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Paradigmatic dimensions of local public management research: The path to reliable managerial decisions


ПАРАДИГМАТИЧНІ ВИМІРИ ДОСЛІДЖЕНЬ МІСЦЕВОГО ПУБЛІЧНОГО УПРАВЛІННЯ: ШЛЯХ ДО НАДІЙНИХ УПРАВЛІНСЬКИХ РІШЕНЬ

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Abstract


Explicated the need to compare the established paradigmatic ideas in local public management and in the political science research environment. Particular attention is paid to the important issue of the project relationship establishing between the paradigmatic approach and the subject field of public management research. Essential discrepancies between the key paradigmatic approaches to local public management and policy making at the local level are revealed. Stated the necessity of essential empirical material evaluation for further research and possibly improvement of the regulatory framework for local public management. Proved that the particular author's (actors') main reason for conducting paradigmatic discussions on local public management is the need to communicate with a powerful research tradition. It is concluded that, the success of public policies and their impact on the lives of citizens depends on an understanding of


Анотація

Висвітлено необхідність порівняння встановлених парадигматичних ідей у місцевому державному управлінні та у середовищі політичних досліджень. Особлива увага приділяється важливому питанню встановлення проектних відносин між парадигматичним підходом та предметною областю досліджень у сфері державного управління. Виявлено суттєві розбіжності між ключовими парадигматичними підходами до місцевого державного управління та формування політики на місцевому рівні. Зазначено необхідність оцінки суттєвого емпіричного матеріалу для подальших досліджень та можливого вдосконалення нормативної бази для місцевого державного управління. Доведено, що головною причиною проведення парадигматичних дискусій щодо місцевого державного управління конкретним автором (акторами) є необхідність комунікації з

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epistemic foundations. Established that different paradigmatic alternatives of public decisions are determined on the basis of scientific data. Considered the most optimal way of applying any paradigmatic approaches is the analysis of the expediency of applying the methodology and forecasting the achievement of scientific novelty or specific results of management projects.

Keywords: paradigmatic foundations, decision-making, local public management, local politics, epistemic freedom.

Introduction

In contemporary Ukraine and all over the world obtained the significant number of scientific schools of public management researches. They generally adhere to the principles of “multiparadigmaticity”: the validity and effectiveness of all scientific paradigms. However, the political and public administration sciences of Ukraine faces the task of unifying the meaning of paradigms of local public management research. This is necessary, firstly, in order to finally remove the influence of unreal (irrational, ideologically determined) methodological and theoretical ideas. Secondly, it is necessary to intensify research on consolidated democracy in Ukraine and other transitive countries and political aspects of sustainable development. For this, it is obvious that there is a need to compare the established paradigmatic ideas in Ukraine and in the leading countries of the political and public administration interdisciplinary science environment.

The paradigmatic approaches have a broader meaning than the theoretical foundations of research. It covers the author's research problem subjective choice, his or her values and author's world view guidelines. Also it embraces the possibilities of research results predicting and planning (even before it begins). An important issue of the project is relationship establishing between the paradigmatic approach and the subject field of public management research. It is also expedient to find out the key foundations of paradigmatic approach defining for different scientific schools.

The orientation of paradigmatic approaches of local public management research to a certain methodology becomes fundamentally important. This should provide a more accurate prediction

потужною дослідницькою традицією. Зроблено висновок, що успіх державної політики та її вплив на життя громадян залежить від розуміння епістемологічних основ. Встановлено, що різні парадигматичні альтернативи державних рішень визначаються на основі наукових даних. Розглянуто найбільш оптимальний спосіб застосування будь-яких парадигматичних підходів як аналіз доцільності застосування методології та прогнозування досягнення наукової новизни або конкретних результатів управлінських проектів.

Ключові слова: парадигматичні основи, прийняття рішень, місцеве державне управління, місцева політика, епістемологічна свобода.

of research results. As a result of the research, a more standardized “algorithm” for the local public management research work should be established, which will probably consist of the following: 1) author's own paradigm definition; 2) subject area clarification; 3) optimal methodology identification; 4) selection of adequate methods.

