

Call for papers

Reviving Implementation Research in Public Administration

Pre-conference workshop at the 2023 Public Management Research Conference

March 2023

Implementation research is at the core of public administration. The study of how policies get adopted, modified, neglected, and—sometimes—influence the life of citizens is in some ways all that public administration is about. Yet, for some years, if not decades, implementation research in public administration has been scattered and interrupted. Indeed, scholars have produced important research on the topic (e.g. O’Toole [2000](#); Riccucci [2005](#); May and Winter [2009](#); Thomann, Engen, and Tummers [2018](#); Andersen and Hvidman [2020](#); Sandfort and Moulton [2020](#); DellaVigna and Linos [2022](#); Bell et al. [2023](#)). However, the research has not united in the attempt to generate a common research agenda aimed at understanding how public administration may be designed to enhance policy implementation in order to ultimately benefit citizens.

In the meantime new, theoretical understandings and new methods have emerged. Theories on the interplay between rational and boundedly rational agents have proliferated, and

more rigorous methods—both interpretative and experimental—have proven their value in the study of various aspects of public administration. These new theories and methods have direct relevance for the study of implementation as a research agenda that exactly requires the concerted combination of all our understandings of the workings of the administration and the best methods for putting these theories to test.

With an increased acknowledgement of the separate challenge of implementing interventions that have proven successful at small scale (List 2022), reviving implementation research would be valuable both within and beyond public administration.

In this pre-conference workshop we invite all scholars that share our ambition in reviving the implementation research agenda to present and discuss their newest research. Presentations may range from new research ideas to new theories of implementation and to empirical studies of various aspects of the implementation process. The pre-conference workshop will thereby also serve as a new network for scholars of implementation.

The workshop will conclude with a roundtable discussion reflecting on the papers presented at the workshop and discussing the future of implementation research within public administration.

Presenters will be asked to serve as discussants on one of the other papers.

Paper proposal should be submitted to mvandersen@econ.au.dk no later than May 1, 2023.

Program

14:00	Introduction: "Reviving Implementation Research in Public Administration" <i>Jesper Asring Jessen-Hansen, Aarhus University</i>
14:30	Paper presentations with discussants
15:30	Break
16:00	Paper presentations with discussants
16:45	Roundtable "The Future of Implementation Research in Public Administration" <i>Simon Calmar Andersen, Aarhus University</i> <i>Elizabeth Bell, Florida State University</i> <i>Jodi Sandfort, University of Washington</i> <i>Søren Winter, VIVE – The Danish Center for Social Science Research</i> Moderator <i>Morten Hjortskov, VIVE – The Danish Center for Social Science Research</i>
17:30	The end

Organizers:

Simon Calmar Andersen, Aarhus University

Morten Hjortskov, VIVE – The Danish Center for Social Science Research

Jesper Asring Jessen-Hansen, Aarhus University

References

Andersen, Simon Calmar, and Ulrik Hvidman. 2020. "Can Reminders and Incentives Improve Implementation Within Government? Evidence from a Field Experiment." Number: muua022, *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* (muua022).

- Bell, Elizabeth, Julian Christensen, Pamela Herd, and Donald Moynihan. 2023. “Health in citizen-state interactions: How physical and mental health problems shape experiences of administrative burden and reduce take-up.” _eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/PublicAdministrationReview.12540> *Public Administration Review* 83 (2): 385–400.
- DellaVigna, Stefano, and Elizabeth Linos. 2022. “RCTs to Scale: Comprehensive Evidence from Two Nudge Units.” *Econometrica* 90 (1): 81–116.
- List, John A. 2022. *The Voltage Effect: How to Make Good Ideas Great and Great Ideas Scale*. New York: Currency.
- May, Peter J., and Søren C. Winter. 2009. “Politicians, Managers, and Street-Level Bureaucrats: Influences on Policy Implementation.” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 19 (3): 453–476.
- O’Toole, Laurence J., Jr. 2000. “Research on Policy Implementation: Assessment and Prospects.” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 10 (2): 263–288.
- Riccucci, Norma M. 2005. “Street-Level Bureaucrats and Intrastate Variation in the Implementation of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Policies.” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 15 (1): 89–111.
- Sandfort, Jodi R, and Stephanie Moulton. 2020. “Replication or Innovation? Structuration in Policy Implementation.” *Perspectives on Public Management and Governance* 3 (2): 141–154.
- Thomann, Eva, Nadine van Engen, and Lars Tummers. 2018. “The Necessity of Discretion: A Behavioral Evaluation of Bottom-Up Implementation Theory.” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 28 (4): 583–601.