

FOREWORD

BY THE GUEST EDITOR

This issue of the journal combines several topics that are currently attracting the attention of public governance researchers. These are: trust in the government; the functioning of NGOs in covid conditions; the management of sovereign wealth funds; the implementation of public administration reforms; the possibilities and limitations of transferring (transit) forms of democratic governance from one country to another, differing in their traditions; the introduction of e-government at the national level in order to provide services; analysis of the quality of services at the local level in the context of public administration reform; legal and institutional features of local self-government; and education management in the field of public administration.

At first glance, these topics differ significantly: different research subjects are touched upon, different country cases are analyzed, and research methods that do not match each other are involved. Nevertheless, these topics are connected to each other to a large extent; the problems raised in them seem to flow into each other, forming a chain of problems. *The connection of topics is the consequence of the interpenetration of problems.* Namely, trust in the government is discussed in the context of problems caused by the Covid-19 epidemic, and it is shown that in countries with representative bureaucracy, trust during the epidemic is higher. Further, the problem of NGOs' trust in the government also turns out to be related to Covid-19, which also influences the duration of lockdowns. The problem of adapting mechanisms and strategies for managing national welfare funds is directly related to risk reduction, which is impacted by the Covid-19 epidemic and the level of trust in the government. The problems of public administration reforms do not remain on the sidelines. The current stage of reforms is a reaction to a complex of problems of deteriorating financial stability, a spreading epidemic, and a crisis of trust in government. Under the conditions of the observed turbulence of country public governance, the thesis previously accepted as quite obvious about the possibility and desirability of the transit of democratic forms of public administration faces difficulties and the problem of the inter-country transit of democratic forms closes with the problems of differences in national traditions and cultures, aggravated by the problems of the epidemic, falling trust in government, economic recession, and the impossibility of administrative re-

forms according to previously approved schemes. The introduction of e-government is slowing down not only for reasons of technical unpreparedness, but also due to other governance problems, with the reassessment of the benchmark, e-government practices of other countries. The very idea of the quality of services, including at the local level, begins to shift due to changes in the preferences of citizens and the conditions for providing external assistance, and the problem of the quality of these services depends on how other problems of public governance evolve. New systems of local self-government are emerging, with legal and institutional frameworks that adapt to the situation, looking “chaotic”, and “hybrid”. Finally, public administration education also tries to “adapt” to changing values and requirements, to take into account emerging governance practices, and to reflect in its problems the problems and trends that arise in other areas and topics of public governance.

The flow of problems of public governance into each other has become especially noticeable in the last two years. In all likelihood, it was Covid-19 that triggered the emergence of a chain of problems that cannot be solved individually (or indeed finally solved), but can only be weakened, so we learn to live with them, accepting the existence of these problems as a new norm. The ambitious goal, which is fixed in this issue of the journal and recorded in a set of articles, is to give the reader a reason to think that the progress of public governance, apparently, in the coming years will occur at the junctions of topics, in the “interference zones” of problems. It will not be the result of scattered attempts to solve individual problems of public governance directly.

*Guest Editor,
Alexey G. Barabashev*