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The mission of the journal is to create a modern platform of full value for discussion, exchange of international and national experience and specific knowledge among professionals in the field of Public Administration; for working out and further correcting the development strategy of public and municipal administration.

The editorial policy is to provide a very clear emphasis on the specific subject along with a focus on the interconnection of the proper public administration problems with the relative economic, legal, political science and managerial problems, including the interaction of the state and civil society.

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CONTENTS

Jesse W. Campbel (<i>S. Korea</i>) REPRESENTATIVE BUREAUCRACY, IMMIGRANTS, AND TRUST IN GOVERNMENT: A CROSS-NATIONAL STUDY.....	7
Natalya Dmitrieva, Evgeny Styryn, Nicolay Lavrentyev, Ruslan Artamonov (<i>Russia</i>) LINKING DISTRUST OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR TO AWARENESS OF COVID-19: THE COVID DISSIDENCE PHENOMENON.....	24
Mstislav P. Afanasiev, Nataliya N. Shash (<i>Russia</i>) STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING GOVERNMENT SOVEREIGN WEALTH FUNDS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC	49
Fatih Demir (<i>Turkey</i>) PUBLIC MANAGEMENT REFORMS IN TURKEY	63
Marton Gellen (<i>Hungary</i>) DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INTERVENTION? REVISITING CRITICISM ON HUNGARIAN DEMOCRACY.....	84
Georgios Kontogeorgis, Nikolaos Varotsis (<i>Greece</i>) REINSTATING GREEK E-GOVERNANCE: A FRAMEWORK FOR E-GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING, IMPROVEMENT AND GOVERNMENT POLICIES	103
Tomasz Michalski, Krzysztof Kopeć (<i>Poland</i>) IMPLEMENTATION OF MONITORING OF THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC SERVICES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL AS A TOOL FOR REFORMING PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION – THE POLISH EXPERIENCE.....	128
Feras Ali Qawasmeh, Kuppusamy Singaravelloo, Raja Noriza Raja Ariffin (<i>Malasya</i>) PALESTINIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: ISSUES OF LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS.....	146
Perfecto G. Aquino, Jr., Revenio C. Jalagat, Jr. (<i>Vietnam, Oman</i>) GEARING PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN THE PHILIPPINES IN RESPONSE TO 21st CENTURY NEEDS.....	172

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*

Original article

REPRESENTATIVE BUREAUCRACY, IMMIGRANTS, AND TRUST IN GOVERNMENT: A CROSS-NATIONAL STUDY

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Abstract. Building a civil service that reflects the diversity of the population it serves can increase bureaucratic legitimacy and the fairness of public service provision. In this study, I draw on symbolic representation theory and argue that the impact of representative bureaucracy on trust in government can vary by citizen immigration status. Combining microlevel demographic and opinion data from respondents in 43 countries and country-level estimates of the representativeness of government personnel, I implement a series of multi-level models to test the theory. The analysis suggests that the representativeness of government bureaucracy does not affect trust in the average case but is a significant factor for first generation immigrants. This study provides new evidence for the trust-enhancing effect of representative bureaucracy among minority stakeholders. I discuss how a cross-national approach can further enrich the theoretical landscape of the representative bureaucracy construct.

Keywords: representative bureaucracy, immigration, trust in government, comparative public administration.

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Introduction

A government that fails to produce the public services desired by its citizens is unlikely to enjoy their trust. However, while public service quality and trust in government are undoubtedly related, one is not necessarily a linear function of the other (Van de Walle and Bouckaert, 2007). Citizens differ in their experiences and knowledge of government, and, while it is possible to estimate the average quality of public service provision for a given population, factors at the individual level, such as gender, ethnicity, or socio-economic status, may affect the actual quality of public services produced and received (Pedersen, Stritch, and Thuesen, 2018). Citizens have different values and preferences, and aggregate models of trust can distort the factors driving trust (or distrust) for certain groups (Wilkes, 2015). Consequently, there is a need to understand how different citizen attributes, experiences, and life histories determine the criteria by which government is judged and ultimately its perceived trustworthiness.

Empirical research has demonstrated that ethnicity and race are related to trust in different ways and in different countries (Marschall and Shah, 2007; Maxwell, 2010a; Leigh, 2006; Wilkes, 2015), and immigrants can have different views about government compared to native-born citizens due to their alternative evaluative reference points, different life experiences, and exposure to different policies (Dahlberg and Linde, 2018; Maxwell, 2010a; Nichols, LeBron and Pedraza, 2018; Rijavec and Pevcin, 2018). When immigrants do not fall into the dominant ethnic, linguistic, or religious categories of their new homes, they may face difficulties integrating into mainstream society. However, if trust in government is associated with heightened intentions to engage with available public policy and programs, it may be useful to know which factors are of particular significance for this group of stakeholders.

The concept of representative bureaucracy is relevant to this case. In brief, a bureaucracy is representative when the composition of its personnel reflects the structural diversity of the society it serves (Bradbury and Kellough, 2011). While earlier work on representative bureaucracy assumed that its positive effect for minorities would be realized through the advocacy of minority government employees, an emerging stream of theory and research known as symbolic representation suggests that greater diversity in the public workforce can heighten the trust of minorities and less advantaged citizens, in turn increasing their willingness to cooperate with government and coproduce public services (Ricucci and Van Ryzin, 2016; Ricucci and Van Ryzin, 2017). The proposed link between trust and representative bureaucracy makes the symbolic representation perspective a compelling framework with which to study the relationships proposed in this study.

Until now, most of the research on both trust in government and representative bureaucracy has been carried out in the United States or other Western countries, and a recent review of the representative bureaucracy literature noted its geographic concentration and called for research to be conducted in different contexts (Bishu and Kennedy, 2020). Importantly, the assumptions that underlie both trust in government and representative bureaucra-

cy are not context specific, and it is reasonable to assess their validity using a cross-national research design. To this end, I use individual-level data across 34 countries from the World Values Survey (Wave 6, Inglehart et al., 2014) and a unique measure of representative bureaucracy at the national level obtained from the Quality of Government Institute (Dahlström et al., 2015a) to test whether a bureaucracy that is representative of the citizenry can impact levels of trust in government for immigrants as well as the children of immigrants. Before describing the parameters of the test, I first lay out the theoretical position that motivates it. Following a presentation of the empirical analysis and results, I discuss the study's implications and limitations, and suggest that a cross-national approach can further enrich the theoretical landscape of the representative bureaucracy construct

Literature

Representative bureaucracy

A bureaucracy is representative to the extent that the demographic characteristics of its employees reflect those of the constituents that it serves (Bishu and Kennedy, 2019). Passive representativeness, or achieving a sufficient level of compositional reflectivity, may be seen as a marker of a government's success in addressing deficits in social equity, reducing discriminatory hiring practices, and infusing democratic values into personnel management (Ricucci and Van Ryzin, 2017). From the perspective of social justice, representative bureaucracy may be understood as a moral imperative and a condition of fairness.

In addition to the normative argument for representative bureaucracy, some studies have sought to understand the extent to which it also has instrumental value. If having a passively representative bureaucracy translates into concrete benefits for women, minorities, and less advantaged citizens more generally, then representativeness is both normatively and instrumentally desirable. The theoretical model underlying the instrumentality hypothesis predicts that social origins are associated with specific values and preferences that in turn shape the actions of bureaucrats, encouraging understanding, responsiveness, and additional care for those with similar origins (Ricucci and Meyers, 2004; Saltzstein, 1979). Although there are presumably many factors at the managerial level as well as in the process of public service (co-)production itself that condition the impact of representative bureaucracy (Meier, 2019), the active representation hypothesis has found some support in the empirical literature. Impressively, the theory has been applied in diverse areas including the awarding of government contracts to minority-owned enterprises (Brunjes and Kellough, 2018; Fernandez, Malatesta and Smith, 2013; Smith and Fernandez, 2010), women's employment, career achievement, and security in the workplace (Choi, Hong and Lee, 2018; Guul, 2018; Rabovsky and Lee, 2018), academic achievement for women and minorities (Atkins, Fertig and Wilkins, 2014; Capers, 2018; Egalite and Kisida, 2018; Favero and Molina, 2018; Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2016; Song, 2018; Vinopal, 2018), and policing outcomes for both women (Schuck 2018) and minorities (Hong, 2016;

Hong, 2017a; Hong, 2017b; Nicholson-Crotty, Nicholson-Crotty and Fernandez, 2017), as well as organizational performance more generally (Fernandez, Koma and Lee, 2018; Fernandez and Lee, 2016; Lee, 2019).

The arguments in the passive representativeness literature have led to a strengthening of the normative imperative to diversify public bureaucracies. Evidence from the active representativeness literature has furnished an instrumental motivation as a supplement to this normative core. However, a third theoretical approach to representative bureaucracy, known as symbolic representation (Bishu and Kennedy, 2019), has emerged. This approach focuses on the perception of government by citizens, suggesting that, in addition to the active channel of improved policy outcomes, performance gains may result from enhanced cooperation and a willingness to coproduce public goods. From a symbolic representation perspective, representative bureaucracy benefits citizens not necessarily because ethnic minorities within the bureaucracy perform an activist role, but rather because a representative bureaucracy will increase citizen (and minority) trust in government, and, in turn, heighten citizen cooperation with government officials and compliance with public policy (Riccuci and Van Ryzin, 2017; Riccucci, Van Ryzin and Li, 2016). The operative mechanism is thus similar to that of active representation but runs in the opposite direction: women, minorities, or less advantaged citizens may more readily identify with government officials who reflect their own life histories and circumstances and thereby be more willing to trust them.

