

# Behavioural Public Administration

## Understanding of individuals in the public domain

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## *Panel outline*

Various scholars have called to integrate behavioural elements and psychological research with the study of public administration (e.g. Simon, 1947). Recently, an increasing number of scholars use psychological insights and methods to understand key public administration challenges (Grimmelikhuijsen, Jilke, Leth Olsen, & Tummers, 2017). The upcoming stream of literature that could be considered behavioural public administration (BPA) is growing steadily.

Theoretically, public administration scholars have increasingly start to borrow and extend theories from the field of psychology. This is evident from research into the actions of nurses in a public hospital by creating conditions with low and high public service motivation (e.g. Belle 2013) or research on the influence of competition and choice options in the public domain (Jilke, 2015).

Methodologically, public administration scholars have recognized the potential of experiments as an advancement of the methodological tool-kit of public administration (Bouwman & Grimmelikhuijsen, 2016; Margetts, 2011). Most importantly, experimental research enables systematic research of *causation*. Moreover, public administration could benefit from methodological innovations such as diary studies, critical incident analysis, and even functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI).

This panel focuses on the use of psychological insights within the field of public administration. This includes attitudes and judgments of citizens, the behaviour of citizens and public servants and the interaction of public sector actors at micro level. Therefore, the central question we pose is: How can we understand the attitudes and behaviour of individual citizens and civil servants in the public domain?

*We invite two types of submissions: regular full papers and research design papers.* The latter are shorter papers that only consist of introduction, theory and methods. This way researchers are encouraged to receive feedback early in the research process, at a time where changes in the design are still possible and useful.

### *In this panel, we welcome:*

- Papers that focus on psychological theories within the realm of public sector organizations
- Papers that employ sophisticated methods using the experimental logic of enquiry and other techniques of measurement.
- Papers that focus on the discrepancy between (self) reported and actual behaviour within the realm of public sector organizations
- Papers that test the validity of macro-level public administration theories with micro-level (individual) data

- Papers that develop and test psychometrically sound measurement-instruments, conduct meta-analyses or study the effects of experimental interventions.

*In terms of topics, we – for instance - welcome papers that focus on:*

- Citizen-state interactions
- Judgment and decision-making in public organizations
- Citizen satisfaction and trust in government
- The interpretation of performance information by citizens/public managers
- The effects of administrative reforms on citizens/public employees
- The use of behavioural science by and on public officials (for instance through nudges)
- Psychology of and pressures on public employees

This panel is related to the Public Management sub-theme of the NIG research program. Specifically, our panel is linked to the knowledge goal of Public Management in Professional Organizations as this panel aims to attract papers that study interactions with and attitudes towards actions of public organizations. Moreover, this panel is loosely connected to the Evaluation of impacts of public management reforms as reforms often have impacts at the individual level: public servants and citizens.

### *References*

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