

## **CALL FOR PAPERS - SYMPOSIUM**

# **Towards an Experimental Public Administration**

***DEADLINE: 15 October 2014***

### **Symposium Guest Editors**

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Experiments in the social sciences typically involve two main attributes: randomization and manipulation. By this, researchers hope to estimate the causal effect of a given manipulable treatment (versus no treatment) - to which experimental subjects are randomly allocated - on a given outcome (for example the effect of performance-related-pay on work motivation). While such a research strategy certainly comes with new challenges, it provides a clear-cut solution to empirical problems of endogeneity (such as reverse-causality, omitted variable bias, or selection bias) that seem endemic in a survey-oriented discipline like public administration. In doing so, an experimental research agenda can provide robust answers to old questions that are of theoretical importance, such as the test of an extended version of Niskanen's budget maximization model (Moynihan, 2013), the effect of governmental performance information and transparency on citizen's voting behavior and trust (Grimmelikhuijsen *et al.*, 2013; James, 2011), or on the relationship between public service motivation and job performance (Bellé, 2013). In other words, if well designed, experiments enrich the methodological toolbox of public administration research and help to increase usable knowledge. Thus it is not surprising that recent calls in the discipline have been made to more frequently *experiment* (e.g. Perry, 2012; Wright and Grant, 2010).

The use of experiments in public administration is slowly increasing. While commentators have indeed noted that experiments are nowadays more often utilized within the discipline (Bouwman and Grimmelikhuijsen, 2014), public administration still lags behind neighbouring fields such as psychology, political science, economics, or management studies (see Van de Walle and Van Ryzin, 2011). The lag may be particularly related to the fact that public administration has no experimental tradition and a limited overall acquaintance among students of public administration with the utilization of experiments. Thus, the envisaged symposium aims to provide an overview of a broad range of experiments within public administration, hoping to contribute to the development of an experimental tradition in public administration. It furthermore seeks to provide encouragement and inspiration for public administration scholars to more frequently *experiment* within the studies they conduct.

Papers are encouraged to apply a wide range of experimental methods (e.g. survey experiments, field experiments, laboratory experiments, but also quasi-experimental approaches), designs (e.g. multi-factorial designs, blocked randomization designs, within-subjects designs, or split ballots) and analytical techniques (e.g. Difference-in-Difference estimators, regression discontinuities, causal mediation analysis) to substantive fields of interest in public administration. Submissions of meta-analyses of experimental evidence and critical review essays about experiments are also encouraged.

Manuscripts should be submitted by **15 October 2014** to the coordinating guest editor at [jilke@fsw.eur.nl](mailto:jilke@fsw.eur.nl). After a first round of screening, selected authors will be invited to submit their manuscript directly to *PAR*'s Editorial Manager System. All manuscripts will be double-blind reviewed via *PAR*'s Editorial Manager System. A final decision on papers will be made by the journal after full peer review. Author's should follow *PAR*'s [style guidelines](#).

## References

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- Van de Walle, Steven and Gregg G. Van Ryzin (2011). The Order of Questions in a Survey on Citizen Satisfaction with Public Services: Lessons from a Split-ballot Experiment. *Public Administration* 89(4): 1436-1450.
- Wright, Bradley E. and Adam M. Grant (2010). Unanswered Questions about Public Service Motivation: Designing Research to Address Key Issues of Emergence and Effects. *Public Administration Review*, 70(5): 691-700.