Research on the symbolic channel between representative bureaucracy and public policy outcomes is not as developed as that of the passive and active literatures. However, recent empirical studies suggest the efficacy of this path. For instance, Riccucci, Van Ryzin, and Li (2016) show that when women are visibly represented in an agency responsible for recycling, female constituents report a greater willingness to participate in recycling programs (however, see Sievery (2021), which fails to reproduce this result). Roch, Elsayed and Edwards (2018) demonstrate that the perceived fairness and legitimacy of disciplinary actions taken against students is greater to the extent that schools have a higher level of passive representation. In a conceptually related study, Riccucci, Van Ryzin, and Jackson (2018) show that perceptions of police fairness and trust among black citizens increases with black representativeness in the police force. This study is related to the earlier work of Theobald and Haider-Markel (2009), who showed that black citizens perceive police action to be more legitimate when the majority of officers are black (they showed also that the same is true for white citizens evaluating a predominantly white police force). In another instance, Gade and Wilkins (2013) demonstrate that veterans enrolled in a vocational rehabilitation program report higher levels of satisfaction and other relevant attitudes when they believed that their counselor was also a veteran.

These empirical studies provide an evidential basis for the symbolic representation hypothesis. However, like many areas of study in public administration, empirical research has been carried out primarily in the American and European context. This geographic research concentration overlooks the vari-

ous ways in which Western society and government may differ in systematic ways from developing countries or countries with different cultural traditions. However, as the theoretical assumptions of the relationship between representative bureaucracy and ethnic and racial minority effects are not culturally or geographically specific, it is reasonable to test whether the relationship holds across a broader range of contexts.

Immigrants, trust in government, and representative bureaucracy

Successfully integrating immigrants, who are often ethnic or linguistic minorities, into mainstream society can be a policy challenge. While local communities can play a role in the integration process, a lack of trust on the part of immigrants of central government institutions may undermine the implementation of integration policy and programs. The difference between how immigrants see government may also differ between generations. Maxwell (2010a) demonstrates that first-generation immigrants tend on average to have more positive views of government than native-born citizens. However, this difference reduces in size or disappears for second generation immigrants that have been raised in the country and therefore exposed to similar socialization processes from birth. On the other hand, Maxwell (2010b, p. 46) notes that even second-generation immigrants often continue to suffer from “stigmatization and discrimination,” failing to achieve full integration into their country while at the same time not feeling completely part of their homeland origins. Immigrants can face barriers to integration including frustrated aspirations for upward social mobility (particularly for low-skill immigrants), racial and ethnic discrimination (particularly for immigrants of non-European origins in Western societies), and, for immigrants arriving from countries with higher levels of political repression, difficulties adapting to the norms of democratic societies (Maxwell, 2010a). On the other hand, this contrasting background can also be a source of increased positive attitudes about the host country (Maxwell, 2010b).

In this study, I test whether representative bureaucracy affects immigrants and non-immigrants differentially. Based on prior empirical research and drawing on the symbolic representation perspective, I propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Immigrant status positively moderates the relationship between representative bureaucracy and trust in government.

Given that the literature has pointed out subtle differences in the integration experiences of second and first generation immigrants (Abouguendia and Noels, 2001; Maxwell, 2010a; 2010b) but does not suggest that representative bureaucracy would affect the two groups differently, I also test the following two hypotheses:

Hypotheses 2a and 2b: Second generation immigrant status (2a) and first generation immigrant status (2b) positively moderate the relationship between representative bureaucracy and trust in government.

The next section describes the data and empirical methods I use to implement the model.

Data and methods

Dependent variable: Trust in government

To measure the dependent variable as well as all other individual-level variables in the analysis, I use data from Wave 6 of the World Values Survey (Inglehart et al., 2014). As the name suggests, the World Values Survey polls individuals across a diverse selection of countries about their perspectives on topics of socio-economic importance. To measure trust in government, I use questions that ask respondents to rate on a scale of 1 to 4 how much confidence they have in various public institutions. A selection of these variables has commonly been used to measure diffuse political trust or trust in government (see Breustedt (2018) and Tao (2021) for a review). I use the mean of confidence in the police, courts, the government in the nation's capital, political parties, parliament, and the civil service. Although these are different aspects of government, a factor analysis suggests that the combined scale is one-dimensional. The internal consistency of the questions is a high .87. However, based on the possibility that trust in specifically administrative organizations may have different foundations than more broadly political ones (Camões and Mendes, 2019), I also use a reduced 2-item scale capturing trust only in the government and civil service. This second measurement is correlated with the 6-item scale at .90 ($p < .001$) but has a lower alpha value of .67.

Independent variable: Representative bureaucracy

Representative bureaucracy captures the extent to which the diversity of the public service reflects the diversity of society (Ricucci and Van Ryzin, 2017). Scholars have measured this variously (Bradbury and Kellough, 2020), but many of these measures have been sub-national and cannot be used in a cross-national analysis. In this study, I use data from the Quality of Government (QoG) Institute's Expert Survey II (Dahlström et al., 2015) to measure representative bureaucracy. The QoG Expert Survey II dataset provides quantitative estimates of structural characteristics of national bureaucracies averaged from the survey responses of international public administration experts. The data has been used in a variety of studies to measure concepts such as merit-based recruitment and tenure protections (Nistoskaya and Cingolani, 2016), performance pay usage (Campbell, 2020a), and national auditing capacity (Gustavson and Sundstrom, 2018). To measure representative bureaucracy, I use responses to the following statement: "Key ethnic and religious groups in society are proportionally represented among public sector employees." Although the estimate is based on a subjective evaluation and not raw personnel data, the question has a high degree of face validity for the construct and captures the core ideas of representation and proportionality in the civil service. The scale runs from 1 (hardly ever) to 7 (almost always), and thus higher values on the scale represent higher levels of representative bureaucracy.

Figure 1 shows the level of representative bureaucracy plotted against country-level mean estimates of trust in government. Although both trust and representative bureaucracy have considerable levels of variation in the data, they are not correlated at statistically significant levels.

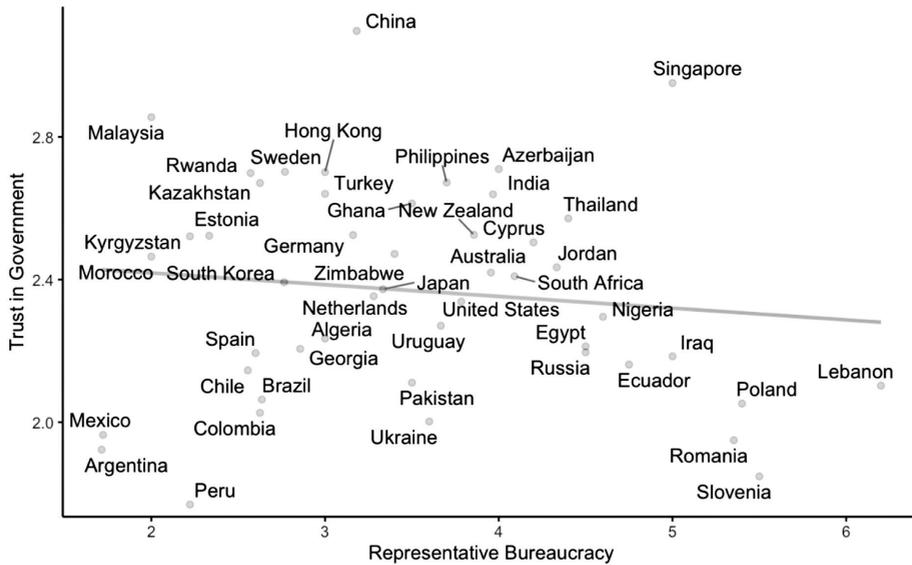


Figure 1: Representative bureaucracy by trust in government.

Independent variable: Immigration status

I follow Maxwell (2010a) and Röder and Mühlau (2012) and create three categories of respondents to capture immigration status. Country-native respondents are those who are neither themselves immigrants nor have immigrant parents. Second-generation immigrants are those who are themselves not immigrants but have at least one parent that is. Finally, first generation immigrants are those that have themselves immigrated to their country of residence.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of immigrants in the sample countries (inclusive of both first and second generation immigrants). Jordan, New Zealand, and Singapore have the highest percentage of their sample made up of immigrants. In contrast, Morocco, the Philippines, and Egypt had the fewest, each with less than 1 percent of their sample reporting to be either first or second generation immigrants. I note here that these sample proportions are correlated at .76 ($p < .001$) with the World Bank's estimates of international migrant population percentages (World Bank, 2016).

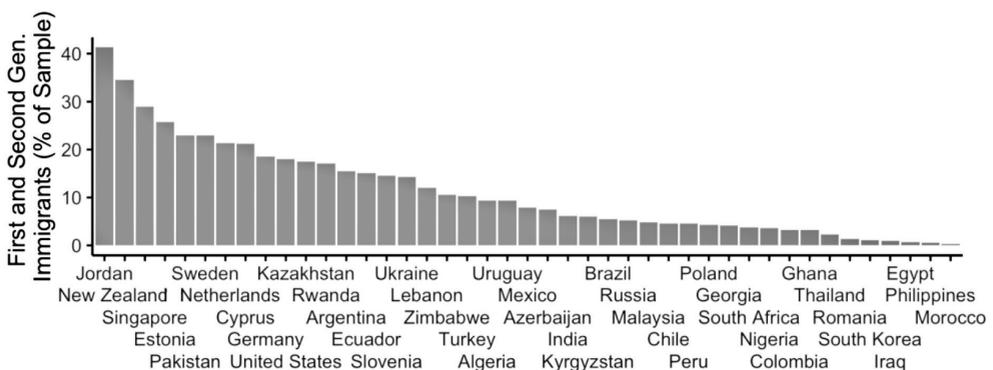


Figure 2: Immigrants in the sample countries (inclusive of both first and second generation immigrants), %.

