
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Aleksander Aristovnik is working at the Faculty of Public Administration (University of Ljubljana) as an Associate Professor in the Department of Economics and Public Sector Management. In addition, he is an Associate Professor in the Department of International Economics at the Faculty of Economics (University of Ljubljana). He has actively participated in around 60 international conferences and has recently performed as the head or a member of a few international and domestic research projects financed by the Slovenian Research Agency (SRA). He has also published and reviewed many professional and scientific articles in domestic and international (ISI-cited) journals. He is a member of various international associations and organisations (e.g., EEA, INFER, ATINER, etc.).

A well-functioning public sector is a prerequisite for transparent and effective democratic governance. Public administration and broader public sector worldwide have been under a great deal of pressure in these times of financial and economic crisis, and even more so during the period of gradual emergence from the crisis, due to austerity measures and the related challenges in relation to rationalisation, optimisation, reorganisation and the changes in the forms of governance. Changes in the development of the public sector have led to the implementation of various types of reform: from the introduction of improved methods of management to comprehensive structural reforms. In this context, the development of public administration (the administrative part of the public sector) and the development of the broader public sector (the service providing part of the public sector) are complementary, as more efficient and democratic public administration depends on the rationalisation and democratisation of the public sector.

This special issue of the *International Journal of Public Policy (IJPP)* includes 14 papers, which focus on different operational elements in various areas of public sector worldwide, such as the optimisation of the management of public organisations, human resource management (HRM), public sector performance, etc. The issue is also carrying revised and extended versions of selected papers presented during the XXII Days of Slovenian Public Administration (in September 2015).

In the first, more general paper, Mirko Pečarič and Tatjana Kozjek strive to give a new look on these standards through two methods developed in psychology and mathematics. By the visual presentation of these two methods, it becomes clear that every decision has four possibilities according to different cues and weights that could change in the face of new evidence. There is a difference between the intuitive use of standards of proof and their use by the help of some developed mathematical or statistical methods, which could be solved with Bayes theorem.

The next paper focuses on reforming public administration in Slovenia in the light of good governance and good administration. Polonca Kovač, Nina Tomažević, Anamarija Leben and Aleksander Aristovnik analyse a theoretical analysis of good administration in relation to good governance in various types of administrative agencies. Findings of the analysis based on views of heads of administrative units and regional financial and police offices, compared to statistical data, prove that Slovene administration consider good administration more as a compliance to formal requirements instead of proactive support of a party and public benefit. Accordingly, policy makers should consider in future public administration reforms the fact that value-based rather than purely structural and normative changes are needed.

The third paper written by Tina Sever provides a closer look at analysing procedures in administrative matters in reasonable time of selected case law by the European Court of Human Rights versus Slovenia. According to the Public Administration Development Strategy 2015–2020 Slovenia is facing the challenge of much-needed modernisation of administrative procedure regulation in order to conduct procedures more efficiently and in reasonable time as well as to become more customer oriented and to adjust its administrative system to the needs of modern society. With this in mind, her paper analyses case law of the European Court of Human Rights referring to Slovenia. The paper suggests for the modernisation of administrative procedural law are proposed. These include the introduction of alternative methods of dispute resolution, administrative contracts, possible exclusion of appeal, positive fiction in case of administrative silence, reduction and limitation of extraordinary legal remedies, etc.

The paper by Tatjana Jovanović and Maja Klun explores regulatory impact assessment (RIA). The research analyses the developmental stage of RIA procedures for tax policy in Slovenia while the literature shows that it is used more on declaratory level. Based on quantitative and qualitative ex-post economic analysis of the tax instrument (thin-capitalisation), the paper proves that the procedure is not sophisticated enough to facilitate efficient and effective regulation in terms of economic and legal elements.

The fifth paper by Mira Dimitrić, Dunja Škalamera-Alilović and Meta Duhovnik explores the impact of the cost and management accounting system (CMAS) implementation process in the public sector on its performance in Croatia and Slovenia. Their research tests the hypothesis that the inclusion of strategic choices made by public accounting actors contributes to the explanatory power of the theoretical framework applied so far. The proposed multiple regression model combines three separate variables of public CMAS implementation explaining its performance: strategic choice, performance measurement and cost control. In addition, the importance of institutional pressures (mimetic and coercive) and competences of internal actors within the model is presented.

