxiographic Exploration of Health Workers in India's National Primary Health Reforms

AREIBA ARIF (Jindal Global Business School, OPJGU)

Rama Mohana Turaga (Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad)

GEORGE KANDATHIL

Policy reforms in developing countries are increasingly shaped by New Public Management (NPM) principles, emphasizing technological integration, contractual employment, and performance-based compensation to enhance public service delivery. The Indian government's Ayushman Bharat (AB) initiative, aimed at providing comprehensive primary healthcare, represents one such NPM-driven reform. Situated at the intersection of policy implementation studies and public management, this study examines how policy reforms, as intentional artifacts, translate into everyday practices during the realization phase of policies. Specifically, it explores the transformation of health sub-centers into Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) and investigates how these reforms shape the practices of frontline health workers. While existing research highlights systemic challenges and workforce performance, it often overlooks the granular, practice-based perspectives of frontline health workers, central to successful implementation.

Adopting a "practice-based approach" (Bartels, 2018), this study positions the everyday practices of health workers as the unit of analysis to bridge theoretical and empirical gaps in policy implementation. Drawing on 14 months of ethnographic fieldwork, including participant observations, in-depth interviews, and policy document reviews, it employs Straussian grounded theory to analyze how health workers at HWCs interpret, engage with, and adapt policies within their unique contexts.

The analysis uncovered pathways of practice that map the progression and adaptation of health worker practices in response to specific events and contexts, offering a nuanced understanding of policy implementation processes. Community Health Officers (CHOs) as contractual workers and Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) as voluntary workers, demonstrated significant practice adoption and adaptation, navigating new responsibilities and aligning with directives from higher authorities. Conversely, permanent health workers exhibited limited adaptation, adhering to established practices. This divergence is theorized through the lens of precarity, advancing critical NPM literature by moving beyond its structural focus to emphasize relational dimensions influencing practice variations across employment types.

By emphasizing the interplay between employment conditions, relational precarity, and practice-based adaptations, this study bridges the traditions of Policy Implementation and Public Management, offering a nuanced perspective on the realization of policies within public organizations. It highlights the pivotal role of frontline health workers in mediating the tensions between policy design and on-ground implementation, demonstrating how their practices shape and are shaped by the contexts in which they operate. Furthermore, the study provides valuable theoretical insights and practical implications for designing and executing policy interventions, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of policy implementation processes in public systems.

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Session 2

Wednesday, July 2nd 16:00 to 18:00 (B2)

(Virtual) Organizational Expertise and Performance: A Knowledge Management Perspective in Local Governments

Sol Jeong (Ewha Womans University)

Yujin Choi (Ewha Womans University)

As decentralized governance expands, local governments face increasing pressure to independently address complex policy challenges. This demands more than individual competence; it requires local governments to function as knowledge-driven organizations capable of effectively managing and leveraging their organizational expertise. In South Korea, 30 years of decentralized governance since the introduction of local autonomy have significantly expanded the responsibilities of local governments. However, while research has extensively examined the roles of local councils and public officials, the organizational expertise of local governments—understood as their collective capacity to accumulate, share, and apply knowledge—remains underexplored.

Given this increasing complexity, knowledge management (KM) has emerged as a valuable framework for enhancing organizational expertise in public organizations. Although research on KM in public organizations has been limited, interest in this area has grown significantly since the 2000s. Studies have emphasized that organizational culture shapes knowledge transfer, organizational effectiveness, and other critical elements of policy implementation (Syed-Ikhasan & Rowland, 2004; Pee & Kankanhalli, 2016). Prior KM research has demonstrated that creating and sharing knowledge within and across organizations positively influences performance (Kim et al., 2014), and these findings suggest that KM principles are equally applicable to public organizations. However, despite its importance, KM in Korean local governments remains understudied (Choi et al., 2013; Kim & Yoon, 2019; Lee & Rhee, 2020).

To fill this gap in the literature, this study investigates the impact of knowledge capability on the performance of local governments through the lens of knowledge management. Specifically, we posit that the organizational expertise of local governments plays a pivotal role in enhancing their performance. Furthermore, we hypothesize that managerial practices aimed at strengthening knowledge capability serve as a moderating factor, amplifying the relationship between organizational expertise and performance.

This study utilizes survey data collected in 2022 from South Korean local government personnel and organizational managers, providing unique insights into the characteristics of local governments, such as organizational expertise, managerial practices, and performance. Through statistical analyses, the study identifies key patterns and relationships, focusing on how the knowledge capabilities of local governments contribute to improved performance. Our findings indicate that higher levels of expertise in local governments are associated with better performance perceptions and that knowledge-sharing cultures play a moderating role in this relationship. Based on these findings, the study highlights the administrative and policy implications of strengthening KM practices in local governments, ultimately contributing to enhanced public management and policy outcomes.

