

GUEST EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

**CONTEXT AND PUBLIC
MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE:
NEW CASES FOR NOVEL INSIGHTS**

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The articles in this collection

The articles in this Special Issue provide insight into the public management phenomenon beyond the developed West. These articles are diverse in their perspective but nevertheless all focus on the challenges for public management in contexts that do not necessarily share the assumptions of those in which the key public management concepts were developed. In this section, we briefly summarize these contributions and also make some connections between them and the common underlying theme.

Frontline civil service workers interface directly with citizens and also tend to have a surprising amount of discretion. Especially in developing countries, where pay is insufficient to provide a decent quality of life, front-line workers may leverage their discretion and extract bribes from citizens as a condition of public service provision. This type of petty corruption can undermine citizens' trust in government and is very difficult to address. L. M. Ngich and W. Cho focus on the issue of police corruption in Southeast Asian countries, where the practice of law enforcement is known to have a distinct lack of im-

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partiality. The authors provide a systematic review of the literature dealing with police corruption in Southeast Asia and detail the various instruments that have been proposed to deal with it. Institutional reform, both of police organizations as well as oversight bodies, such as anticorruption agencies, are popular recommendations among scholars. Interestingly, though, the possibility of public participation, both direct participation by citizens as well as civic organizations, is a relatively popular proposal for reducing police corruption. This is despite the fact that, as the authors note, this link has insufficient evidence in the empirical literature. Of course, however, the most important theme for fighting police corruption among the examined articles relates to strengthening the political will to do so. The authors suggest that without political will, other strategies alone may be ineffective, and therefore that political will may be a necessary condition to reduce police corruption.

Political will, of course, is not only critical for the reduction of petty corruption, but is also critical for the overall improvement of public sector management as a whole. O. M. Ikeanyibe, J. Obiorji, N. O. Osadebe and Chuka E. Ugwu go to the heart of this matter with their piece on political will (or the lack thereof) for the improvement of public management on the African continent, and specifically in Nigeria. Although the politics-administration divide has never been as absolute as early public administration theory envisioned it, Ikeanyibe and co-authors describe a situation in which political considerations permeate the implementation process and therefore undermine efforts for genuine performance-based reform before they can even get underway. The authors suggest that a disproportionate emphasis on bureaucratic quality is misplaced in a context in which incentives and opportunities for interference in the public service are abundant. Based on a detailed review of both of the contextual characteristics of the politics-administration division in Nigeria, the authors argue that the Common Assessment Framework as well as the African Peer Review Mechanism can provide counter incentives for interference in the administrative sphere and thereby strengthen the possibility of a credible commitment on the part of politicians for results-oriented public management reform.

A deficiency of political will stands as a barrier to public management reform. One way to address this, as the Nigerian case suggests, is to strengthen the role of external actors that have a stake in public management reform. Providing additional insight into this phenomenon, Ngoc Ha Pham and Thi Hong Hai Nguyen focus on the case of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in Vietnam, which has implemented an impressive program of results-based planning that has transformed its traditional planning model. The Vietnamese government has long played a significant role in the development of the country, with five-year national development plans being its main instrument of policy implementation and central-local coordination. The new results-based planning approach was designed and adopted to address known deficiencies of the traditional approach, including a lack of clarity and development objectives, weak links between development plans and budgetary resources, and generally ineffective performance monitoring and evaluation. The authors provide an overview of Vietnam's adoption of results-based planning, and further provide a quantitative analysis of how leadership, training,

and international donor support are effective instruments to increase employee commitments to results-based planning and improve outcomes.

A further contribution relevant to the efficacy of performance management in developing contexts is made by A. Rodas-Gaiter and P. Sanabria-Pulido, who focus on the legitimacy of performance appraisal among local government officials in Columbia. Since 2004, Columbia's National Civil Service Commission has continued to iterate the country's mandatory performance assessment framework, which plays a key role in promotion and other human resource decisions throughout the government. However, as the authors note, the level and quality of implementation of performance assessment varies throughout the country, and, as is common to many developing country contexts, there remains a gap between the actual and expected results of performance assessments, and many managers struggle to use the tools effectively. Arguing that the perceived legitimacy of the performance appraisal system is a critical component of its efficacy, the authors develop a theoretical model capturing the drivers of such legitimacy. Empirical research suggests that some performance management initiatives may have little effect on motivation if they poorly operationalized at the employee level, and the authors demonstrate that both managerial quality and goal alignment can enhance the perceived legitimacy of performance assessment, further discussing the practical implications of their research for public managers in Columbia and elsewhere.

