

INTRODUCTION

The articles of this Special Issue were prepared before March 2022, and their content is reflecting the trends that were dominant for pre- and COVID-19 epoch. The content of the Issue is divided into 3 main blocks: Participation and openness; Bureaucracy, leadership and intergovernmental cooperation; State audit, public services and its quality. The final article of the Issue is literature review that is dedicated to usage of digital technologies in public administration in the context of government performance quality. Eight articles of the Issue are representing a broad spectrum of countries from Europe, Eurasia, and Asia, that shows the interest of many scholars of these regions of the World in public administration research, and the contribution of different administrative cultures and research traditions into the field of governance.

The focal point of the first Block of the Issue, *participation and openness*, is the usage of high technologies. Public participation in governance is analyzed in the cover article of the Issue as ability of states to support e-participation. As shown for EU countries, the platforms and programs dedicated to cooperation have led to a reduction in the costs of operating the administrative apparatus and its decrease. Open Government Data and its openness in Ireland is discussed in the second article of the Block. The authors show that the use of Open Government Data make more of the data available through electronically accessible formats and have the potential to play an important role in achieving transparency, and accountability, enabling new forms of civic participation.

The quantitative instruments of research are the central for the second Block, dedicated to *bureaucracy behavior and its functional coordination*. Quantitative methods were applied for comparative analysis of the influence of leadership styles in state apparatus on employee job satisfaction in Vietnam. It was shown that three leadership styles (task-oriented, relation-oriented, change-oriented) directly predicted positive moods, but only task-oriented and change-oriented leadership directly affected employee job satisfaction. In the second research article, the Indonesian government activities on terrorism and radicalization were analyzed in different government institutions by using the key words corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis. The authors found that the explored agencies developed quite different and fragmented concepts due to their local tasks, goals and funding.

The usage of data, observations and regression analysis are in the focus of the articles from the third Block (*audit of corruption, public services, and their quality*). The first study of the Block investigates the roles and contributions of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) to anti-corruption in Yemen, using collected data, reports, and questionnaires. The results of research show that despite the ability to detect corruption, the SAIs failed to prevent corruption due to weak political stability and lack of application of laws. The second article of the Block investigates the local government internal au-

dit functions in Indonesia in supervising local public services quality. The secondary data from all local governments in Indonesia for the 2016–2019 fiscal year have been used. The authors found a positive effect of local government internal audit function maturity and expertise on public service quality. The last article is dedicated to investigating the impact of the size of local government units in Armenia on the provision of local public services. The authors collected and analyzed a complex of financial and socio-economic indicators from 465 amalgamated communities in Armenia, as well as 52 formed clusters. The analysis quantitatively proved that for certain public services it would be more favorable to have larger local government units.

The literature review, presented at the end of the Issue, encompasses in its content general orientation of all Blocks both to high technologies and data analysis. It uses surveys for evaluating digital government performance published in 2011–2021 in over 50 countries. An analytical framework of the survey includes four levels of digital government performance (inputs and outputs characterizing government digitalization process, and outcomes and impacts representing public values) as well as cost and risk constructs. The analysis of empirical papers examining digital government performance demonstrates that survey-based methods vary in the level of digital maturity.

To conclude the Guest editor preface, I would like to express my feeling that this issue can be named as the relevant representation of “pre-crisis problematics”, with a strong researcher’s belief in continual progress in governance. However, the COVID-19 became the first mark of global turbulence process that was hidden under COVID-19 coverage. The focus of research in public administration and public policy is changing now dramatically. We are spectators of the re-orientation of governance analytics to risks and threats that are far beyond COVID-19 challenges. Despite ongoing COVID-19 epidemic that continues to hit the World, and that all countries recently are more or less under the pressure of social and economic limitations due to pandemic threats, other events and tendencies have emerged and occupy the leading positions in academic reasoning right now. The challenges for common World order, the lack of natural resources, food crises, climate change are creating the enormous pressure for national and international systems of governance. That is why, I guess, the risks- and threats-related issues in governance will dominate in the nearest future.

The transfer of researcher’s interest towards new areas and approaches has two sides. First, there is a more critical attitude toward existing theories and modes of explanations, because available data belong mostly to “old times” and can be not relevant for the recent situation. The priorities of governments and politicians are concentrated recently around problems of survival in the face of complex crisis and aiming at protecting their countries from emerged risks and threats, not at doing business “as usual”. It is far from theoretical motto of almost finished epoch of well-being improvement, public services extension in volume, its growth in quality and in variety. Second, there is positive orientation to new subjects and ways of research. The matter is not that the “old” subjects will have to be neglected, but that those subjects should be re-conceptualized and embedded into the frame of risk management approaches.

Special Issue Guest Editor
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