The purpose of the article is to identify differences and collect key benefits in the interpretation and application of paradigmatic principles of local public management researches.

Literature Review

The problem of paradigmatic prerequisites of political management is of interest to a number of modern authors. For instance, the study of A. Pegan delves into strategic planning methods for local government co-creation, drawing evidence from Croatia and Slovenia. Through empirical analysis, it sheds light on effective strategies for fostering collaboration between governments and citizens in the local context (Pegan, 2023). E. D. Schoburgh critically examines the concept of the «new orthodoxy» in local governance within the Caribbean context, questioning whether it represents a genuine paradigm shift or merely rhetorical discourse. She offers insights into the dynamics of local governance and its evolution in the region (Schoburgh, 2009). N. Baptista, H. Alves, N. Matos synthesize existing research on the engagement of public sector organizations in co-creation activities with citizens. It explores the various benefits, drivers, and barriers associated with such collaborative endeavors, providing a comprehensive overview of the subject (Baptista et al., 2020). (David et al., 2023). employ the

PRISMA methodology to analyze and synthesize existing literature on digital technology adoption strategies by local governments. It offers insights into the factors influencing the adoption of digital technologies and provides recommendations for enhancing technological uptake in local governance (David et al., 2023). K. Gurdon-Nagy (2021) examines whether local governments are drivers or followers of broader societal transformations. She contributes to the understanding of the relationship between local governance and societal change within the Hungarian context. Despite these achievements, there is a need to consider paradigmatic discussions within the framework of the administrative and management components of public management at the local level.

Methodology of the research

The process of data systematization regarding paradigmatic dimensions in local public management research was carried out on the basis of a comprehensive analysis of the main philosophical and political paradigms and the decision-making agenda of local political management. The systematic approach revealed the regularity and expediency of the application of certain paradigmatic dimensions and prerequisites for clarifying the results of their application both in the framework of research and in the framework of practical managerial activities. The paper analyzes the empirical agenda of political decision-making in contemporary Ukraine during the war in a comparative context with modern sustainable democracies. The modern management community at the local level in the broadest sense (leaders and performers), which carries out certain research procedures within the framework of strategic decision-making at the local level, acted as the main actors, choosing the paradigmatic dimension. The development of projective procedures for the analysis of the managerial paradigms of the context at the local level was carried out on the basis of the application of inductive and hypothetical-deductive methods, as well as prognostic analysis. They made possible to reveal the need for further identification of the choice of a paradigmatic dimension by researchers and managers within the framework of scientific support for decision-making.

Results and Discussion

The significance of the paradigms evaluation among other things is revealed in the paradigmatic foundations` of political science

research identification. It provides essential empirical material for further research and possibly improvement of the regulatory framework for local public management. In particular, the real features and essential peculiarities of the paradigmatic choice of both postgraduate students and their supervisors will be revealed. This will make possible to raise questions about “decision-making standards” within the framework of local public management and further improve the theoretical and methodological basis. The question of the fundamentals` formation of an integral political theory (Grand Theory) also will be raised.

Collecting data on the content of the paradigmatic dimension of local public management research will allow to more fully realize the topic of scientific and scientific research. There is also an ambitious opportunity for local public management researchers and local governing actors to improve their understanding of the author`s (actor`s) paradigm choice as part of their research.

The obtained conclusions and recommendations regarding the «algorithmization» (algorithm providing) and/or streamlining of the theoretical foundations and methodology of political science/public administration research will be used in local public management modernization. The effectiveness of conclusions and recommendations evaluation will be possible after the research results publication in scientific publications, methodological manuals and monographic studies. The particular author`s (actors`) main reason for conducting paradigmatic discussions on local public management is the need to communicate with a powerful research tradition.

