

## XXIII IRSPM Annual Conference

### Panel proposal

# Public Service Ethics for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

#### Chairs

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The century is still less than two decades old yet already much of the world has seen a huge shift in social and public values. Often the dynamic has been towards progressive change, perhaps most notably the *#metoo* movement and increasing awareness and acceptance of LGBT rights. More recently, however, some commentators have noted a tilt towards authoritarian values that have perhaps been both cause and effect on the rise of “strongman” political leaders in both Western and Eastern jurisdictions.

Public management continues to evolve alongside these changes. We have seen myriad responses to major change movements: individualization, isolationism, globalization, information technology, and many more. As a result, institutions disaggregate and realign in increasingly complex forms; hybridization and collaboration are becoming increasingly the norm while more formal institutional arrangements wither.

Remaining at the heart of each of these manifestations, however, is the concept of public ethics. As new forms of governance have emerged we have witnessed a parallel rise in the ways we try to understand integrity and ethics. We have witnessed the development of new integrity systems at the micro, meso and macro level; from new forms of organisation to supra-national bodies and initiatives. This special issue sets out to explore the implications of such movements for ethics in public management, theory and practice.

For despite these trends, or perhaps because of them, scientific evidence about the nature, legitimacy, and ethics of new public management forms remains under-researched. As we move forward into the millennium the normative dimensions of public management need to be better understood and more clearly articulated.

This call for papers is intended to ask what a genuinely forward-looking, 21<sup>st</sup> century public service ethics looks like. In particular, we are interested in the following questions:

- Does public service ethics need to retain its own identity? Is it true to suggest that there is a discrete subset of ethics that we can label ‘public service ethics’ or do we need a more general understanding of ethics that we can apply to different contexts?

- How does public service ethics respond to technological change? From the use of drones as a means of warfare, to the potential impacts on public policy from increased robotization, what are the new ethical dilemmas that public servants face and how should they work through them?
- What are the challenges of new forms of policy analysis and implementation? Has the rise of big data analytics brought up its own challenges? What are the ethical frailties behind the rise of behavioural insights?
- Does social change impact on the legitimacy of the public service? Have increasingly diverse forms of public participation had an influence on new forms of legitimacy in public governance, and if so how? Has the continuing reconceptualization of the citizen (as client, co-creator customer, etc.) impacted upon the way we frame ethical relationships with the state?
- Is there room for a new institutionalism? How have institutions coped with 21st century ethical demands? How have new institutional forms evolved to deal with ethical conduct, anti-corruption activity, and standards of behaviour? How does this sit alongside other structural approaches, or individual behavioural approaches?
- How does public ethics and integrity reflect in the management of employment relationships (employment practices, attraction and retention, and performance management)? Will different types of employees be attracted to the new public sector environment and if so, what attracts them to work in the new environment and what will happen to the psychological contract of those who do not meet the new expectations?
- Are there regional differences in the human resource implications in the era of public ethics and integrity?

Papers from this panel may be invited to submit to a special issue of *Public Management Review*, entitled “Public Service Ethics for the 21st Century”. Submission for the special issue will be October 2019.