Control variables

At the individual level, I control for respondent sex, age, and level of education. I also control for social trust using a dummy variable coded 1 for respondents who answered “Most people can be trusted” when dealing with others and 0 for those who answered “Need to be very careful” (Camões and Mendes, 2019). I further control for three significant factors at the country level. Citizens of more developed countries may have higher levels of trust in their government, and development is also closely related to public service quality. I therefore control for economic development by including a measure of GDP per capita (log) from the World Bank’s Development Indicators (2016). How positions linked with political power are distributed may also affect trust in government. I thus add a control for levels of democracy using Freedom House’s iPolity measure for the year 2014 (2019). To better isolate the composition of government from its performance, I control for two additional factors. First, Fund for Peace’s estimate of public service quality from the Fragile States Index (Messner et al., 2015) captures public service performance across a range of vital services. Finally, I also include an estimate of Control of Corruption from the World Bank’s Governance Indicators from 2014 (Kaufmann et al., 2010).

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics for the variables used in this study.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
<i>Individual level</i>				
Trust in Government	2.37	0.72	1	4
Non-immigrant	0.89	0.31	0	1
First Gen. Immigrant	0.04	0.20	0	1
Second Gen. Immigrant	0.06	0.25	0	1
Female	0.51	0.50	0	1
Age	41.74	16.48	16	102
Education	5.70	2.38	1	9
Social Trust	0.25	0.43	0	1
<i>Country level</i>				
Representative Bureaucracy	3.52	1.00	1.7	6.2
GDP per Capita (log)	9.52	0.93	7.4	11.3
Democracy	6.74	2.91	0.25	10
Public Service Quality	5.89	2.17	1.9	9.5
Control of Corruption	2.51	1.07	0.9	4.8

Sources: Author’s calculations based on various datasets.

Results

Because individual responses are nested in countries, I specify the model using a multilevel estimator (Hox, Moerbeek and Van de Schoot, 2017), including random intercepts and slopes for the immigrant status variables. The interclass

correlation coefficient suggests that about 22% of the variance in trust in government is explained by country context, which implies that a multilevel estimation approach is appropriate.

Table 2

Trust in government, representative bureaucracy, and immigrant status

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
Representative Bureaucracy	-0.01	-0.01	-0.03	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02	-0.03	-0.01	-0.01
Immigrant (1st or 2nd Gen)		-0.02	-0.01	-0.02	-0.02				
Representative Bureaucracyx Immigrant			0.04 *	0.04 *	0.04 *				
Second Gen. Immigrant (SGI)						-0.03	-0.02	-0.02	-0.03
First Gen. Immigrant (FGI)						-0.02	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02
Representative Bureaucracyx SGI							0.04	0.04	0.04
Representative Bureaucracyx FGI							0.06 **	0.06 ***	0.06 **
GDP per Capita (log)				0.01	0.01			0.00	-0.01
Democracy				-0.07 ***	-0.07 ***			-0.07 ***	-0.07 ***
Public Service Quality				-0.04	-0.05			-0.06	-0.07 *
Control of Corruption				0.24 ***	0.24 ***			0.27 ***	0.27 ***
Female Respondent					0.02 ***				0.02 ***
Age					0.00 ***				0.00 ***
Education					0.00				0.00
Social Trust					0.17 ***				0.17 ***
Intercept	2.34 ***	2.35 ***	2.35 ***	2.41 ***	2.37 ***	2.35 ***	2.35 ***	2.51 ***	2.57 ***
Residual Variance	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.42	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.42
Intercept Variance	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.05	0.05	0.08	0.08	0.05	0.05
Slope: Immigrant	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01				
Slope: First Gen. Immigrant						0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00
Slope: Second Gen. Immigrant						0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Countries	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	43
Observations	59,307	59,307	59,307	59,307	58,030	59,307	59,307	59,307	58,030

Note: * p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Sources: Author’s calculations based on various datasets.

Model 1 contains only representative bureaucracy as a predictor of trust in government. Model 2 adds the first immigration variable. Independently, neither of these factors appears to be a significant predictor of trust in government. Model 3 adds an interaction term, which is positive and statistically significant. In line with the general orientation of this study, this suggests that the effect of representative bureaucracy on trust is potentially significant for immigrants. Models 4 and 5 add country and individual level control variables, respectively. In Model 4, we can see a negative and statistically significant correlation between democracy and trust in government. This is consistent with some of the empirical political science research (You and Wang, 2020). The results also suggest that controlling corruption has a positive relationship with citizen trust, a result that is, again, consistent with prior research (Catterberg and Moreno, 2005). Model 5 suggests that female respondents and older respondents tend to trust government more. Unsurprisingly, social trust is positively related to trust in government.

Models 6 through 9 are similar to Models 2 through 5 but disaggregate immigrant status into first and second generation and thereby address hypotheses 2a and 2b. While neither of the disaggregated immigrant status variables are independently significant predictors of trust, the interaction effect between first generation immigrant status and representative bureaucracy is positive and statistically significant across all models. In contrast, there is no significant interaction with representative bureaucracy and second generation immigrant status, suggesting that the effect is limited to those who are themselves immigrants but not the children of immigrants.

To better interpret this effect, I graph trust in government as a joint function of representative bureaucracy and first generation immigrant status. Figure 3 shows the interaction effect. Representative bureaucracy has a positive relationship with trust in government for first generation immigrants. For those not in this citizenship category, the relationship appears to lack significance. This effect is consistent with hypothesis 2b of this study.

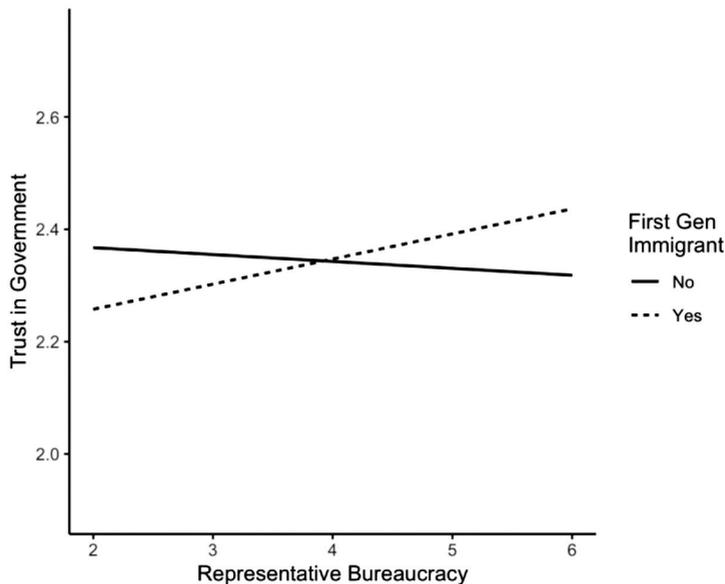


Figure 3: **Moderating effect of immigration status on the relationship between representative bureaucracy and trust in government.**

Discussion

This study takes a novel cross-national approach to the study of representative bureaucracy and links the construct to trust in government among immigrants. The key finding is that representative bureaucracy is positively related to trust in government for (first generation) immigrants, which is consistent with the symbolic theory of bureaucratic representation described by Riccucci et al. (2014) and others. This finding has implications for the theory of representative bureaucracy and is suggestive of further research paths.

I note some limitations of this study and suggest ways that future work can improve upon and extend the findings. First of all, even though this is, to the author's knowledge, the first study to conduct a cross-national, multi-level analysis of representative bureaucracy, and the sample of countries included in the analysis represents a range of situations, a survey-based measure of representative bureaucracy rather than one based in numerical personnel data was used. This measure has both strengths and weaknesses. In terms of the former, the general nature of the survey question allows for comparability between countries. Moreover, numerous validity checks conducted by the stewards of the Expert II survey suggest that the data itself is of a high quality, with marginal bias due to characteristics of the expert panel (Dahlström et al., 2015b). This being said, a generic survey-based approach cannot capture the full range of experiences between countries. For instance, the measure is a country-level measure capturing representative bureaucracy in the central government as a whole. In reality, there likely would be variations not only in how representative bureaucracy is implemented between countries that this survey measure fails to capture, but also within government (for instance, between high-ranking and front-line staff, or between different regions) there are likely to be differences. Although capturing these differences empirically may mean restricting sample size, this nevertheless would help bring out the nuances of the studied relationships.

Second, I note that the measure of immigrant status I use is quite crude. Although the variable clearly captures first and second generation immigration status, it says little about the degree to which the given respondent is distinct in various ways from the host country population. Relevant differences may be ethnicity, language spoken, religion, or cultural traditions. Others have used more fine-grained estimates which capture length of residency as well as the level of relative cultural and other differences between the host and migrant country. For instance, Röder and Mühlau (2012) attribute to origin country frames of references the high level of trust on first generation immigrants. Immigration status does not capture this level of complexity and subtlety in the actual situations of respondents. Integrating these factors into an empirical model may provide further clarity about the impact of representative bureaucracy on trust for immigrants and minorities.

Next, I note again that representative bureaucracy has no statistically significant direct effect on trust in government, even before controlling for alternative explanatory factors. However, trust in government is not the only outcome relevant to the representative bureaucracy concept and was selected as a dependent variable in this study to test the symbolic representation theory of representative bureaucracy. Importantly, prior research has demonstrated that representative bureaucracy can lead to positive, concrete outcomes for individuals (Bishu and Kennedy, 2020; Kennedy, 2014), which this study does not test. Although trust in government is important from the perspective of securing compliance and may lead to enhanced coproduction among minority classes of citizen (Ricucci et al., 2017), and moreover may be thought of as a normative imperative, linking up representative bureaucracy with actual service quality and other outcomes of interest rather than subjective evaluations of government trustworthiness is an important research goal which this study's results should not dissuade re-

searchers from pursuing. Of course, although the symbolic representation perspective represents an important contribution to the theory of representative bureaucracy, scholars continue to be concerned about how bureaucracy actually impacts citizens and the conditions under which representativeness is likely to improve bureaucratic outcomes, with bureaucrats directly acting in the interests of clients (Meier, 2019).