The local public management research paradigm evaluation could be planned as part of a series of interviews with leading local public management actors within the research prospective project. The first step is to clarify the content of paradigmatic approaches and their significance for local public management. Also, in the form of an open question, they will be asked to provide their own definition of the paradigmatic approach in political science research. Also a question regarding research and criteria for determining the optimal methodology based on a paradigmatic approach will be included. It will outline the preferences` of scientists, who are postgraduate students` supervisors. The result of the expert interview will be the identification of the most significant and used paradigmatic approaches in political studies. An idea will also

be formed about the possibility of transition from the paradigmatic level to the methodological level within the contemporary political and public administration sciences' framework.

Epistemic foundations of public policy on local level grounds on the provisions, which are underlying the understanding, analysis and formulation of political decisions in the sphere of local public governing. It is a broad field that encompasses various scientific disciplines, such as political science, sociology, economics, law, and others, which help to understand complex social problems and ways to solve them. This is especially evident against the background of the ontological space in which a list of alternatives for making local policy decisions is formed. As appropriately noted M. Paananena, M. Alasuutarib, K. Karilaa, and A. Siippainen, when utilizing ontological authority, actor presents or frames the nature of the situation as an objective fact for, example, by using research or statistics. The second is moral authority, which draws on generally approved-of and morally binding norms, such as human rights. The third is capacity-based authority, which depends on the perceived ability of an actor to condition the actions of other actors (e.g. by imposing sanctions). The fourth is charisma, which is based on referring to the unique character of an actor, be it a person or an organization. The four forms of epistemic work are mutually intertwined and can – and often do – accumulate meaning. In other words, an actor can utilise more than one aspect of epistemic work to support their argument (Paananena et al., 2019).

One of the key paradigmatic foundations of public policy is political theory, which studies political institutions, processes, and behavior, revealing decision-making mechanisms and interactions between different actors in a political system. Political economy also plays an important role in helping to understand the economic aspects of political decisions and their impact on society. The materials of the debate on the epistemic examination of local politics, worked out M. Paananena, M. Alasuutarib, K. Karilaa, and A. Siippainen make it possible to assert that in discussing these shared aims and norms, moral authority was used to argue for the obligation to think about the 'rights' or 'equality' of the children. Even though equality and children's rights were shared aims among the speakers, references to moral authority were made only by those who opposed the restrictions. Claims in relation to moral authorities, such as references to the constitution and the EU, were made when some speakers argued that savings

could not be the only criterion to influence decision-making. Other norms, such as the rights of children, had to be taken into account (Paananena et al., 2019).

Sociology and psychology disciplinary paradigms are important for analyzing society's behavior and perceptions, and for understanding what factors influence political decision-making. Jurisprudence provides the basis for the development of laws and regulations that underlie public policy. The example of the discussion about the organization of education at the local level shows that interdisciplinary epistemic (paradigmatic) synthesis is important for the development of a consensus and mutually acceptable decision at the local level. As Finnish scholars point out, in the council debates, the first construction considered ECEC (*Early childhood education and care*) as an efficient method of ensuring human capital development – primarily, ECEC fulfils an educational function. ECEC is constructed as being good for child development. However, it is considered a public expense that should be reduced. According to this construction, parents utilise full-time day-care services when they do not need to. Moreover, it was posited that the restriction of unconditional entitlement to full-time day-care services would result in considerable savings while leading to disruptive changes to the practices or lives of the families affected (Paananena et al., 2019).

An interdisciplinary approach to the study of public policy makes it possible to understand the complexity of social problems and find effective solutions to solve them. The success of public policies and their impact on the lives of citizens depends on an understanding of epistemic foundations. Choosing the right political alternatives based on epistemological analysis involves the use of multidisciplinary (for example, economic and legal) scientific data and a mental strategy to understand the essence of the problem and possible solutions. In this regard, the interdisciplinary paradigmatic matrix allows to choose the right solution even under the condition of equal influence of two equal factors of influence on the local situation. M. Ylönen, J. Jaakkola and L. Saari truly resumed, that the 2010s showed a further extension of the epistemic shift from lawyers to economists, which completed the long-term transformation from legalism to economism in the Finnish corporate tax policy. First, the growing reliance on economics in policy-making enabled anchoring policy proposals on economics literature. The normalization of this practice contributed to a situation where the MoF's

leadership was able to bypass their own Tax Department to advance a major corporate tax cut. Second, the normalization of the use of economics enabled designing tax policy with future-oriented estimates that relied on assumptions drawn from the economic theory (Ylönen et al., 2021).