Our Vietnamese and Colombian cases explore public servant perceptions of public performance management in the developmental sphere. However, increasingly, governments have sought to use performance-based techniques in diverse areas. Even as the challenges of performance management vary based on context, however, the specificities of a particular policy domain can also interact with context in order to produce novel challenges. V. Burksiene and J. Dvorak article on implementing performance management in Lithuania's Curonian Spit National Park brings this issue to light. Like many national parks around the world, administration of the Curonian Spit needs to balance access and usage with preservation, which introduces competing goals and therefore a certain level of complexity into the performance management equation from the outset. Adding to this technical challenge, however, the authors argue that the successful management of the national park requires the active involvement of local stakeholders, which presents an additional set of challenges due not only to the relatively lower capacity of local government but also the lack of participatory political traditions in Lithuania. Although a difficult problem to solve, the authors suggest that leadership may be a critical component in facilitating greater stakeholder involvement in the management process.

An additional example of performance-based management appearing in less likely places, Se-Hee Kim details the usage of performance management by the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in South Korea. Like the delicate balance between utilization and preservation in the management of protected areas, fine arts museums also need to balance several different and potentially competing goals, such as iterating their core collections vs attracting visitors with flagship exhibits. Since its transformation into an executive agency in 2006, performance-based controls have increasingly come to substitute for more direct

mechanisms. However, as Kim demonstrates, although the performance management system has facilitated a move towards formal independence, because the goals of the museum have shifted over time with each directorate, doubts can be raised about how well the system as a whole accurately captures performance.

As the Lithuanian and Korean cases show, extending performance management systems to areas with complex goals is challenging, and the individual context of each country has additional features that need to be considered in system design. Agiamoh contributes to this discussion through an examination of Moscow's ongoing efforts to improve the performance of local waste management systems by increasingly leveraging market signals. Creating a zero waste city, wherein waste can be treated as a resource and priced accordingly, is an ambitious goal that is approximated by only a handful of cities worldwide. However, through greater stakeholder involvement, accreditation of additional recycling firms, and inter-city collaboration, positive steps have been taken. At the same time, the shift to a more market-based approach to waste management has faced difficulties due to its incompatibility with the centralized, bureaucratic approach that has historically been used. Ultimately, Agiamoh suggests that city officials keep in mind specific features of the Moscow municipal context when benchmarking other international cities and designing policy.

In some formulations, public management initiatives are designed to incorporate market signals into the managerial decision-making process in order to allocate scarce resources efficiently. At the same time, seldom is a formally autonomous organization entirely free from external bureaucratic controls, and moreover, especially for complex public services, such as administering health care, community involvement can be an additional source of control. Sapparojpattana's study of Thailand's Ban-Phaeo Hospital demonstrates how a multitude of forces, values, and public management strategies contribute to the governance of the country's only private-style managed hospital. Bureaucratic, professional, and community controls shape the behavior of managers, affecting goal setting, planning, and investment decisions. While such a governance arrangement is complex, it nevertheless contributes to the legitimacy and effectiveness of one of the country's most important medical institutions.

Finally, Seoh and Im look into factors that affect the performance of research and development (R&D) across a range of developed countries. Although such research does not focus on a specific context outside of the developed West, it nevertheless lays bare the conditions underlying high-performance R&D contexts that can further be explored in diverse settings.

This collection of articles sheds light on the various conditions underlying public management beyond the developed West. By detailing some of the important institutional, economic, and organizational features of the cases in these studies, we hope to provide additional data that can be fed into theoretical models and result in a more comprehensive, context-aware perspective for public management. By making the implicit contextual conditions underlying theories of public management as well as successful public management reform explicit, we hope that this collection of articles contributes to a richer understanding of the contingent nature of public management performance in the public sector.