Overseeing Public Programs: Comparing Recovered Designs to Enhance Domain Knowledge in Public Management

Michael Barzelay (London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London)

Sérgio Seabra (Instituto de Ensino Superior de Brasília)

Implementing public programs is a functional challenge in government, as is overseeing public program implementation. Both are topics for inquiry in Public Management as are adjacent topics, such as anti-corruption institutions and initiatives and regulation inside government. Oftentimes, political science research is illuminating about institutional characteristics of oversight bodies and networked overseers, but less illuminating about how the functional challenges are tackled in organizational, technological, and communication terms. On the other hand, studies that provide information and commentary on the latter allow for limited cumulative learning because they don't have a methodology to do so. This paper will show how design recovery case studies can be carried out to achieve cumulative learning about how the function and purpose of overseeing program implementation can be fulfilled under varying task and contextual conditions. This will be a comparative case study paper where the cases are (a) the European Commission's overseeing the European Social Fund's implementation by Member states through monitoring, auditing, and discretionary budget execution, in an empowering legal context and (b) Brazil's Office of the Comptroller General's overseeing the use of Federal funds for local implementation of national programs and its collaborative work with law enforcement in investigating cases of suspected corruption by local officials. The cases will be separately analyzed using the same methodological research practice. The use of comparisons to enhance domain knowledge about overseeing public programs, a kind of endeavor in Public Management, is to be explored, discovered, and criticized in the paper.

Artefactual Studies as a Link Between Practice and Science: Insights from a Failed Policy Initiative. The Youth Meeting Centres of Argentine Patagonia, 2013-2015

Luciano Andrenacci (Universidad Nacional de General San Martín)

Questions about success and failure are often challenging for scientific approaches to public policy because they require normative judgments about the value scales used to assess social and political processes. Science tends to be more comfortable with descriptive language or quantified variables, where value judgments are either less apparent, easier to justify, or legitimized through "objective" comparisons.

In the professional realm of our discipline—particularly in program design and evaluation—such assessments are an integral part of our work. Design transforms a concept into an operational plan with a clear purpose, while evaluation assigns value to its outcomes. However, design is often detached from implementation, absolving it of responsibility for results. Similarly, evaluations are typically conducted externally and frequently fail to connect process and output with outcomes, as if the former were either irrelevant or purely mechanical.

This paper suggests there are ways to develop relevant knowledge about success and failure, useful for both the professional and the scientific uses of Public Administration. Herbert Alexander Simon's classic perspective presented social and political organizations as artificial organisms, or "artifacts." Unlike nature's organisms, artifacts are design creatures, deliberately developed and implemented phenomena. Much like natural organisms, they function as organizational interfaces, balancing internal operations with external adaptation to their environment and context. Human enterprises may or may not "satisfice" (to borrow Simon's other, better-known terminology), meaning they might not always be designed and implemented in a way that ensures their interfaces "fit" and successfully transform reality according to intent.

This paper proposes a framework for developing meaningful knowledge about success and failure that is useful for both the professional practice and scientific study of Public Administration. Herbert Alexander Simon's classic perspective views social and political organizations as artificial constructs or "artifacts." Unlike natural organisms, which evolve organically, artifacts are deliberately designed and implemented. Yet, like natural organisms, they function as organizational interfaces, balancing internal operations with external adaptation to their environment and context. Human enterprises do not always "satisfice" (to use Simon's well-known term), meaning they may not be designed and implemented in a way that ensures their interfaces "fit" and effectively transform reality according to their intended purpose.

This relatively simple yet powerful idea is valuable in organizational and administrative studies, as it offers both a scientific research objective (understanding how something functions or has functioned) and practical applications in planning, management, and evaluation. It has recently gained renewed academic attention through the work of Michael Barzelay and other scholars advocating for the use of design and

implementation case studies in both scientific and professional contexts.

The paper examines the case of the Youth Meeting Centres in Argentine Patagonia (the specific province is intentionally omitted), a project for which the author had technical responsibility in 2014. This perspective effectively explains the project's failure from a scientific standpoint, highlighting how its interface struggled to navigate the technical and political challenges posed by its requirements and context. Additionally, it offers valuable professional insights on how to assess context in design and implementation processes.

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Session 3

Thursday, July 3rd 16:00 to 18:00 (B4)

From framework to delivery: unpacking project management maturity in public sector infrastructure delivery management

Matshidiso Tseke (University of Pretoria)

Abstract

Introduction: Infrastructure delivery failures in government are often attributed to poor organisational performance, ineffective frameworks, and insufficient capacity within government departments. The Infrastructure Delivery Management System (IDMS) was introduced for the purpose of standardising delivery processes for infrastructure delivery and probing organisations to ensure the correct capacity to deliver infrastructure projects. Is capacity and a framework enough? How ready is the said capacity in departments to implement the IDMS? Why are we still seeing a number of failing projects despite a good framework for implementation?

