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"LocRef" Projects & Publications

"LocRef" Publication Projects (selection)

Edited volumes (published by Palgrave, "Governance and Public Management" series):

"Local Public Sector Reforms in Times of Crisis: National Trajectories and International Comparisons", eds. Sabine Kuhlmann and Geert Bouckaert.

"Provision of public and social services in Europe. From public to private – and reverse or beyond?", eds. Hellmut Wollmann, Gérard Marcou, Ivan Kopric.

"The European Mayor II: Political Leaders in the Changing Context of Local Democracy", eds. Hubert Heinelt, Annick Magnier, Herwig Reynard.

Local Authority Index (LAI)

"LocRef" scholars elaborate a Local Authority Index (LAI) to analyze changes in the degree of decentralization of 38 countries within Europe.

"LocRef" POLLEADER Survey

The survey project focuses on European mayors and their attitudes on local public sector reforms in 29 countries.

Contact

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COST Action IS 1207 "Local Public Sector Reforms: An International Comparison (LocRef)"

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Grant Holder Institution University of Potsdam, Germany

Period: 03/2013 - 03/2017



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Research Outline

Local governments all over Europe are in a period of increased reform activity and intensity, especially since they have been the level of government most seriously affected by the still expanding global financial and economic crisis in some countries. Against this background, it is a cause for concern and also criticism that the analysis of the local level is absent in the current comparative research and literature concerning public sector modernization. "LocRef" is meant to assess local public sector reforms from a cross-country comparative perspective, which has so far not been done within a broader research network.

The overarching question of the Action is:

Which approaches and effects of local public sector reform can be identified from an international comparative perspective, how can these be explained and what lessons can be drawn for policy making?

About the Action

"LocRef" is an international research network on local public sector reforms with more than 250 senior and early stage researchers in 32 countries. Based on a shared European perspective, it brings together researchers and practitioners of all stages of local public sector reforms in order to jointly assess the hitherto scattered and dispersed information bases on local public sector reforms, to generate new comparative knowledge, and develop policy-relevant frameworks for the design of future modernization processes in Europe. The Action provides an excellent platform for promoting the careers of young and early stage researchers.

Networking Activities & Instruments:

- International workshops and conferences
- PhD-Training Schools
- High level seminars
- Short Term Scientific Missions (research stays for scholars in partner institutions)
- Joint publications and policy papers



Governance Structure

The Actions' Management Committee (MC) consists of 60 European scholars (up to two representatives per participating country) and is in charge of developing, supervising, and implementing the Action. The MC is supported by four Working Groups (WG) studying various types of reforms.

WG I: External (Post-) NPM

Externalizations of local services to private or non-profit providers (contracting-out, functional/asset privatization, corporatization, competitive tendering), re-municipalization and re-integration of previously externalized local functions

WG II: Internal (Post-) NPM

Performance orientation and target steering, strategies of internal re-organization, process re-engineering, new budgeting and accounting systems, and Human Resource-related modernization, e.g. performance related pay

WG III: Territorial/Functional Re-Scaling

Territorial reforms: amalgamations and inter-local cooperation; functional reforms: political decentralization, administrative decentralization and de-concentration of tasks

WG IV: Democratic Renewal

Strengthening of direct democracy (local referenda, direct election/recall of local executives), new forms of participatory and cooperative democracy on the other (citizen forums, consultations, youth/ neighborhood councils, E-democracy)

Management Committee

| WG I: External (Post-) NPM | | WG II: Internal (Post-) NPM | |
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| Ivan Kopric | HR | Riccardo Mussari | IT |
| Hellmut Wollmann | DE | Emil Turc | FR |
| Gérard Marcou | FR | Hilde Bjorna | NO |
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| | | Itai Beeri | IL |
| | | Yüksel Demirkaya | TR |
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