

Call for papers for special issue

Public Policies and Responses of Various Policy Actors during the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020: Experience and preliminary lessons from the Czech Republic and Slovakia

Guest editors:



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Word count:

8,000 max. (incl. references)

Timetable:

- 10 January 2021: submission of abstracts, working titles and keywords to the corresponding guest editor (daniel.klimovsky@uniba.sk)
- 30 January 2021: submission of full papers (for internal review by the guest editors of the special issue) <https://editorial.upce.cz/scipap>
- 10 February 2021: final decisions of the guest editors (the positively evaluated papers will be submitted further to the SciPap for double blind review)
- 25 February 2021: results of the 1st round review
- 5 March 2021: revision according to the requirements and/or recommendations of the 1st round review, and re-submission
- 15 March 2021: results of the 2nd round review
- 31 March 2021: finalization
- 15 April 2021: online publication

Context and expected contents:

This call is issued in the context of enormous public policy challenges raised by the COVID-19 pandemic. In general, the pandemic offers a unique natural experiment in comparative public policy and public administration. Both the Czech Republic and Slovakia were really successful in managing the spread of COVID-19 during the first phase of the pandemic in spring 2020, but at the cost of heavy burden on their national economics and by the questionable restrictions of some human rights. However, both countries totally failed to prevent the expected second phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, some relevant data from September and October 2020 showed that the countries lost their positions of leaders in fighting against the pandemic and they dropped down in international rankings among the worst cases worldwide. While the Government of the Czech Republic implemented a hard nationwide lockdown, the Slovak Government decided to combine a soft lockdown with a blanket testing of its entire population. In the late October, Slovakia became the first EU country to attempt a similar feat. Obviously, the eyes of many epidemiologists and medical scientists were focused on these small EU countries thanks to these measures. However, their policy design, implementation as well as effects were carefully observed by various social scientists, too.

The already existing knowledge as well as experience opens many different directions for academic research. The crisis evoked by the pandemic has enhanced, for example, the visibility of public value, a concept now representing a superordinate goal uniting all sectors. It has also tested policy-making and administrative capacities of all governments. Obviously, some policies were affected more than the others but proper research is needed in all cases. A positive and/or negative role of traditional media and social media in preventing the infection spread is another interesting question that needs to be reflected by relevant research. There is much to learn about public private interface, public service management and service delivery. Last but not least all these phenomena have already had significant impacts on public budgeting at all levels, because high level of uncertainty leads always to some difficulties in planning and strategic decision making.

This special issue is focused on experience of the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Both countries have at least partly followed neoliberal ideology when solving critical impacts of the pandemic crisis on their business sectors. Resilient services should be built by allowing for innovation, transformation and enrichment of processes and human activities. However, are these countries working on public service resilience during the COVID-19 era? And what resilience could be expected towards allocation and distribution of public resources? We call for diverse scholarly contributions. We encourage especially empirical contributions on different aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Czech Republic and Slovakia with special regard to various public policies and related budgeting challenges as well as other social, political and economic issues. For example, the following issues can be covered:

- What have we learned from the first phase and/or the second phase of the COVID-19 from perspective of public policy, public management and public administration?
- To what extent made the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic strategic decision making more difficult? To what extent and in what ways did it influence public budgeting at all levels?
- How did governments at various levels manage to adopt various measures while fighting against the COVID-19 spread? What are the limitations and/or requirements of political and administrative leadership in the face of scientific evidence about the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What shifts in powers could be related to blame avoidance or credit claiming strategies between various levels of government and how did it influence vertical/horizontal intergovernmental relations?
- How public policies and public services responded to the crisis? What impact could the pandemic have for the future design of public services?
- What alternative ways of public service delivery (co-production, out-sourcing, etc.) were used by the governments during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What innovation solutions did we experience in the field of public service delivery through digital infrastructure and digital inclusion?
- What are the short-term effects (and possible long-term effects) of the policy measures taken during the COVID-19 pandemic on equity and quality of democracy.
- Is it possible to identify some similarities if we compare the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic with the recent global financial crisis? What kind of similarities should be taken into account by relevant decision makers at different political levels?