

## Special Issue Call for Papers “Public Policy & Administration”

Public Policy Implementation and Public Organizations Management: One Problem, Two Ontologies

**Abstract Submission Deadline:** April 30, 2025

**Final Submission Deadline:** September 30, 2025

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### In short

This special issue aims to combine two strands of literature that have evolved separately yet converge upon state action: policy implementation and public management. We see policy implementation literature as the part of policy analysis that, drawing mostly from political science, focuses on what happens in the realization phase of policies. We regard public management as the part of public administration that focuses on the design and organizational aspects of policies as purposeful artifacts. Although both fields are unquestionable children of 20<sup>th</sup>-century policy sciences, they grew in the distinct environments provided by science and professional practice.

Our special issue aims to delve further into these developments and to provide a platform for the best work from both traditions to enter a new phase of exchanges. While Implementation Studies and Public Management define their focus differently and use different analytical tools, they can ultimately produce a common body of knowledge. This project originated from the International Public Policy Association (IPPA) Workshop in Guadalajara, Mexico in 2024. We are taking this opportunity, with the launch of a Call for Papers, to engage in a second round of productive discussions aimed at finalizing a special issue for your journal, "Public Policy & Administration."

### Presentation

As state actions became policy sciences' "public policies" and thus systematic subjects of scientific research and professional knowledge throughout the 20th century, the exploration of what occurs between the shaping of a political will and the resulting actions and understanding why and how a policy is formulated and its effectiveness (or lack thereof), became focal points of interest in Policy Analysis.

Two common-sense keywords, descriptive of the fundamental practices underlying plans and actions – design and implementation – evolved into sophisticated concepts around which numerous approaches vied to fulfill the promise of causal and useful knowledge.

However, these interests, as well as the conceptual bridges and architectures built upon them, do not seem to have lasted very long. For reasons yet to be fully documented and understood, they appear to have diverged along the final decades of the 20th Century and to have remained

surprisingly separate.

A dominant branch uses Policy Analysis as an umbrella term for models intended to provide a means for the comparative description, explanation, and prediction of public policies. However, successive generations of favored models have been unable to avoid oversimplifying policy processes, as singularity is sacrificed for comparability. On top of this, the academic community tends to be explicitly or implicitly dismissive of producing professional knowledge for policy design or evaluation as scientific *topos*.

In-depth policy process understanding seems to have fallen to the fringes of policy sciences, as it requires much research for limited conceptual benefit. Professionally oriented disciplines, on the other hand, build instruments on the shallow conceptual ground, exaggerating policy sectors' differentiation, overemphasizing practice, and underestimating theory, with practitioner's wisdom as the usual—and sometimes only—a source of validation.

Bridging the gap means aiming for policy analysis models with explanatory capabilities and professional design and implementation tools enriched by scientific evidence. The special issue aims to bring together those interested in this endeavor and willing to try it.

### **Expected results**

We anticipate that the Special Issue will greatly interest researchers who wish to gain a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between political and functional dimensions in policy implementation. By examining these dimensions, the SI aims to assist the research community in moving beyond—or even challenging—the limitations of traditional approaches to policy analysis that have developed over the years, along with the assumptions and methodologies that have long shaped the field. Notable classical and contemporary debates surrounding this perspective are highlighted in works by Barzelay (2019), Grindle (1980), Hill and Hupe (2002), Howlett (2019), and Ritz and Yerramsetti (2024).

We believe that this emerging dialogue can be enhanced by various scholarly contributions. These may include conceptual papers that present innovative theoretical perspectives, in-depth case studies that offer detailed insights into specific artifacts in their contexts, and comparative approaches that emphasize similarities and differences across experiences and settings. This research path on implementation studies appears to be highly productive for advancing the theory, methods, and practical applications of various management approaches to public policy implementation. This is evident from the recent work of prominent implementation scholars such as Hadorn and Sager (2024), Hudson et al. (2019), Casula (2024), Imperial (2021), May and Søren (2009), Moynihan and Soss (2014), and Pradhan et al. (2017).

### **Open call**

The Special Issue welcomes papers taking any of the following formats:

- 1) Research papers sharing the results of single/multiple/comparative case studies in public policy implementation and public management, particularly if they are hybrid/heterodox in their methodological approaches.
- 2) Theoretical, conceptual or methodological papers discussing one or more approaches to

studying public policy implementation and public management, and how they tackle the aforementioned limits and issues.

3) Literature reviews/states of the art comparatively regarding different approaches to public policy implementation and public management and their limits and possibilities.

### **Submission Process**

Manuscripts will be reviewed according to the *Public Policy and Administration* double-blind review process. Submissions should be prepared using the *Public Policy and Administration Manuscript Preparation Guidelines*.

Abstract proposal should be submitted, at the following link: <https://forms.office.com/e/zpyYzPAyMJ>.

Manuscripts should be submitted by the *Public Policy and Administration* Editorial Manager website.

For informal inquires related to the special Issue, proposed topics and potential fit, please contact the guest editors at: [landrenacci@unsam.edu.ar](mailto:landrenacci@unsam.edu.ar); [M.Barzelay@lse.ac.uk](mailto:M.Barzelay@lse.ac.uk); [mattia.casula@hotmail.it](mailto:mattia.casula@hotmail.it); [fritz.sager@unibe.ch](mailto:fritz.sager@unibe.ch).

### **Main references**

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