Finding optimal solutions in local public administration is a complex and multifaceted process that requires the analysis of various aspects, taking into account the interests of various parties and the ability to choose the most effective strategies. The paradigmatic (epistemic) compatibility of some academic disciplines allows for the development of a certain algorithm for evaluating events and phenomena at the local level. Thus M. Ylönen, J. Jaakkola and L. Saari rightly claim, that exploiting opportunities between professional bodies of knowledge requires instigating a shift in one of the five factors the extent to which politicians rely on expertise; the balance of power between academic disciplines in evidence-based policy-making; the disciplinary base to which the dominant expert groups rely on; the ways in which the epistemological, ontological and methodological mainstream changes over time within particular disciplines; and the extent to which IOs are seen as epistemic versus policy-driven authorities (Ylönen et al., 2021).

The process of paradigmatic evaluation of the local decision-making situation begins with a thorough analysis of the problem or situation to be solved. This may include collecting and

analyzing data, identifying the factors that influence the problem, and understanding its root causes. On the example of legal and economic paradigmatic considerations, one can see the deployment of management processes in important branches of the local economy. M. Ylönen, J. Jaakkola and L. Saari have noticed, that lawyers had not have made way to economists in key working groups, the introduction of theoretical economic approaches to the forefront of tax policy reasoning would have been extremely unlikely. Ultimately, these mutually reinforcing shifts created a situation where a single economics review article became the main justification for a 4.5-percentage point corporate tax rate cut with huge budgetary impact. Given the heightened reliance on economic reasoning in policy-making, similar path-dependencies are likely to be found in other countries as well (Ylönen et al., 2021).

Thus before looking for appropriate solution in local public management, it is necessary to clearly define the goals to be achieved, as well as the constraints that may affect the decision-making process. After defining the problem and goals, it is necessary to find different options for solutions. This may include consideration of different strategies, programs or policies that may be used to achieve the objectives. Each solution option needs careful evaluation, including an analysis of their advantages, disadvantages, costs, and possible consequences. Evaluation methods may include cost-benefit analysis, SWOT analysis, risk assessment, etc.

Table 1.

Tasks of paradigmatic discussions at the level of local politics

Type of a paradigm	Task	Actors	Result
Disciplinary/ interdisciplinary	Decision-making in a specific area	Managers, leaders, officials of local administration	Coordination of interests of institutional subjects or links of local administration
Valuable/ socio-cultural	regulation of citizens' behavior	Experts and non-governmental organizations	Stability and consensus in the community
research	search for obtaining new information, provision of innovations	Scientific communities at the local level, local business	Sustainable innovative development of the community

Developed on the base of Federation of Canadian Municipalities VNG International Publication Federation Of Canadian Municipalities. (2015)

Based on the analysis of paradigmatic (epistemic) alternatives, a decision could best meet the set goals and constraints. After making a public management decision, it is necessary to implement it and monitor the results. This allows for expert to detect any negative consequences in

time and adjust strategies if necessary. At the global level, the influence of the epistemic position of the actor who makes the decision, as well as the paradigmatic environment in which the discussion takes place, is already felt. As argued Ch. Bueger and A.Littoz-Monnet, by

epistemic orders, we refer to those larger structural conditions and long-term patterns, whether more ideational or material, that shape knowledge production. Paying attention to epistemic orders provides us with new understandings of how the problems or “objects” of global governance are constructed, delineated and eventually governed (Bueger & Littoz-Monnet, 2023).