Much of the research on representative bureaucracy has been conducted in a single country, which in turn necessitates a focus on the individual-level factors, for instance, whether or not the gender/race of the public service provider and client match (Ricucci et al., 2016; Ricucci et al., 2018). However, studying representative bureaucracy in a cross-national context allows isolating factors that single-context studies preclude. One research path may link up levels of ethnic homogeneity with administrative traditions and test their joint influence in determining the impact of representative bureaucracy. For instance, both Singapore and South Korea have a strong state tradition and high levels of public service quality (Im, Campbell and Cha, 2013; Kasdan and Campbell, 2020; Wade, 2018). However, the former is very diverse whereas the latter has one of the most homogenous populations in the world. Studying the character, conditions, and impact of representative bureaucracy in such contexts in a comparative manner may produce additional insights beyond what can be achieved by focusing exclusively on rich Western countries. Or, ethnolinguistic fractionalization is linked with low growth (Posner, 2004), partly as fractionalization provides incentives to use individual connections in the recruitment process of government at the expense of merit (Sundell, 2014). The interplay between context, recruitment, representativeness, and performance deserves careful treatment as it can shed further light on the relevance of representative bureaucracy to government performance.

Another area of research with which the symbolic perspective on representative bureaucracy may intersect is that of organizational communication and public relations. Communication and the provision of information matters for trust, both within government and for citizens (Campbell and Im, 2015; Im and Campbell, 2020; Van de Walle and Bouckaert, 2003; Yang and Holzer, 2006), particularly as government performance is a complex construct that may not be readily accessible to citizens accustomed to drawing upon a private sector-derived performance model (Campbell, 2020b). In the current study, I argued that representative bureaucracy would have a larger impact on trust in government for immigrants based on the symbolic representation approach. However, one assumption of this argument is that citizens actually pay attention to the composition of government, an assumption that is absent from the active representation approach, which is based in concrete action and the interaction between government and citizens. The composition of government is in many cases largely hidden from citizens, particularly for organs that have an administrative or internal focus. The relative visibility of representative bureaucracy to the citizen should thus be a core determinant of its symbolic impact, and researchers may explore how different ways of making the representativeness of government salient for citizens shapes its impact on trust and other outcomes of interest.

By providing a cross-national, multi-level test of the relationship between representative bureaucracy and trust in government for immigrants, this study provides new evidence for the symbolic representation hypothesis. Although there are limitations and questions remain, this study makes a contribution by leveraging novel data to bring empirical evidence to bear on the link between representative bureaucracy and perceptions of government. As global migration continues to accelerate, and with many (particularly in developing countries) continuing to suffer from poor government and diminished life chances, facilitating an understanding of how public administration can better serve a diverse set of constituents is a practical imperative of growing urgency.

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Original article

LINKING DISTRUST OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR TO AWARENESS OF COVID-19: THE COVID DISSIDENCE PHENOMENON

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Abstract. In this study, we analyze the correlation between trust in government and official information with individual compliance to recommended measures, and between attitudes to government measures and people's behavior during the Covid-19 pandemic. We identified a group of respondents who refused categorically to believe in the COVID-19 pandemic in Russia – COVID-19 dissidents. They not only deny the pandemic but also refuse to comply with pandemic rules and restrictions. Then, based on seven national samples covering a combined total of 40,700 people in all regions of Russia, we established a link between the level of distrust of the public sector and the level of COVID-19 dissidence by means of linear regression.

We proved that COVID-19 dissidents do not trust official statistics and believe in low infection risks. They provide low evaluation of the medical aid quality which leads to underestimation of the risk of being infected and COVID-19 compliance rules. We recommend governments consider restoring citizens' trust as one of the priorities in fighting the pandemic, alongside battling misinformation that feeds conspiracy beliefs. The level of public trust in government decisions is a critical factor that speeds up mass vaccinations and contributes to a quick exit from the pandemic crisis.

Keywords: Trust in government, distrust of the public sector, COVID dissidents, generalized social trust.

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JEL Classification: I1, I18.

Introduction

The theoretical literature offers a variety of approaches to and classifications of trust, depending on whether trust is conceived of in economic, political, psychological or social terms. The works of Francis Fukuyama, Piotr Sztompka, Adam Seligman and others lay the foundation for the study of various aspects of social trust. In this study, we rely on the sociological theories of trust as social capital, and we view this phenomenon in the context of a risk society.

In a risk society, the past loses its ability to determine the present (Beck, 2000), and trust plays a key role in containing risk and mitigating uncertainty. Trust is a “prosthesis that people need in a risk society” (Sztompka, 2012, p. 112). In this study, we drew on Sztompka’s idea that distrust is the “mirror image of trust,” involving negative expectations of others’ future actions, whereas lack of trust is a transitional, intermediate stage in the process of building or losing trust. Following Sztompka, we treat *distrust as a specific position, not merely a lack of trust*. We also adopted Seligman’s understanding of trust (2002) as a form of generalized exchange that is acquired and used only by a whole group and, in modern public relationships, forms the basis of solidarity, creating, in turn, a base for social capital. At the same time, “the reduction of trust in a society will require a more intrusive, rule-making government to regulate social relations” (Fukuyama, 2008, p. 588). For this reason, we regard trust as a matter of exceptional importance and relevance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Trust in government has long been a subject of study for scholars (Bok, 1997; Levy and Stoker, 2000; Kim, 2005). Trust in government is not analogous to personal trust (Aitalieva, 2018). Uslaner (2008) notes that trust in government is different from trust in people and is about government performance and the popularity of political leaders. Government creates a legal framework, standards and administrative practices, all of which can be considered independent objects of trust. Citizens may have different attitudes to different types of government activities and trust or distrust them, and these relationships may change over time. Trust in public institutions can be evaluated indirectly through the observance of laws and regulations. Christensen and Laegreid (2005) found that people who have a high level of trust in one government institution are able to trust all the others. They also say that the higher the level of satisfaction with public services, the more trust people have in government institutions.

Government as a set of institutions is an interesting subject of institutional trust studies (Bachman and Inkpen, 2011), posing questions of trust in internal and external institutional processes, trust monitoring and measurement. However, Nooteboom (2007) states that “for institutions to form a basis for trust in people (institution based trust), one must have trust in those institutions (institutional trust)” (p. 30). Although conceptually institutional trust can be considered as a single structure, trust in specific institutions, such as the police, courts, parliament or banks, is of much greater practical importance. The World

Values Survey¹ (WVS) is an international research program that contains a wide range of questions about trust between various groups of people and institutions. However, Nooteboom (2007) recommends: “For measurement, in surveys, and analysis, and for cross-country comparisons, one should be aware of distinctions between objects of trust (people, firms, institutions), aspects of behavior (competence, intentions), the limits of trust (due to pressures of survival), and the distinction between reliability, which includes control, and trustworthiness, which goes beyond control” (p. 48).

In the last few decades, trust in governments has been in decline. Because trust in institutions depends on competence and values, the information provided to the public should allow citizens to correct their beliefs about how reliable, responsive and efficient the government is. Trust allows citizens to evaluate the government’s integrity, openness, and fairness (OECD, 2017b). Grimmelikhuijsen (2012) distinguishes trust between three dimensions: competence, benevolence, and honesty. Alessandro et al. (2021) built a global index (Trust in Government) on four intermediate indexes (Competence, Benevolence, Honesty, and Confidence).

Trust in government cannot exist without transparency, i.e. transparency of internal government activities and decision-making for an external observer who can obtain the necessary information (Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2013). Rainey (1997) points out that the public often has incorrect information and a biased perception of government activities. In the age of digital technology, information transparency becomes a key dimension of transparency that can be delivered via official government resources and social media. Information transparency for citizens is characterized by accuracy of information, provision of information to the public, the right to access information, and reliable and verifiable sources of information (Cullier and Piotrowsky, 2009; Jaeger and Bertot, 2010).

A key purpose of government information policy is to produce an “informed citizenry” by means of digital technologies and the Internet (Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2013). But if such a policy is ineffective or lacking, especially in times of crisis, the vacuum is filled by all sorts of unsubstantiated rumors and speculation, serving to further undermine trust in official information and the government. Tolbert and Mossberger (2006) demonstrated a direct link between the use of government websites and the level of public confidence in government. Michener and Bersch (2013) formulated the requirements for government information that can help produce informed citizens. Information should be verifiable, simple, comprehensible and accessible so that citizens can easily find it, understand it and reach unambiguous conclusions. Generally speaking, the accuracy of information influences the level of trust (Buerhoff and Vornefeld, 2016). COVID-19 has demonstrated this to a large extent. When government agencies promptly distribute information to the public through social media channels about the measures taken against COVID-19, the positive perception of the government’s response

¹ World Values Survey. URL: <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSContents.jsp> (accessed 30 September 2021).

by citizens during the crisis increases and leads to a higher level of trust (Mansoor, 2021). Using social networks for civic engagement has a significant positive effect on the propensity to trust, and this trust leads to an increase in trust in institutions (Warren et al., 2014; Ticiău, Hinteă and Andrianu, 2020).

