

Bridging Public Management and Organization Theories

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Managing the public sector has always been a crucial theme for politicians and chief executives. When the public sector was expanding in the early 1950s the general belief was in planning and regulation; after the economic crisis in the 1980s the focus was on efficiency and incentives; and, in recent years, complex societal problems have spurred ideas about more coherent and inclusive public management. These developments, however, are not only the outcome of the ongoing quest to refine public management and solve current and pending economic and social problems, but they are undeniably infused with specific understandings of how a public sector organization works and how to institute organizational change in highly political contexts.

The purpose of this panel is to discuss and develop a more nuanced understanding of public management by explaining how different steering paradigms embed elements of organization theories. By steering paradigms we refer to the models and principles by which public authorities govern such as traditional public administration, new public management and the recently emerging public value management. By organization theory, we refer to the line of theories that engage organizational elements such as decision-making, power, practices, norms, meaning, professions, and institutional environments, offering various explanations about how an organization works.

The panel invites papers, which seek to develop conceptual intersections between steering paradigms and organization theories. The papers may address the following topics (not exclusively):

- How steering paradigms promote specific understandings of organizational change and innovation processes
- How ideals of coordination and collaboration in organizations varies according to steering paradigm
- How public leadership and management require different power and identity conditions
- How local organizing and implementation is facilitated differently due to the dominant steering paradigm
- How shifts between - or the co-existence of - steering paradigms create tensions in organizations

The panel aims at inviting participants' papers into a publication on the links between public management and organizational theories.

Literature

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