Openness, public participation and balanced consideration of different points of paradigmatic view acquire key importance in local public management. It is also important to have scientifically sound data and use best practices to achieve optimal results. A rather unexpected circumstance for the paradigmatic choice of decisions and actions within the framework of local politics is the appearance of various stakeholders of epistemic justification. In particular, it is possible to say about powerful business actors. According to Ch. Bueger and A. Littoz-Monnet, public de-investments in universities and research as well as a growing economic valuation of scientific knowledge have made it possible for large companies and the philanthropies of the global commercial elite to position themselves as knowledge producers. Thus, a large share of research and expertise activities are today funded by companies, consultants, philanthropists, or their offspring organizations (Bueger & Littoz-Monnet, 2023).

The formation of local public management paradigmatic rationale begins with the collection and analysis of scientific data on a problem or situation that requires policy intervention. This may include statistical data, research results, expert opinions, and more. A careful analysis of the data helps to understand the essence of the problem and its impact on society. Different epistemic alternatives of public decisions are

determined on the basis of scientific data. This can be done through SWOT analysis, cost-benefit analysis, risk assessment, and other evaluation methods. Ch. Bueger and A. Littoz-Monnet, focusing on epistemic orderings, reintegrate considerations of how the micro and the macro intersect in processes of knowledge production, shedding light on how micro-moves often sustain, but sometimes disrupt larger structural conditions. Danish authors also emphasize the necessity of examining processes of sense-making and knowledge-making, rather than questions of collaboration and effectiveness. This lens makes it possible to reflect on our understandings of what needs to be governed, opening up the realm of our reflections on global governance, the kinds of problems it should be tackling, and the objectives it is meant to be pursuing (Bueger & Littoz-Monnet, 2023).

The expert opinions` paradigmatic grounds and epistemic considering experience of local governance officers and leaders in relevant fields can be an important source of information for determining the correct (appropriate) policy alternatives. It is important to take into account the specifics of the context in which the political decision will be implemented. This means taking into account cultural, historical, economic, and social factors that may affect the success of an alternative. The choice of a policy alternative should be based on objective arguments, logic and scientific data, not on personal beliefs or ideology. It is important to ensure the transparency of the process of choosing political alternatives and take into account the opinions and interests of the public. Carrying out an epistemological analysis before making a political decision helps to ensure the validity, effectiveness and legitimacy of political actions in response to public problems on a local level.

Table 2.
The main political and philosophical paradigms and the agenda of local political management decisions

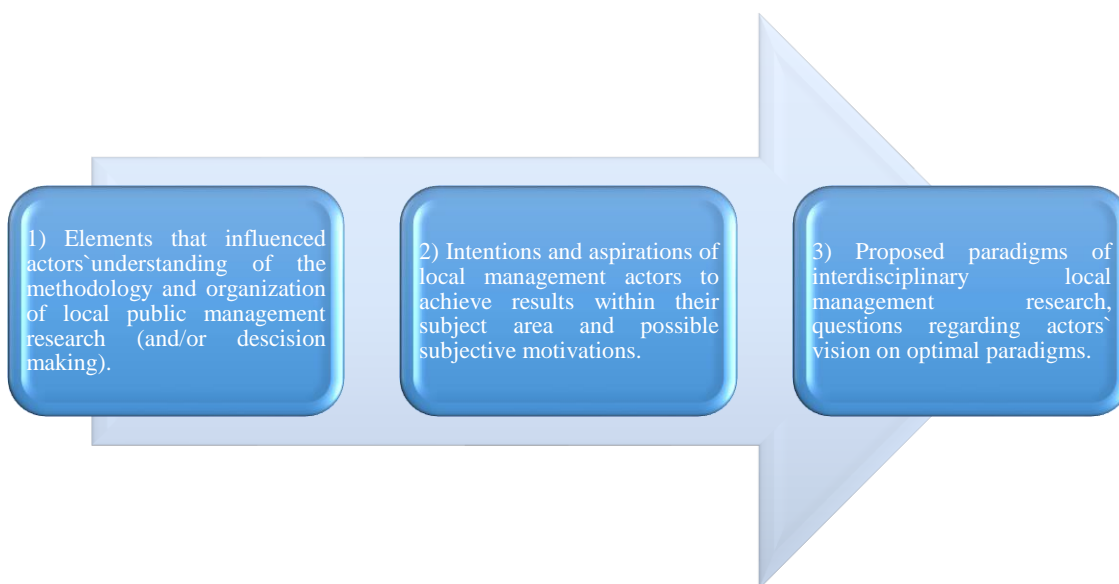
The title of the paradigm	Epistemic focus or motivation	The field of the decision
Liberal	protection of rights and freedoms	Political stability development of local democracy
Rational-critical	scientific justification	introduction of innovations
Postmodern	variability, unpredictability of development	identification of risks
Communicative	argumentation, ethical justification	openness of the community
Synergistic	interaction of the system and the external environment	strategic development of the local community

