

Conference of the European Group for Public Administration (EGPA)

8-10 September, 2010, Toulouse

**EGPA PERMANENT STUDY GROUP on
EU ADMINISTRATION AND MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE**

Call for Papers

**The Emerging Multilevel Administrative System in Europe:
Patterns, Problems and Perspectives**

The new EGPA Study Group on EU Administration and Multilevel Governance is pleased to invite interested scholars and practitioners to participate to the meeting of the Study Group during the EGPA Annual Conference, 8-10 September, 2010, Toulouse.

Introduction and rationale

Nowadays, the meaning of (national) “borders” in Europe has in many respects diminished and public bodies at all levels of government routinely have to work closely together in public policy making. We do however know little about how public administrations works beyond relatively clear-cut national contexts, which up to present are conceived of as providing the essential institutional, legitimacy, motivational, and managerial conditions for public services to be run efficiently and effectively as well as in equitable and sustainable ways.

The focus of the Study Group is on the emerging multilevel administrative system in Europe. What are its features, and how does it work? In other words, processes, actors and patterns of vertical differentiation (where the bodies of the European Union can be interpreted also as “hubs” of the new administrative system) as well as horizontal differentiation (administrative interchange in the context of semi-autonomous regulatory bodies at national and international levels) are focused. There are three major questions: what do we observe, how do we explain varying patterns of vertical and horizontal multilevel interaction and what is the impact of particular administrative interaction in various sectors of European public policy, i.e. what are the effects of administrative change in the multilevel system on public policy-making.

We profoundly agree with Johan Olsen that ‘public administration [is] a key institution of government, and understanding administrative change [is] an important, though often ignored, part of comprehending the ongoing transformations of the European political order’ (Olsen, 2006)

Topics for the EGPA Annual Conference, 8-10 September, Toulouse

There are two areas of foremost interest. First, we need to understand better how, why and with what effects supranational administrations change. Second, we need to connect this change at the “top” of the emerging multilevel administrative system in Europe with the study of vertical and horizontal administrative interaction and its implication for policy-making in various policy sectors.

In order to enable meaningful interdisciplinary analysis we invite in particular papers in the following areas:

I. In Search for a Paradigm – Multilevel Governance, European Administrative Space, Convergence, European Governance and Integration

We need to clarify *conceptually and theoretically* what are the phenomena that we focus, why they are worth being analyzed and what are the advantages or disadvantages of existing theoretical approaches to be employed in the analysis of EU multilevel administration.

Multi-Level Governance

Multilevel governance is an unfinished intellectual undertaking. The study group invites in particular theoretical reflections about the potential contribution public administration is able to make to this debate and its limitations. Do we need a particular administrative dimension of multilevel governance theory? What is the added value of an administrative dimension for other areas of research? Might a consolidated theory of administrative interaction in multilevel constellations be a corner stone for the development of a comprehensive theory of the administration of the EU? What are the features of the emerging multi-level administration (Egeberg, 2006)? And does the emergence of multi-level administration contribute to the constitution of what we may unitarily consider *the European Administrative Space*? And what are the borders of the European Administrative Space?

The European Administrative Space and Convergence

The notion of European Administrative Space is a multi-faceted one. One way of conceiving of it is to understand EAS as convergence on a common European model of public administration (Olsen, 2006). To some extent, this theme of investigation may be located within the stream of Europeanization studies, specifically where it focuses the Europeanization of public administration (Knill, 2001; Sverdrup, 1997 and 2002). Another way of looking at it is by investigating through a comparative approach the causes and the dynamics of administrative reforms, in both national administrations and the administration of EU institutions. We look for papers that, with different approaches, address these and similar questions: Is there evidence of such a convergence? In what forms (sectoral, or else)? To what extent has it occurred, and under what conditions does it occur? What can be the explanations, and what may be the implications? And more

broadly, what are alternatives modes and frameworks for conceptualizing, and empirically investigating, the European Administrative Space?

Administrative Fusion

The questions about convergence may be interpreted as just one perspective of research, albeit a very important one. Another perspective is that of (administrative) fusion (Trondal, 2007 and 2009), a notion that refers to situations in which outputs of decision-making processes occurring at the administrative level are determined more by integrated/fused administrative systems spanning across institutional borders (typically: EU and national, sometimes sub-national, administrations are ‘fused’ together), than by the hierarchical lines within individual administrations, thus aiming at describing and interpreting a trend in the transformations of administration in the European Union. Another employed term is that of administrative integration, a term sometimes utilized in approaches rooted in a European administrative law perspective, and concerned, *inter alia*, with the challenges posed to the functioning and to the accountability of European administration by the lack of a general ‘administrative procedure act’ (Hofmann and Turk, 2006). We search for papers that explore the different themes and issues of the European ‘fused’ or ‘integrated’ administration. More broadly, we welcome papers that address questions like:

Supranational Law as Encouragement and Constraint

The multilevel system is coined by overlapping and sometimes competing legal orders. There are, for example, direct legal constraints of the EU system of government, i.e. European treaty requirements, consequences of the principle of conferred competences (as opposed to the generality of state powers in constitutional systems), consequences of judicial review of EU administrative action (directly through the European Court of Justice and the EU level administration). There are also indirect constraints through national courts and tribunals for national and sub-national administrations. This is a field which is well known by practitioners in the EU institutions, but which is largely ignored by political science and public management research, whilst legal research often overlooks the management consequences of overlapping legal orders. The study group thus encourages multi-disciplinary discussion among political scientists, EU lawyers and scholars of public administration and management, in particular with respect to the analysis of overlapping legal orders and frameworks.

