

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

May 24-26, 2019 / Prague, Czech Republic

Working Group 3: Public Administration Reform in CEE and CA

WG Coordinators

Diana-Camelia Iancu, Romania
Veronica Junjan, The Netherlands

Aims of the Working Group

The Working Group on Public Administration Reform in CEE and CA provides a forum for structured research and reflection on the dynamics of public administration reform in the NISPAcee target region countries. Specifically, the group focuses on patterns of reform in the EU New Member States (Central and Eastern Europe), the West Balkans, and in Central Asia. Public administration reform is defined as any restructuring of the administrative part of the public sector in order to solve organisational and/or societal problems associated with this structure and intended as promoting a professional, merit-based and neutral civil service.

Theoretical background of the Call 2019

The group focuses on the relationship between social science and policy making, which has been a recurrent topic in social science literature for some time. Weiss (1979:426) introduced the concept of "research utilisation", and proposed one of the first classifications of the mechanisms that influence the use of research in the policy process. With the New Public Management paradigm for reform in the public sector, the focus on actively using evidence-based knowledge in policy and administration increased significantly. The core assumption is that the decision-making process improves through the use of the research evidence (Head, 2016). Pollitt (2006: 259-261) discussed different types of knowledge provided by academics to practitioners, and proposed a range of roles performed by academics in relation to administrative practice. According to Pollitt (2006), the tasks of the academics in their relationship to the world of policy and administration include using scientific methods to structure the problem that needs to be addressed, help with concept clarification, act as facilitator/moderator, help with decision structuring by using appropriate scientific methods, question false assumptions, provide methodological advice on how to collect data, and to put forward advice based upon limited generalisations. A different direction of the research in this area focused on the transition from the traditional knowledge production systems where academics provide the answers to the problems posed by practice, towards investigating the communication between practitioners and academics, with the extension towards co-production, characterised by cooperation between the two worlds (Cepiku, 2011: 132, Gibbons et. al, 1994).

Expected contributions

Most of the research on this topic, however, is conducted in Anglo-Saxon countries and in Western Europe. Administrative reforms, particularly designed and implemented in a period of continuously shrinking resources, can benefit enormously from the knowledge provided by scientific research. Mechanisms facilitating (or impeding upon) incorporation of scientific knowledge in the policy process tend to function differently in various politico-administrative contexts. Strengthening the uptake of research in policy can also provide useful recommendations for practitioners in charge of designing, deciding, and implementing reforms. In this sense, relatively little is known about the use of scientific research in CEE and CA countries in regard to issues such as reform development, decision-making, and implementation.

For the Annual Conference 2019, the Working Group on PAR in CEE and CA is looking forward to extending the existing knowledge regarding research utilisation and use of research evidence in the CEE and CA contexts. **The group welcomes research proposals regarding the use of scientific research in policy development/policy design, decision-making, and implementation.**

Longitudinal studies, comparative case designs, and in-depth case studies documenting the use of research for policy development/policy design, decision-making, and implementation are of particular interest.

Special attention will be paid to Policy Design and Policy Practice in the European Integration Context.

Application link: <http://www.nispa.org/conference2019/application>

Deadline for applications: October 31, 2018