Trust has become a key factor during the COVID-19 pandemic, both in slowing the spread of the novel coronavirus infection and in helping countries make a faster recovery from the attendant economic crisis. According to the 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer,² current world trends in the level of trust are such that people in many countries view government bodies and governments in general as incompetent, unethical and untrustworthy. Moreover, despite a strong global economy and near full employment at the end of 2019, people trusted none of the four analyzed institutions: government, business, non-governmental organizations and the mass media. According to the 2021 Edelman Trust Barometer³ the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the erosion of trust around the world. For example, in the last six months of 2020, the level of trust in governments worldwide has decreased by 8%. The most noticeable is the drop in confidence among Chinese citizens: minus 18 points since May 2020. Trust in any sources of information over the last year of the COVID-19 pandemic has fallen to a record low (search engines – 56%, minus 6%, social networks – 35%, minus 5%).

In the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic, society's level of trust is directly related to both past and future actions of government institutions. In the current situation, trust depends crucially on the set of measures that authorities develop and implement to prevent, treat and slow the spread of the infection as well as on support for the population and business. Another key factor in relations between government and society is work to raise public awareness of various processes going on in the country.

Seven sociological surveys, conducted in Russia in March–August 2020 and based on a representative sampling, identified a stable group of COVID dissidents – people who are less inclined to agree with the restrictions imposed, less willing to comply with lockdown measures and more critical of the actions taken by local and national government. An international comparison between the level of trust and the spread of COVID-19 has shown that such trends are not limited to Russia. The authors compared data on the global spread of COVID-19 with the findings of the 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer and found that the speed of transmission and length of lockdowns in the first wave of the pandemic correlated with the level of trust in national governments.

Our study focuses on COVID dissidents, who deny the pandemic despite the wide dissemination of information on COVID-19, the growing number of cases, the rising death toll, and the measures taken by the government. We look at how trust in government impacts the compliance with anti-COVID measures.

This article is structured as follows: First, we characterize trust as well as distrust of the public sector. Second, we describe the base, data and methodology

² Edelman Trust Barometer 2020. URL: 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer | Edelman (accessed 30 September 2021).

³ Edelman Trust Barometer 2021. URL: 2021 Edelman Trust Barometer | Edelman (accessed 30 September 2021).

of our study. Third, we present our key findings. Finally, we formulate our conclusions and make recommendations for further research.

Conceptual framework

Many scholars have investigated the influence of government measures on the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. In general, the measures taken by governments belong to two main types: one concentrates on strengthening the capacity of the hospital system, such as setting up temporary hospitals; the other targets reducing the probability of contracting the virus, such as a lockdown (Alfano and Ercolano, 2020; Achuo, 2020). We studied the link between citizens' trust in government and support for its measures to control COVID-19. In each country, of course, the level of public trust in government is influenced by a wide variety of social, political, economic and other factors. However, our review of relevant research has shown that these are similar factors.

First, by analyzing existing academic studies, we found that individual compliance with the recommended measures is influenced by many economic, socio-political, and psychological factors (Bish and Michie, 2010). Previous outbreaks of the pandemic in the world have shown that lack of trust can lead to refusal to comply, which leads to increased difficulties in fighting the disease. Trust in government is a strong determinant of preventive behaviors during a pandemic (Fremuth et al., 2014). Factual knowledge provision about government performance outcomes and intentions could be an important way of increasing citizens' trust in government (Grimmelikhuijsen, 2012).

Second, we compared data on the level of trust in countries covered in the 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer⁴ with international statistics on the number of cases⁵ on the first, tenth and twentieth days of lockdown periods in the countries selected for analysis and confirmed a correlation that the lower the level of trust in public institutions, the lower the level of compliance with lockdown restrictions (rules).

Using data on restrictions (lockdown measures)⁶, we measured the spread of COVID-19 in relation to the introduction and lifting of restrictions (lockdown measures) in each of the analyzed countries. It should be noted that, in introducing restrictions to slow and/or prevent the spread of COVID-19, the analyzed countries did not do so in a uniform manner, but at different times and in stages, depending on the number of cases nationally and internationally, the economic and social situation and other factors. Detailed data are provided in Appendix A.

The 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer bases its assessment of the level of trust in relations between government and society on two criteria – competence (delivering on promises) and ethical behavior (doing the right thing for society) –

⁴ Edelman Trust Barometer 2020.

⁵ Worldometer. Coronavirus statistics. URL: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/> (accessed 30 September 2021).

⁶ Global Covid-19 Lockdown Tracker. URL: <https://auravision.ai/covid19-lockdown-tracker/> (accessed 30 September 2021).

and the authors of this study thus hypothesized that a high level of trust in public institutions would promote compliance with government lockdown restrictions, and vice versa: a lower level of trust in government would result in a higher level of non-compliance with lockdown restrictions.

In all of the countries that we looked at, restrictions had a positive effect in terms of slowing the spread of COVID-19: the rate of growth in the number of cases was substantially lower after restrictions were lifted. However, despite the fact that the duration of lockdown measures differed from country to country, countries with a high trust rating showed average rates of growth that were half what they were in countries with a low rating on the tenth and twentieth days after restrictions were lifted. Countries with a higher level of trust saw median growth of 1.6% and 1.5% in the number of cases on the tenth and twentieth days after restrictions were lifted, while countries with a low level of trust saw 3.5% and 2.9%, respectively.

Moreover, lockdown measures lasted longer on average in countries in the first group (67 days) than in countries in the second group (47 days). This may indicate an understanding that lockdown measures needed to be extended in countries with a low level of trust because citizens did not scrupulously comply with government restrictions for a considerable period of time.

Bargain and Aminjonov (2020) combined three data sources: COVID-19 mobility reports from Google, trust data from the European Social Survey and policy stringency from the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker. They found out that European regions with high-trust level before COVID-19 crisis demonstrated high and non-linear efficiency of government constraints policy during the crisis.

Third, we analyzed various studies on the relationship between trust in government and official information, attitudes to government measures and people's behavior during the Covid-19 pandemic.

At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, scientists from different countries studied the relationship between public confidence and support for government measures to combat COVID-19. Pre-existing institutional trust affects attitudes towards an emergency response. But researchers have discovered the so-called "crisis effect". For example, in the UK, whilst 52.7% of respondents said the government was making the right decisions, only 42.3% thought the government was telling the truth about COVID-19. Generalised mistrust in politics was shared across all groups as a reason for questioning the truthfulness of official information on COVID-19 (Enria et al., 2020).

Mansoor (2021) studied the mechanism of the relationship between the elements of good governance and public confidence in government. He showed through the example of Pakistan that the citizens' perception of government measures on COVID-19 is positively associated with the general trust in government.

Government agencies are responsible for providing information about the outbreak of the virus. Attitudes towards public institutions can influence how people perceive reports about the epidemic and the restrictions imposed.

Alessandro et al. (2021) highlight the importance of active information provision to citizens as a way to increase transparency. If citizens find out about

the deception, they will no longer trust the information provided by the government, and the value of any subsequent signals will disappear. The provision of high-quality and objective information through social networks strengthens this connection (Mansoor, 2021). American scholars investigated the level of public trust in various sources of information about COVID-19, depending on the categories of general health, age, place of residence, as well as the quality of compliance with recommended measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (Ipsen et al., 2021).

A number of researchers from different countries have studied the relationship between different types of conspiracy theories about COVID-19 and defensive behavior.

On the one hand, these studies have demonstrated a relationship between the approval of unreasonable beliefs about COVID-19 and a decrease in compliance with public health recommendations (Allington et al., 2020; Oleksy et al., 2021). Wirawan et al. (2021) showed that the relationship between conspiracy beliefs and restriction-related behavior is mediated by political trust, a preference for saving the economy, and a preference for saving lives. On the other hand, some studies find no significant link between conspiracy theories and compliance with preventive measures, which can be explained by significant differences between countries and assessment tools. For example, researchers from China proved a positive statistically significant relationship between trust and excessive preventive behavior only among people with a low level of knowledge about COVID-19 (Min et al., 2020).

To analyze the correlation between COVID dissidence and distrust of the public sector, we applied the model used by Porumbescu (2016) to analyze how the use of social networks and websites is linked to trust in government. This partly determined our choice of theoretical sources. Porumbescu based his measurement of trust in government on three criteria: citizens' opinion of public sector competence, their opinion of whether the public sector acts in the interests of citizens, and the public sector's truthfulness in living up to its public commitments.

In addition, other confidence factors from the global online survey in 58 countries were analyzed. The results of this study indicate a strong distrust of government (26.6%), which depends on stringency of public health measures and mental health outcomes and gender (O'Hara et al., 2021).

All other hypotheses are formulated in accordance with this model and presented in Table 2.

Data, measures, research methodology, hypotheses

Data

The study consists of seven separate sociological surveys (waves of research) taken by residents of Russia between 18 March and 7 September 2020, involving a programmed online questionnaire. The total research sample included 40,700 people from all 85 constituent entities of the Russian Federation. Detailed information is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Research samples by survey (wave)

	1st wave	2nd wave	3rd wave	4th wave	5th wave	6th wave	7th wave
Periods of fieldwork	18–19 March 2020	4–5 April 2020	18–20 April 2020	11–12 May 2020	21–26 May 2020	13–16 June 2020	5–7 Septem- ber 2020
Sample (no. of respondents)	1,2	3,1	11,1	7,3	7,6	7,8	9
Women, %	54.6	54.5	59.6	53.7	55.5	54.7	53.5
less than 20 years, %	8.7	3.1	4.2	3.3	3.8	2.9	2.8
20–29 years, %	16.3	12.0	17.3	11.9	14.4	11.8	9.5
30–39 years, %	19.4	22.9	25.7	22.8	24.1	22.4	22.4
40–49 years, %	19.7	18.8	23.7	19.0	23.0	18.8	18.4
50–59 years, %	19.6	17.6	18.0	18.4	19.6	17.5	17.3
60 years and more, %	16.2	25.5	11.0	24.5	15.0	26.5	29.5

Source: Compiled by the authors.