European Governance

The transformation of the administration and the European Administrative Space poses major issues for our understanding of European Governance (Eising and Kohler-Koch, 1999; Peters and Pierre, 2008). In governance approaches public institutions tend to be considered as one of many (societal) actors potentially participating in the broader processes of governance (though the ones that retain the fundamental prerogative of being able of reversing this state of affairs), and these public institutions are conceived of not as monolithic, but as a highly differentiated actor, with multiple components having various degrees of autonomy (Peters and Pierre, 2008). Can issues of ‘consistency’ of public policy, accountability of public institutions, responsiveness of public sector organizations raised in governance approaches to the EU be better understood through an

improved knowledge of the transformations of public administration in the EU? And in what respects? We search papers that address these and related issues.

Integration

Last but not least, we welcome papers aimed at exploring the potential insights that might come from the investigation of the transformations of EU administration for revisiting the literature on European integration, in all the different streams (revised neo-functional accounts, liberal intergovernmentalist perspective, federalist perspectives, ‘supranational’ governance approaches, and others).

II. Empirical Views into the Emerging Multi-Level Administrative System in Europe

The Lisbon reform treaty: implications for public administration

The Lisbon reform of the treaties has introduced major modifications in the institutional system. New ‘institutions’, like the European External Action Service, have been established, and novel dynamics in inter-organizational politics at the EU level are emerging. Another related area of interest regards the substantive and processual implications of the provision about administrative cooperation provided for by the Lisbon treaty, and what it may mean for collaboration and coordination in the EU at the administrative level (a topic so far mainly addressed in the literature on policy-making, e.g. in the growing policy network literature, Jordan and Schout, 2006, Peterson, 2008). We welcome papers exploring the administrative dimension of such major novelties that are reshaping the EU polity.

Management reforms of EU administration

The European Union has engaged in reforming its administrative bodies. At least five crucial questions have to be raised about recent supranational reform attempts: when and why were management reforms possible, which models have been employed, what is the direction of reforms, what are the specific implications for the respective organizations, and what are the likely impacts of organizational change for the EU policy process (and particularly: have the institutional and organizational bases for the European Commission to perform as policy entrepreneur in the EU changed? And the conditions to perform as supervisor of programme implementation?)

The rise of EU agencies and processes of administrative integration and disintegration in the European Union

Closer ties between various sub-groups of public bodies, for example national functional agencies that cooperate with their homologues in transnational networks, may, at the same time, bolster (supranational, transnational) integration and national disintegration as national bodies are getting more distant to their national practices and lose embeddedness in national structures. The study group encourages work about the conditions under which integration and disintegration phenomena emerge and with what effects for national and supranational policy-making.

More specifically, the growing phenomenon of EU agencies requires investigation: we welcome papers studying the various features of EU agencies and addressing questions about the way EU agencies will influence the European Multi-Level Administration and affect public policy-making.

Heterogeneity and Similarities in Multilevel Administrative Interaction

The study group urges for analyses that attempt to conceptualise and categorise policy types and patterns of multilevel administrative interaction: whether the EU administration is engaged only in policy formulation or also in policy supervision, the administering of funds, etc. may make a huge difference in terms of what kind of patterns of administrative interaction we would expect. Such questions ask for a policy-analytical approach and thus the study groups decidedly invites policy area specialists to reflect about how administrative interaction in their particular fields works and how administrative patterns and features reconnect to developments at European and national level in a more general perspectives.

Invited Speakers

The opening Keynote Speech of the meeting of the EGPA Permanent Study Group will be delivered by Prof. Hussein Kassim, University of East Anglia, UK (subject to final confirmation).

The concluding Speech will be delivered by prof. Adriaan Schout, Clingendael, the Netherlands Institute of International Relations (subject to final confirmation).

Practicalities:

The EGPA Study Group on EU Administration and Multi-Level Governance will aim for publication of high-quality papers according to three main lines: by activating special issues of peer-reviewed journals; by creating opportunities for the publication of single papers; and/or by activating contacts with top level publishers for thematic edited books.

We welcome abstracts (500 words maximum) to address one of the issues mentioned above. Abstracts must be sent to the workshop conveners no later than **the 1st of May 2010**. Abstracts should include a short description of the contents of the paper, and clearly specify the *theoretical framework*, the *research method* and the *empirical basis* of the work. Notification of acceptance will be no later than **the 31st of May 2010**. Final papers are due by **the 1st of August 2010** and should not exceed 8,000 words. Papers will be made available on the conference web page of the Study Group.

For general information, please visit the conference website at:

<http://www.egpa2010.com/>

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