Problem Statement: The Infrastructure Delivery Management System (IDMS) lacks mechanisms for maturity assessments at the project management level, which hinders infrastructure units from evaluating their effectiveness. Although the IDMS is a uniform national standard, departments function in varied environments, leading to a lack of tailored guidelines.

Objectives: This study aims to evaluate the project management maturity of Infrastructure Management Units (IMUs) within the Gauteng Departments of Education (GDE), Human Settlement (GDHS), and Social Development (GDSD) in relation to IDMS implementation. Secondary objectives include contextualizing theoretical frameworks for infrastructure delivery in Public Policy, comparing regulatory frameworks in South Africa with those in Kenya, Singapore, and the UK, identifying suitable maturity assessment frameworks for the IMUs, and exploring how maturity and contingency variables impact delivery performance.

Methodology: A mixed-methods approach with a sequential explanatory design will be employed to provide quantitative and qualitative insights. The study will focus on three departments involved in social infrastructure delivery, utilising purposive sampling for participant selection.

Implications for Public Policy: The study addresses a gap in maturity assessment research within Public Administration, leveraging theories from Project Management and Software Engineering. Findings and guidelines from this research could enhance the efficiency of infrastructure delivery and inform public policy frameworks.

Conclusion: Currently, the study is in the literature review phase, and no conclusions have been drawn yet.

Under Pressure - Higher education performance agreements as responses to ambiguous institutional pressures

Synne Lysberg (University of Bergen)

What happens when governments aim to implement new policies in a domain characterized by significant

autonomy of public organizations, and already saturated with policy activity? This is the key guiding question in the study of how the higher education system in Norway responded to a set of policy measures introduced over the last 10 years, with a particular focus on efforts aiming to increase diversity of higher education organizations.

The higher education system is conceptualized as a structured organizational field, while policy measures are seen as constituting specific institutional pressures towards higher education organizations (universities). The theoretical approach relies, first and foremost, on the concept "isomorphism" that has been widely used to explain the process of homogenization and how organizations within the same field over time become more similar to each other due to the coercive, mimetic or normative pressures they face (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). This is further nuanced by distinguishing between three different types of homogeneity - homogeneity of forms (isomorphism), homogeneity of names (isonymism), and homogeneity of practices (isopraxis) - as well as the recognition that within a structured organizational field 'travel of ideas' can lead to both homogeneity and heterogeneity (Erlingsdottir and Lindberg, 2005).

The Norwegian public higher education system represents a highly structured organizational field, making it a suitable context for examining the processes that may result in both homogenization and heterogenization. Similarly to other European countries, Norwegian higher education has been characterized by a shift towards a "steering at a distance" mode of governance, which supports more institutional autonomy, more evaluation, and more competition (Capano et al, 2019). This mode of governance has led to the introduction of procedural tools designed to balance centralized oversight by public authorities with decentralized management within universities (Paradeise et al, 2009), introducing procedural tools to diversify higher education systems, including performance agreements. These agreements are contracts between the government and individual higher education organizations, outlining specific goals to be achieved within a given period (de Boer et al., 2015).

The study focuses on the period between 2016 when the performance agreements were piloted in a handful of universities, to 2022 when all higher education organizations in Norway renegotiated their agreements with the ministry. While the performance agreements are the main focus, the analysis will consider them in the context of other instruments affecting the domain in the period under study (such as regulation and funding).

Using the performance agreements of all public Norwegian higher education organizations as data, I will analyze how they correspond to theoretical expectations regarding what kind of pressures these instruments represent, and the degree to which these pressures result in homogeneity of forms, names and practice. In addition to the empirical contribution specific to Norway, the study aims to contribute to the theoretical toolbox for studying policy implementation, by employing a nuanced institutionalist approach to studying policy instruments and their unintended consequences.

* This is a draft for the first article of my PhD dissertation investigating policy implementation in Norwegian higher education.

Research on the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Effect of Emergency Finance— The Moderating Role of Fiscal Autonomy

Xiaogang ZHU (Fudan University)

China is a country frequently affected by natural disasters. In the "VUCA" era, proactive prevention rather than passive response is an essential requirement for emergency management. Emergency finance serves as the foundation of emergency management activities, as emergency responses rely on the allocation of fiscal funds. The emergency finance budget also reflects the government's emphasis on prevention and preparedness.

This study, through an empirical analysis using a fixed-effects model, finds that increasing emergency finance budgets significantly reduces the impact of natural disasters. Emergency finance plays a crucial role in disaster risk reduction (DRR). Overall, greater local fiscal autonomy enhances local governments' DRR effectiveness, though different patterns emerge in the eastern region.

The study highlights the importance of shifting the focus forward in China's emergency finance system. Local governments should strengthen proactive disaster prevention efforts, avoid an overemphasis on disaster relief at the expense of prevention, and promote a balanced, comprehensive development of the emergency finance system throughout all stages of disaster management.