During periods of fieldwork, respondents were recruited from among all users of the Russian Internet, using banners, pop-up windows and offers. People who matched the characteristics of the target group were routed to the online questionnaire. Recruitment took place wherever people spend time on the Internet: social networks, news portals, apps and games, search engines, thematic websites, blogs and forums, etc. Respondents were recruited by means of river sampling in proportion to the population of each federal district. Instead of selecting respondents from databases (panels), river sampling is an online research method that involves recruiting Internet users in real time.

River sampling makes it possible to recruit respondents from a variety of social and demographic groups, not just those willing to take a paid survey. By promoting a survey on thematic platforms, researchers obtain a sample that is representative by age, gender and region of Russia.

Measures

The surveys in each of the seven waves consisted of an average of 25–30 questions, including open-ended questions and socio-demographic questions. There were also filter questions: the answer to one question determined whether the respondent would be asked follow-up questions or not. Questionnaires took an average of no more than fifteen minutes to complete. They were programmed so that no one could take the survey more than once. Each respondent's answers were entered in an electronic database in SPSS format. Data on respondents who did not answer all the questions were excluded from consideration.

The questionnaire was developed using the OECD Guidelines on Measuring Trust and contains international recommendations for the collection, publication and analysis of trust data (OECD, 2017a).

Research Methodology

In our study, following Porumbescu’s model (2016), citizens’ perception of whether the public sector has the required competencies is reflected in the following questions:

- confidence (on scale of 10) that problems caused by the pandemic in Russia will be solved within a month;
- confidence (on scale of 10) that medical institutions in the area where the respondent lives can cope with the flow of patients.

Citizens’ perception of whether the public sector acts with their best interests in mind and is committed to their well-being was studied using the following questions:

- attitude (Likert scale) to self-isolation measures;
- assessment (on a scale of 5) of the authorities’ efforts to support individuals and the economy during the pandemic.

The third group of questions reflects citizens’ perception of whether the public sector is truthful in its dealings and sincere in its attempts to live up to public commitments:

- trust in official statistics on the number of cases in Russia (nominal scale)
There is a special group of questions on changes during the pandemic:
- assessment of the risk (on a scale of 10) that respondents and their families will be infected;
- awareness of infected people in the respondent’s environment (nominal scale);
- changes in the respondent’s accustomed lifestyle (nominal scale);
- assessment of changes (Likert scale) in the respondent’s level of income and expenses;
- assessment (on a scale of 10) of the respondent’s adaptation to self-isolation measures;

as well as socio-demographic characteristics: sex, age, economic status, size of community and occupation.

Hypotheses

Table 2

Summary of hypotheses

(H1)	The lower the level of support for (compliance with) government lockdown measures, the higher the level of COVID dissidence
(H2)	The greater the distrust of official statistics, the higher the level of COVID dissidence
(H3)	The lower the assessment people give of their personal risk of being infected, the higher the level of COVID dissidence
(H4)	The lower a household’s economic status, the higher the level of COVID dissidence
(H5)	Young people are more likely to be COVID dissidents
(H6)	COVID dissidents are more likely to live in small communities far from large metropolitan areas

(H7)	Men are more likely than women to be COVID dissidents
(H8)	The less confidence people have that the public sector is competent to deal with the problems caused by COVID-19, the higher the level of COVID dissidence
(H8-1)	The less confidence people have that medical institutions where they live are prepared for the flow of patients, the greater their distrust of the public sector's competence to control COVID-19
(H9)	COVID dissidents are more likely to be critical of the public sector's efforts to support individuals and the economy during the COVID-19 pandemic
(H9-1)	The more strongly people disagree with self-isolation measures, the lower their assessment of the public sector's efforts to support individuals and the economy during the pandemic
(H9-2)	The lower the level of people's compliance with self-isolation, the lower their assessment of the public sector's efforts to support individuals and the economy during the pandemic
(H9-3)	The higher the level of people's adaptation to self-isolation, the higher their assessment of the public sector's efforts to support individuals and the economy during the pandemic

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Results

Stage 1

From the very start of our research, we identified a group of respondents who refused categorically to believe in the COVID-19 pandemic in Russia, claiming that the danger had been exaggerated or that it was all the invention of persons who stood to benefit⁷. In the first survey, one in four respondents (26.3%) held this view. By the time of the seventh wave, despite the continuing spread of COVID-19 in Russia, this number had risen to 43.4%. We termed this group of respondents *COVID dissidents* (COVID-D) and studied them over the course of six months.

Based on answers from the seven total samples, we generated two additional samples: (1) COVID-D⁸ and (2) respondents aware of people in their environment who were infected. To identify the distinctive behavioral strategies of COVID dissidents, we compared compliance with lockdown measures in these three groups in five of the surveys (waves 3–7). Complete data are provided in Appendix B. The comparison showed that COVID dissidents were two or more times less compliant with lockdown restrictions than respondents in the total sample and three or more times less than those aware of people in their environment who were infected with the virus.

⁷ In all seven waves, respondents were asked to choose the statement that best characterizes the current state of COVID-19 in Russia. There were nine possible answers: 1) the pandemic hasn't yet begun; 2) we are still in an early stage; 3) the pandemic is currently under way; 4) the pandemic is now peaking; 6) there won't be a pandemic: the danger has been exaggerated; 7) there won't be a pandemic: it's the invention of people who stand to benefit; 8) don't know; 9) other.

⁸ The COVID-D group includes respondents who answered the question on the current state of COVID-19 in Russia by saying there won't be a pandemic: answers 6 and 7 (see footnote 6).

Thus, the respondents we regarded as COVID dissidents were not only those who deny the pandemic in Russia, but also those who do not comply with government lockdown restrictions.

Stage 2

In the second stage of our study, we formulated several hypotheses that were studied in all surveys after the first (Table 2). We created linear regression models to analyze hypotheses (H1)–(H7) based on the data obtained in surveys 2–7. The regression results are detailed in Appendix C.

We originally hypothesized that COVID dissidents were more likely to be young, male, live in small communities far from large metropolitan centers and have low economic status. However, when we included these variables in the regression equation for all six surveys, we found that these factors have virtually no bearing on COVID dissidence. Moreover, the distribution of respondents by age, economic status and size of community in groups of COVID dissidents who fear and do not fear infection matched that of the total sample throughout the period of study. It is true that the percentage of males among COVID dissidents was higher than in the total samples in the first and second waves, but the percentages evened out by the seventh wave. This is an indirect indication that when the infection first began to spread, women were more likely to believe that the pandemic was real due to fears for their health and the health of their families.

The regression models in Appendix C, based on the six waves of surveys, show that the hypothesized relevance of sex (H7), age (H5), economic status (H4) and size of community (H6) was not corroborated. For this reason, only three independent variables were used in the final regression models: personal risk of contracting COVID-19, trust in official statistics on the number of cases in Russia and attitude to self-isolation measures. Since R^2 for linear regressions turned out to be low (about 0.3), it should be noted that the independent variable (variables) may be influenced by other factors.

First, the percentage of COVID dissidents among respondents who assessed their danger of infection as high (who fear infection)⁹ remained within a range of 1%–2% in all the surveys. In the group of respondents who assessed their danger of infection as low (who do not fear infection)¹⁰, the percentage of COVID dissidents rose from 63% in the first wave to 83.8% in the seventh wave of the study. Second, among COVID dissidents, initially one out of three respondents, and subsequently one out of two, assessed the risk that they and their families would be infected as low. It should be noted that over the six months covered by the study, the percentage of respondents who did not fear infection essentially doubled: from 12.5% to 23% of all those surveyed. Third, the Pearson correlation coefficient between people's assessment of the coronavirus situation in Russia and their assessment of their personal risk of being infected also steadily increased: from 0.381 in the first survey to 0.527 in the sixth.

⁹ Score of 8–10 on a scale of 10 in terms of the perceived danger of COVID-19 for oneself and one's family.

¹⁰ Score of 0–3 on a scale of 10 in terms of the perceived danger of COVID-19 for oneself and one's family.

Thus, the lower the assessment people give of their personal risk of being infected, the more often they express the opinion that there is no pandemic, i.e., on a personal level they do not trust the official international position on the COVID-19 pandemic. Figure 1 compares growth in COVID dissidence with growth in the awareness that people in the environment are infected as well as with the percentage of COVID dissidents who do not fear infection.

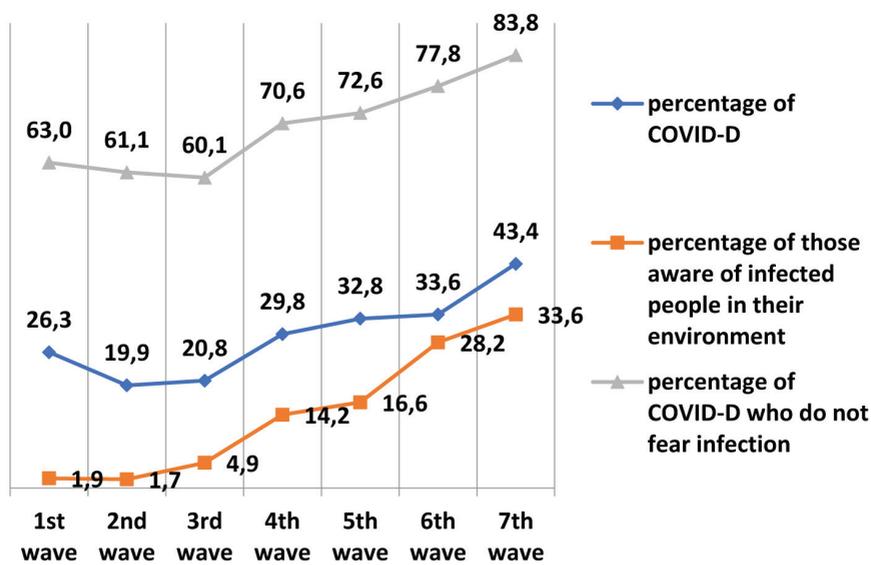


Figure 1. Comparison of growth in COVID-D with growth in the awareness that people in the environment are infected as well as with the percentage of COVID-D who do not fear infection, in percentage

To test hypotheses (H1)–(H3), we created six regression models, including one dependent variable – the attitude to COVID-19 in Russia – and three independent variables: assessment of personal risk of infection, trust in official statistics and attitude to self-isolation measures.

