IRSPM Panel Proposal 2019

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Disruptive Technologies: Governance, Public Services and Regulation

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A number of leading technology commentators have argued that we are on the cusp of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. We have seen significant advancements made in fields such as robotics, artificial intelligence, additive manufacturing (better known as 3D printing), augmented reality, autonomous vehicles and quantum computing. Although none of these technologies are new, rapid developments in these fields mean that they are becoming more embedded within our everyday lives. Many of these innovations have not just helpful technological applications, but also social, environmental and economic implications and, as such, they raise important questions about the ways in which governments provide public services and govern society, with the potential to for significant dilemmas in terms of ethics, equity, information sharing, privacy, surveillance and regulation. They raise a myriad of societal risks, including concerns about privacy invasions and data breaches; issues of access to public services arising from the 'digital divide'; and issues about the deprivation and isolation of some groups in society arising from the 'chilling effect' of contemporary technologies.

New digital technologies offer possibilities for strengthening public administration through more efficient and effective service delivery and enhanced public-policy making but they are also 'disruptive' in that they challenge and modify existing norms, institutional behaviours and practices. In this respect the 'risks' are also of a systemic nature, they relate to political-democratic processes, such as the reallocation of power, control and ownership to non-governmental (including corporate) providers, rather than citizens or public authorities, and concealed privatization through algorithmic governance - technical solutions designed and

provided mostly by private sector providers leading to an evolution of traditionally accountability mechanisms. These issues highlight that the introduction of disruptive technologies inherently involve change and that public agencies need to develop responsible approaches to leading and managing disruption.

As Pollitt (2016) acknowledges, the public management academic community has often failed to give sufficient attention to aspects of technological change. This panel actively welcome papers that deal with the various facets of the governance of disruptive technologies to address this lacuna. The panel is keen to solicit both theoretical papers exploring the nature of disruption in the public service environment and empirical studies assessing the design and deployment of disruptive technologies in public service and policy contexts. We invite papers that address various issues of the governance of disruptive technologies including, but not limited to:

- Ethical implications of the introduction of disruptive technologies;
- Equity implications of disruptive technologies and the impact on communities
- Organizational disruption of new technologies;
- Regulating disruptive technologies;
- Disruptive impacts on professional standards;
- Ensuring privacy in the world of new technologies of care;
- Surveillance and technology;
- Developing public service capability in disruptive technologies;
- Public service workforce changes resulting from disruptive technologies;
- Case studies of the governance of disruptive technologies;

The aim of this panel is to bring together public management scholars with an interest in these new technologies to explore important themes relating to the preparedness of the public management practice and academic communities in adapting existing processes of governance to these new technologies.

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