Developed on the base of S. Lavelle (2015), J. Bryson, B. Crosby and M. Stone (2015) and M. Cawley (2016)

Based on the above mentioned, the purpose of the conducting of paradigmatic choice could be proposed as the identifying of researchers` and managers (local leader) attitudes to the «algorithmization» (algorithm providing) of methodological search and paradigmatic justification of the theoretical grounds of research and the policy evaluation. It is necessary to establish how contemporary local public management researchers are aware of the relationship between the paradigm of their research, their author's preferences and value guidelines. We can propose the local public management research questionnaire, which can include questions about the paradigmatic sources of their academic school, the content of their paradigmatic worldview and value principles. The question will be especially important, how these elements had influenced their understanding of the methodology and organization of local public management research. The second block of questions will be to find out the intentions and aspirations of local

management actors to achieve results within their subject area and possible subjective motivations. The third block will be a survey of local public management researchers` opinion regarding the application of their proposed paradigms of interdisciplinary science research, as well as open questions regarding their own vision of optimal paradigms.

Within the third phase on the basis of the received information, a joint scientists (experts) and practitioners` seminar-discussion could be held with the aim of establishing conclusions and approving or rejecting the algorithm for identifying the optimal paradigmatic approach, establishing the subject area of research, applying the optimal methodology, and obtaining new scientific results. Thereby research will both qualitative and quantitative. On first two phases it will be qualitative. Then the final phase has to be quantitative since it will be necessary to calculate the answers to the questionnaire questions.



Scheme 1. The order of paradigmatic justification of the theoretical grounds of research and (or) the local policy evaluation.

Based on K.Gurdon-Nagy`s paradigmatic changes in Hungary local self-governments analyses (Gurdon-Nagy, 2021)

Conclusions

Thus, local public management is now in a situation where it is necessary to consider political alternatives both in the context of the competition of political actors at the local level and within the framework of making management decisions. The paradigmatic bases for determining the right direction of local governance include ideological (doctrinal) principles, the engagement of officials, the

penetration of scientific elements of scientific research into governance practices, the presence of value and behavioral determinants of the cognitive processing of local public decisions. The possibility of choosing the «correct» (or appropriate) paradigmatic affiliation within the framework of local public management research or within the framework of applied management activities at the local level depends on the level of training and competence of researchers or

managers. The most optimal way of applying any paradigmatic approaches is the analysis of the expediency of applying the methodology and forecasting the achievement of scientific novelty or specific results of management projects. Accordingly, the possibility of making the «correct» decision in local public management requires broadening of views on the current situation. This, in turn, involves working in a multiparadigmatic mode. The legal or political paradigm of local public management largely depends on the initiative of actors of local management. At the same time, the presence of an impartial and rationally critical analysis of the problems and resources of the local community indicates the introduction of a scientific approach to management on an interdisciplinary basis. Therefore, in the context of further discussions regarding the paradigmatic justification of local public management and in general activities regarding the selection of political alternatives, it is appropriate to turn to the assessment of the potential of artificial intelligence in the context of adopting standard management decisions.

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