Table 3

Linear regressions of factors associated with a level of COVID dissidence

	2nd wave	3rd wave	4th wave	5th wave	6th wave	7th wave
Constant	3.502	3.550	4.161	4.363	4.501	4.676
Personal risk of being infected	- 0.206	- 0.211	- 0.231	- 0.204	- 0.197	- 0.178
Attitude to self-isolation	+ 0.386	+ 0.410	+ 0.378	+ 0.349	+ 0.307	+ 0.327
Trust in official statistics	+ 0.172	+ 0.164	+ 0.157	+ 0.167	+ 0.201	+ 0.151

Source: Compiled by the authors.

A comparison of the six regression equations shows that the constant increased, generally indicating that COVID dissidence grew during the spread of COVID-19 in Russia, as we have already noted. The coefficients of the dependent variables do not differ significantly and show an identical progression in all surveys. Our regression models demonstrate that *people who have a low risk of being infected, who do not support self-isolation measures, and who believe that official data on the infection are inflated or that the number of cases are minimal, fall into the group of COVID dissidents*. Hypotheses (H1), (H2) and (H3) were thus corroborated.

Stage 3

In the third stage of our study, we looked at how confidence that the public sector is competent in dealing with the problems caused by the pandemic is related to COVID dissidence. (H8): The less confidence people have that the public sector is competent to deal with the problems caused by COVID-19, the higher the level of COVID dissidence.

In stage 3, our study uses moderated mediation analysis to assess hypotheses H1, H2 and H3. Moderated mediation models are estimated using three ordinary least squares (OLS) regression equations. The equations used for moderate mediation differ from the standard approach in that they extend the standard regression (Table 3) by including a new interaction term in each. In stage 3, we used citizens' attitudes to the level of the public sector's competence to control COVID-19 as such a term. Specifying the analysis in this way gives us a clearer idea of how one of the main indicators of basic trust can influence the appearance of COVID dissidence.

The frequency distribution, on a scale of 10, of answers in waves 2–7 to the question “How confident are you that the problems caused by the spread of the pandemic in Russia will be solved within a month?” is shown in Figure 2:

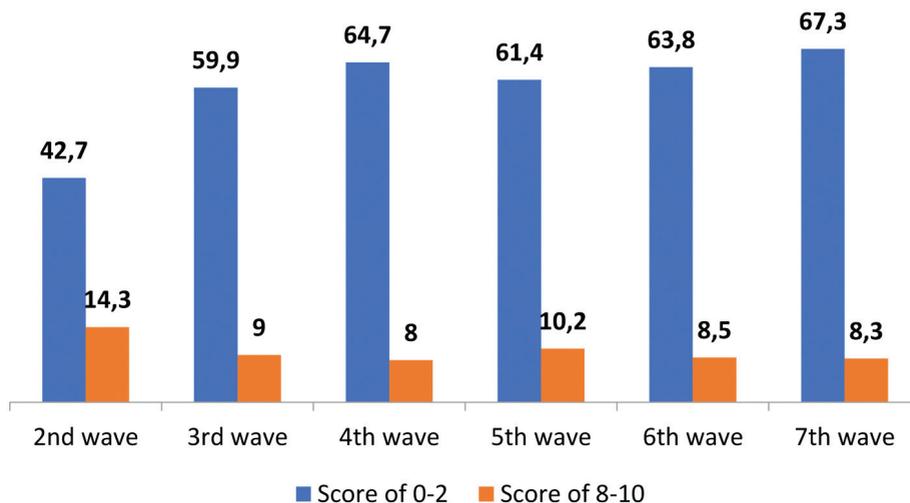


Figure 2. Distribution of positive (8–10) and negative (0–2) assessments of the public sector's competence in dealing with the problems caused by COVID-19, in percentage

To obtain a variable for selecting observations, we combined the respondents' scores into three groups: scores of 0–3 in the first group, 3–7 in the second, and 8–10 in the third.

The new regression equations used to forecast the level of COVID dissidence for the group that gave a low assessment of the government's ability to control the spread of COVID-19 in Russia (a score of 0–2) are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Linear regressions

	2nd wave	3rd wave	4th wave	5th wave	6th wave	7th wave
Constant	3.730	3.742	4.181	4.380	4.556	5.416
Personal risk of being infected	– 0.242	– 0.237	– 0.244	– 0.214	– 0.212	– 0.225
Attitude to self-isolation	+ 0.363	+ 0.389	0.356	+ 0.347	+ 0.311	+ 0.123
Trust in official statistics	+ 0.187	+ 0.171	+ 0.184	+ 0.176	+ 0.193	+ 0.163

Source: Compiled by the authors.

A comparison of the six new regressions (Table 4) with regression equations (Table 3) shows that the constant increased in all equations, and the coefficients of the independent variables follow the same trend in all surveys, increasing in the majority of cases. This confirms the general conclusion that people who do not believe that the public sector has the necessary competencies to control COVID-19 are more likely to become COVID dissidents. Hypothesis (H8) was thus corroborated.

Stage 4

In stage 4, we used the data of individual surveys to study individual aspects of COVID dissidence.

In the second and third surveys, we hypothesized (H8-1) that distrust of the public sector's competence to control COVID-19 has to do with a lack of confidence that medical institutions where people live are prepared for the flow of patients. The Pearson correlation coefficient between these variables was 0.383 for the first wave and 0.345 for the second. Hypothesis (H7-1) was thus corroborated.

The fifth-wave survey included a special question about the efforts of federal, regional and municipal authorities to support individuals and the economy during the pandemic. Since there turned out to be a strong correlation between the assessments of various levels of government (a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.663–0.852), only one variable was used in the regression model: assessment of efforts at the federal level. Appendix D gives the values of the Pearson correlation coefficient with the given variable. In addition to the independent variables from the previously described regression models, two new variables were added:

“managed to adapt to self-isolation” (correlation: 0.309) and “compliance with self-isolation”¹¹ (correlation: -0.35).

We further hypothesized that COVID dissidents are more inclined to be critical of the public sector’s efforts to support individuals and the economy during the COVID-19 pandemic (H9). To corroborate this hypothesis, we created a regression model including one dependent variable – assessment of the public sector’s actions – and two new independent variables – compliance with self-isolation and adaptation to self-isolation – in addition to all the independent variables previously included in the full regression model.

By incrementally generating the regression equation, we established the following significant dependence:

$$\text{Assessment of the public sector's actions} = 2.506 - 0.087 (\text{attitude to self-isolation}) - 0.301 (\text{compliance with self-isolation}) - 0.133 (\text{impact of COVID-19 on spending}) + 0.063 (\text{adaptation to self-isolation}) \quad (1)$$

The regression model (1) demonstrates that the more strongly people disagree with self-isolation restrictions and the less they comply with those restrictions, the lower their assessment of the public sector’s actions. In contrast, the higher the level of people’s adaptation to self-isolation, the higher their assessment of the public sector’s actions. People who lost income during the pandemic also gave a lower assessment of the public sector’s actions.

Thus, people who do not support self-isolation measures (74.2% of COVID dissidents), who do not comply with restrictions and who have lost some or all of their income (54% of COVID dissidents) are more likely to be critical of the public sector’s efforts to support individuals and the economy during the pandemic.

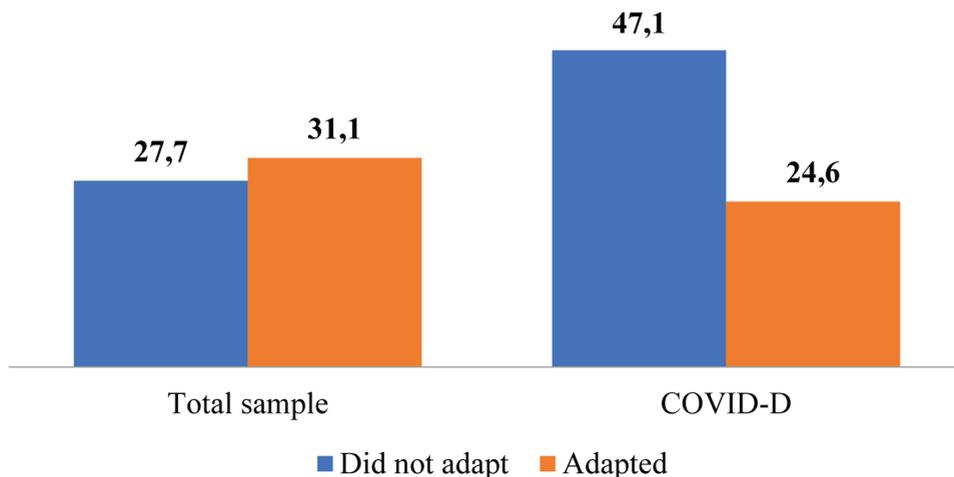


Figure 3. Comparison of how COVID dissidents and respondents in the total sample assessed their adaptation to self-isolation, in percentage, 5th wave.

¹¹ A factor analysis was used to calculate this variable by determining the factor loading of all answers to the question “How have you changed your accustomed lifestyle during the coronavirus pandemic?”

