

CALL FOR PAPERS

Understanding the Transformation of European Public Administrations: changing structures and arrangements for coordination and collaboration

EGPA Study Group on Governance of Public Sector Organizations
Conference of the European Group of Public Administration (EGPA)
24-26 August 2016, Utrecht, Netherlands

The EGPA Study Group on Governance of Public Sector Organizations studies different aspects of public sector organizations, such as their origin, management, autonomy, control, accountability, specialization and coordination, their role in policy making and implementation, and performance. Different types of public sector organizations are studied, ranging from ministries, to semi-autonomous agencies, state-owned companies, government foundations, partnerships; and at different government levels (supranational, national, regional and local).

A core question addressed is what makes a well performing administrative apparatus, including issues of government capacity, such as coordination capacity, delivering capacity, regulative capacity, and analytical capacity; but also trust relations and legitimacy, such as input legitimacy, throughput legitimacy and output legitimacy as well as organizational reputation. The formal organizational arrangements and how they work in practice as well the public perceptions toward government bodies are therefore important issues to be discussed in this study group.

In 2016 we are especially interested in the **transformation of administrative structures**, both in contemporary reforms and changes, but also in *longitudinal developments* of formal organizations, their birth, maintenance and death, and how this is linked to environmental factors, like changing policy agendas, reform doctrines and crises, or to organization-specific factors like reputational threats, political salience and leadership change. For example, the effects of NPM reforms as well as current crises (financial crisis, migration, internal security) have led to a new wave of reforms in public sector organizations with different labels: post-NPM, collaborative government, 'whole of government', new Public Governance and neo-Weberian reforms. *Centers of government* have been (re-)strengthened and granted more coordinating powers. *Mergers and reorganizations* of existing organizations have taken place. Tasks have been re-clustered in for instance *shared service centers and other collaborative efficiency arrangements*. In many countries, new laws and regulations have been imposed to tighten controls. Budget cuts have led to reforms in personnel policies and downsizing of public sector organizations. The question also is raised what the *effect* is of these frequent waves of structural reforms in the last decades are at organizational and system level.

In addition, **coordination and collaboration** through network arrangements, lead agencies and partnerships within, between governments and with private/civil society actors are developing in the shadow of hierarchy to handle '**wicked issues**' characterized by complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty. 'Wicked issues' are often transboundary, representing a misfit between organizational structure and problem structure as seen in the areas of climate change, social problems or internal security. Thus, *crisis coordination and coordination through innovative platforms* to enhance the integration of public sector organizations are important objects of study as well as how new ICT-based technologies might foster such platforms. We are interested in *collaborative government* and how the development of new coordination practices in policy development as well as policy implementation and service delivery both within the public administration and with actors in civil society and the private sector transforms the governance, structure and culture of public sector organizations, and how they foster coherent and innovative policies and services.

These new reforms do not necessarily replace old reforms but might build on top of the old reforms, leading to complex and mixed arrangements. For instance, in the field of accountability hierarchical accountability has been combined with new forms of horizontal or diagonal accountability – to stakeholders, to audit institutions or to the public. Also, these reforms have created a new balance between autonomy and control, raising questions about the actual autonomy of government agencies and the accumulation and overlap between control instruments. Although the aim of the new reforms has been to create more coordination and to improve performance and quality of policy implementation, research into their results is scarce, and when carried out shows a mixed picture.

Consequently, we invite papers that present research findings on these processes of reform, on governance capacity and legitimacy, on new arrangements for public sector organizations, and their results. Different policy areas can be addressed such as internal security and crisis management, climate change, immigration, etc. Papers can be descriptive or explanatory, but they should have a clear conceptual and theoretical basis and meet appropriate methodological standards. Comparative papers (across time, countries, government levels or policy sectors) are particularly welcomed. The Study Group aims to expand its boundaries by inviting researchers from public administration and other disciplines like management research, organization studies, and public policy.

Practicalities

Practical information on the EGPA 2016 conference can be found at: www.egpa-conference2016.org/
Please submit a short abstract (max. 400 words) outlining: the title of the paper; a short description of the contents of the paper; the research method of your contribution, and the empirical material to be used; and name, affiliation, and contact information of the author(s) via <http://www.egpa-conference2016.org/> under “registration-submissions”.

Proposals should be uploaded through the submission website by April 15, 2016

Deadline for decision and selection of the accepted papers by the co-chairs: May 5, 2016

Deadline for submitting the complete papers: July 31, 2016

Papers will be made available on the conference website. Paper presenters will be expected to prepare a short presentation and to act as a discussant for at least one other paper. Please submit paper proposals in doc(x) or pdf format online through the Conference Website.

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