

The IER Seminar in Empirical Economics

We would like to invite you to the **Empirical Seminar** series organized by the Institute of Economic Research, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Šancová 56 that will be held in hybrid form (online and at the library of the Institute of Economic Research, Slovak Academy of Sciences). The seminar will take place on **February 22th, 2022 at 15:00**.

The speaker will be **Michal Sedlačko** (The University of Applied Sciences Campus Vienna, Austria).

The topic of the seminar is: ***Achieving Policy Impact as an Outsider-Academic in Civil Service Reforms in Slovakia***

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Abstract

The professionalisation of civil service has been on the agenda in Central and Eastern European countries since the collapse of communism. Nevertheless, it took pressure from the European Commission to create a window of opportunity for reforming civil service in Slovakia. This paper studies two processes of civil service reform in Slovakia during the period of 2014–15 (the formulation of the Strategy on Civil Service Management and the redrafting of the Civil Service Act) in order to reflect on the involvement of an ‘outsider-academic’ and her strategies developed to achieve policy impact. The context of such involvement are multi-level processes permeated by political interests and poor on evidence, which favour strategic interests, bargaining and political pressure and contestation (the mode of ‘powering’) and a mode of legal-based ‘puzzling’ as opposed to a conceptual, intellectual search for solutions friendly towards outside academics – and achieving only incremental results. We theorise on the success of these strategies (including helping serendipity, throwing ideas to see what sticks, mobilising allies, anchoring a non-binding concept, and finding and developing long-term connections) and sketch analogies and differences between the position of an outsider-academic and a policy entrepreneur. We rely on auto-ethnographic data and documentation of the work of the committees involved and their outputs.

The seminar will be co-chaired by Mária Širaňová.