

Consolidating the state of the art of post-NPM literature: a bibliometric approach

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Abstract: The aim of our paper is to consolidate the state of the art of academic research on modern post-NPM public governance models (PGM). A critical evaluation of post-NPM literature proves vital in order to provide the scientific foundations for overcoming complex policy issues, related to multi-level governance, delegation of powers and decentralization, business globalization, digitalization, the 4th industrial revolution, migrations, nationalism and interstate conflicts, environmental change and several others. Yet, the research problem faced when analysing the post-NPM literature is the lack of studies examining the multitude of possible public governance models (PGM) with sufficient comprehensiveness, especially in Central and Eastern European (CEE) states. In order to effectively address the research problem, a bibliometric analysis was performed, following three objectives: (i) an investigation of the evolution of the PGM literature, based on publication frequency (ii) an identification of the core publications and authors, (iii) a citation network analysis (a historiograph), indicating the relations among most-cited publications. It involved identification of over 16,000 publications in the Web of Science database, and narrowing down the latter into 100 most cited publications from 1994 to 2017 and application of the HistCite bibliometric analysis software, covering descriptive statistics, bibliometric indicators and historiographic citation analysis. The research results reveal growing research interest in the topic as supported by the bibliometric indicators. Also, important differences as regards the coverage and the diffusion of the individual post-NPM models are indicated. Namely, most publications focus on the 'governance' paradigm and subsequent critical rethinking, as indicated by several post-NPM modernization proposals. Furthermore, we have shown that such evaluation of governance and related doctrines may be biased in favour of subjective, pluralistic Western ideas about governance presumably limiting their impact within the CEE and several other regions. Hence, the regions' particularities (post-socialism, Rechtsstaat culture, EU membership, small states etc.) from the governance perspective must be further taken into account within the post-NPM literature.

Key words: public administration, public governance models, bibliometrics, historiography, European Union