The level of fiscal transparency and accountability of budget users in Macedonia has been examined by Borce Trenovski, Ilina Mangova and Nikola Levkov. The main contribution of the paper is in two areas: firstly, the level of transparency and accountability of budget users was evaluated using specially developed methodology; and secondly, the relationship between selected indicators and the level of transparency and accountability for budget users was analysed by using comparison of means and bivariate correlation. The results indicated that all monitored budget users have a very low level of transparency and the average accountability of the budget user's performance is almost five times higher than their average transparency.

In the paper by Silvia Cantele, Andrea Guerrini and Bettina Campedelli is carried out efficiency of Italian universities using the data envelopment analysis (DEA) technique, and attempts to explain the different efficiency levels found in light of environmental and organisation-specific factors such as size, ownership, geographical location and human resources composition. Adopting a robust DEA bootstrapping procedure, the article demonstrates that the presence of private investors boosts efficiency; similarly, the largest universities and those located in the Northern regions have the best performance.

The eighth paper written by Tamara Dimitrijevska-Markoski explores the ways in which social impact bonds (SIBs) are utilised to deliver social services in the area of criminal justice across the UK, the USA, and Australia. The research defines SIBs, explains their structure, and briefly discusses their advantages and disadvantages. Even though the effectiveness of the implemented projects has not been confirmed, the paper identifies challenges for SIBs effectiveness, efficiency, equity and manageability that need to be considered when designing a SIB.

The next paper by Danjuma Abdullahi, Yahaya T. Baba and Aminu Musa tackles the problems of lack of innovation in public sector and focuses on a topical question why public institutions are less innovative compared to the private counterparts. The findings of the paper show that there is significance relationship between bureaucracy, collaboration, government intervention, digital public service and innovation. At the end, some recommendations were provided on how to achieve innovation in public service delivery.

In her paper, Sangeeta Goel gives evidence of biased attitudes of bureaucracy manning public sector in India. Results of her research showed that both male and female bureaucrats across the country harboured strong bias, irrespective of age, seniority and decision levels. The results also suggest that bureaucrats despite education; sensitisation and public policies, fail to rise above their own cognitive biases, which might be adversely affecting the functioning of the public sector.

Herlin Chien aims to investigate the nature and location of organisational learning in the public sector from the perspective of HRM in Taipei, Taiwan. His research examines how the quality of social interaction in public-private joint programs affects knowledge flow and the dynamics of organisational learning. To explore this theoretical argument, an empirical analysis of five public-private partnerships (PPP) across different social welfare policy domains is conducted. Among others, the study primarily views PPP as a potential expansion of government's HR structure and an opportunity to promote organisational learning.

As a form of collaborative governance, government procurement of public services from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) has become a major channel for public service delivery. In their paper, Bing Ran and Huiting Qi discuss six major issues in Chinese Government procurement of public services from the perspective of collaborative governance theory, analyses the reasons that lead to these six challenges, and propose some important solutions to these issues.

The next paper by Yasmin Khodary seeks to answer to what extent do institutions, such as water, basic education and primary health care institutions, conform to good governance standards and how can good governance offer a new perspective for institutional reform in Egypt. The comparative assessment reveals low levels of transparency, participation, accountability and responsiveness shared among the water, basic education and primary health care institutions. As a result, the research suggests a

reform process for state institutions from a good governance perspective that, in particular, emphasises transparency, participation, accountability and responsiveness.

In the final paper, Abdoulaye Ouedraogo, Mehmet Serkan Tosun and Serdar Yilmaz examine the cyclicity of public investment in African countries using panel data for the 1996–2012 period. They also examine public investment in country sub-groups such as Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), and the South African Development Community (SADEC). While their results confirm procyclicality in public investment in Africa, the degree of procyclicality varies significantly across the country groups. Procyclicality becomes less significant when spatial spillovers are considered for WAEMU and CEMAC countries but it becomes stronger for SADEC countries.

In summary, the 14 papers more or less emphasise the importance of the quality and efficiency, transparency and responsibility of the public sector worldwide. Improved efficiency of resources should be provided through a programming budget, the establishment of suitable mechanisms for efficient and transparent implementation of public procurement, and through the better HRM. Moreover, modernisation of administrative procedural law should develop in the direction, which allows administrative relations to develop and the state to have a more administrative role, which will contribute to better reputation among citizens and competitiveness of the economy. Further research and additional measures will help to achieve a higher level of efficiency, professionalism, innovation and responsibility of the public sector.

Acknowledgements

The guest editor for this special issue takes the opportunity to thank all the peer reviewers who acted on the deadline to give their comments, and to the editor of *International Journal of Public Policy (IJPP)*, Dr. Mohammed A. Dorgham, for his support in putting together this special issue.