Experiments in Public Management Research: Methods and Opportunities

Pre-conference half day workshop

PMRA Public Management Research Conference, Aarhus University, Denmark

Wednesday, 22nd June 2016

Start 13.00: End: 16.45

(lunch from 12.00-13.00 at Bartholins Allé 8, Building 1321)

(buses to welcome reception will leave from Aarhus University to ARoS at 17.00)

Workshop Venue: Cellar Room 018, Building 1330 Bartholins Alle 7, 8000 Aarhus

Organizers

Oliver James, Department of Politics, University of Exeter, UK

Sebastian Jilke, School of Public Affairs and Administration, Rutgers University

Gregg Van Ryzin, School of Public Affairs and Administration, Rutgers University

Description

The increased use of experiments in public administration and management research offers much promise for informing theory, applying insightful methods, and building knowledge about substantive research topics. They also offer a means for evaluating public programs and informing policy. This workshop is aimed at researchers relatively new to experimentation and will provide some guidance both for those interested in conducting experiments or in critically interpreting experimental research. Furthermore, it will provide an opportunity for discussion and provide examples of work being done by researchers using experiments who will reflect on the methodological issues and practical logistical issues raised by their experimental work. It will draw on material including from the organizers’ edited book on the topic area (James, O., Jilke, S. and Van Ryzin, G. (eds) 2017 Experiments in Public Management Research, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press) which includes contributions from researchers at several institutions including Aarhus. It has three main aims:

1. To discuss and set out issues for the successful design and implementation of experiments, notably the role of intervention by researchers and experimental control, randomization in allocation of treatment or control, differences between experimental settings –especially laboratory, survey and field experiments and related issues of internal and external validity.

2. To suggest the emerging contribution of experiments to the public management literature. The contemporary contribution is especially evident in the topics of performance information’s use by managers and citizens, changes in administrative rule systems, the transparency of systems, the coproduction of public services, and public managers’ work motivations and related organizational behaviors. Relatedly, to discuss with experimental researchers the conceptual and more practical issues involved in running experiments.
3. To discuss and outline agendas for future experimental research. In so doing to identify potential topics and promising advances in experimental methods. In support of this aim, to promote research collaboration and the sharing of experiences and experiment protocols.

**Format of the workshop**

1300: Welcome and Introduction to Experimental Design, Implementation and Analysis

1345: Experimental design presentations and discussion (including presentations by participants)

1500-1515: Break (Approximate timing)

1515-1600: Experience with an Experimental Research Programme

1500-1645: Agenda for Experimental Research: Discussion involving the organisers and participants about the future agenda for experimental research and how public management can best make use of them, including how they can best be utilised to complement non-experimental methods.

No paper or other submissions are required by participants who are required to be registered for the main PMRC conference and who should sign up to participate in the workshop by emailing pmrc2016@ps.au.dk