The sixth and last wave included two questions on the sources of COVID dissidence as perceived by COVID dissidents themselves: why they do not regard the virus as dangerous and what sources of information they base this on. A factor analysis was done based on the answers received. The results are detailed in Appendix E. The factor analysis showed that one out of five COVID dissidents has a conspiracy theory to explain COVID-19: it was created as a biological weapon, or to expand microchip implantation, or to alter the human genetic code, or to reduce the world's population, and so on. Ten percent of COVID dissidents believe that COVID-19 was invented by the authorities to distract people from important economic issues. Three other reasons (factors) for denying the COVID-19 pandemic have to do with (1) a lack of people in the respondent's environment who have contracted COVID-19 or had mild symptoms; (2) the perception of COVID-19 as a natural virus that does not result in fatalities, and (3) rumors and speculation, spread largely by social networks. Thus, in a situation where the authorities fail to adequately inform the public about the spread of the virus and the measures being taken, the information vacuum is filled by all sorts of unsubstantiated rumors and speculation and by distrust of official information.

Thus, hypotheses H1-H3, H8-H9 are accepted; H4-H7 are not supported.

Discussion

The current study applied the model used by Porumbescu (2016) to analyze how the use of social networks and websites is linked to trust in government. We confirmed that three criteria could be used to measure trust in government: citizens' opinion of public sector competence, their opinion of whether the public sector acts in the interests of citizens, and the public sector's faithfulness in living up to its public commitments. By including specific variables reflecting each of these three criteria in the model, we were able to identify the key factors influencing trust in government and also the specific conditions and forms of distrust of government as these relate to COVID dissidence in Russia.

Drawing on theoretical literature, international statistics and sociological studies, we demonstrated that trust in government is an important determinant of citizens' compliance with public health policies, especially in times of crisis. General international trends were corroborated by research done in Russia. Our study confirmed most of the similar hypotheses from international studies: a higher level of compliance to national directives is observed in regions with a high level of trust (Bargain and Aminjonov, 2020); general COVID-19 conspiracy theories negatively correlate with preventive behavior, while the belief that government was hiding the real number of COVID-19 cases is positively associated with protective measures (Oleksy et al., 2021); trust in public institutions positively predicts different types of precautionary behaviors, but these relationships are conditioned by knowledge about COVID-19 and extreme negative emotion (Min et al., 2020); and without trust in government or institutions, it is difficult to mobilize support for policy implementation, especially when short-term sacrifices are required in crisis situations (Kye and Hwang, 2020).

Using the example of Russia, a country with a low level of trust in government institutions, we established that the higher the level of COVID dissidence, the more likely people are to disagree with self-isolation restrictions and the less likely they are to comply with lockdown measures. COVID dissidents are more inclined to be critical of the public sector's efforts to support individuals and the economy during the COVID-19 pandemic, and this group is much less compliant with self-isolation measures. It turns out that a high level of general distrust of public institutions results in an ever-growing group of COVID dissidents who violate government requirements, thus contributing to growth in the number of cases and to still greater distrust of government efforts to support individuals and the economy during the pandemic. This, in turn, further increases distrust of public institutions and non-compliance with government restrictions as well as the incidence of COVID-19 cases.

We were unable to corroborate the classic hypothesis advanced by many specific as well as general theoretical studies that an increase in the transparency and availability of information tends to improve the level of trust. It would be interesting, however, to look at what type of information, disseminated in what format, tends to promote opportunistic behavior and growth in COVID dissidence and what information, on the contrary, tends to promote social solidarity and reduce the level of COVID dissidence. It would also be interesting to see whether these processes are driven by any additional cultural, ethical, educational or other catalysts in countries with different levels of basic trust.

There are some limitations to this study. First, our study of the causal relationship between trust in government and COVID dissidents' behavior was conducted during the first wave of the pandemic. Second, we conducted our survey in Russia, whose government concentrates a lot of power, thus creating a unique political culture. We believe that extreme caution is needed in order to generalize the findings from our study and map them to other societies.

Conclusions

Our analysis demonstrated that COVID dissidence is not only a Russian, but a global phenomenon, and its dimensions in each country depend on the general level of trust in government: the lower the level of trust in government, the higher the level of citizens' non-compliance with lockdown restrictions. Our results also foreshadow the obstacles that some countries may face in order to convince citizens to get vaccinated once a vaccine is developed. In particular, vaccination rates may differ between countries depending on the level of public trust and perception of the effectiveness of government actions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This study brings attention to a serious challenge that is faced by governments around the world, especially in countries with a low level of trust in public institutions. The lower the level of trust, the longer and harder the pandemic recovery is. The clearest confirmation of this conclusion is the new pandemic waves that are now covering the world. We believe that not only a vaccine but

also serious efforts by national governments are needed to stop the pandemic, concentrating particularly on growing the level of public trust in their decisions and actions.

We recommend governments consider restoring citizens' trust as one of the priorities in fighting the pandemic, alongside battling misinformation that feeds conspiracy beliefs. Joint actions by media and government authorities could be effective in achieving trust in official government information. The Government should also provide more space for relevant scientific and statistical information.

We believe that the framework presented in the article can be further enhanced by comparing the results of economic recovery after the pandemic in groups of countries with different levels of trust in government. The pandemic crisis has had mixed impacts on social trust. Improvement in generalized social trust may also have a positive feedback to the risk management process because low social trust can exacerbate the consequences of the crisis (Kye and Hwang, 2020).

Maintaining variety in regional attitudes towards national policy makers continues to be important and should be taken into account by the authorities responsible for general policy design as well as by those responsible for the implementation of nationwide emergency policies. This is relevant to the current context for both the enforcement of lockdown policies and the necessity to recover from the crisis and economic downturn. Further research is needed to find a relationship between local or individual data on vaccination and compliance with anti-COVID restrictions. The research studies could go further to revealing the relationship between risk management processes and the level of public trust in various social groups.

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Appendix A. National levels of trust and growth in the number of cases after restrictions (lockdown measures) are lifted

No	Country	Trust in government according to the Edelman Trust Barometer 2020	Duration of lockdown, days	Growth in the number of cases 10 days after restrictions are lifted	Growth in the number of cases 20 days after restrictions are lifted
1	<i>China</i>	90	58	0.1%	0.1%
2	<i>India</i>	81	32	6.5%	6.6%
3	<i>Saudi Arabia</i>	78	94	3.3%	2.9%
4	<i>UAE</i>	76	46	4.9%	4.3%
5	<i>Indonesia</i>	75	127	1.6%	1.5%
6	<i>Singapore</i>	70	59	3.5%	2.8%
7	<i>Thailand</i>	60	76	0.1%	0.1%
8	<i>Netherlands</i>	59	49	0.9%	0.7%
9	<i>Malaysia</i>	58	84	0.3%	0.2%
10	<i>Canada</i>	50	46	2.9%	2.3%
11	Germany	45	38	1.0%	0.8%
12	Mexico	44	107	2.1%	2.0%
13	Australia	44	53	0.1%	0.2%
14	Japan	43	54	0.2%	0.3%
15	<i>Italy</i>	41	36	1.7%	1.3%
16	<i>Ireland</i>	41	52	0.3%	0.2%
17	USA	39	42	2.7%	2.3%
18	<i>Brazil</i>	37	27	9.1%	8.1%
19	UK	36	45	1.7%	1.3%
20	<i>France</i>	35	55	0.3%	0.4%
21	<i>Argentina</i>	34	80	4.5%	4.8%
22	<i>Russia</i>	33	42	3.5%	2.9%
23	<i>Columbia</i>	33	62	4.8%	4.3%
24	<i>Spain</i>	30	37	2.2%	1.9%
25	<i>South Africa</i>	20	36	6.0%	6.0%

Sources: Compiled by the authors.

Appendix B. Comparison of compliance with lockdown restrictions by various groups of respondents: COVID dissidents and those aware of infected people in their environment as compared with the total sample, by wave, %

	I wear a face mask	I observe social distancing	I avoid public places	I avoid public transport	I don't go shopping as often	I work at home	I stay at home more often	I wash my hands more often	I cancel plans made with family and friends	I haven't made any changes in my lifestyle
3rd wave	-	35.9	43.2	36	44.7	16.3	67	56	30.9	13
COVID-D, 3rd wave	-	14.8	20.5	15.2	17.4	8.4	39.8	28.9	17.2	37.3
Infected people in the environment, 3rd wave	-	56.8	57.2	50.5	58.6	33	78	68.5	48.1	3.8
4th wave	43.8	37.4	43.1	35.5	38.3	16	58.8	51.1	28	19.3
COVID-D, 4th wave	18.5	14.8	20.5	16.1	17.1	7.9	33.9	27.3	17.1	41.1
Infected people in the environment, 4th wave	60.4	56.5	56.9	49.5	55.1	27.9	74.5	64.3	40.9	5.9
5th wave	50.9	41.2	47.4	40.2	39	14.9	53.2	56.9	30.9	22.5
COVID-D, 5th wave	17.7	12.7	16.1	13.8	13.1	5.7	21.3	27.3	13.5	51.9
Infected people in the environment, 5th wave	71.9	63.3	69	60.1	59.9	27.9	73.5	73.6	50	6.5
6th wave	48.4	40.1	45.5	38.5	35	12.9	46.8	55.3	26.2	25.1
COVID-D, 6th wave	13.4	8.6	11.8	10.4	7.1	4.7	13.1	24	8.1	60.1
Infected people in the environment, 6th wave	70.3	63.1	67.7	58.3	55.5	20.3	66.8	74.1	42.7	6.1
7th wave	40.5	31.8	38.3	28.3	18.3	4.3	22.5	66.4	9.3	27
COVID-D, 7th wave	18.5	14.3	18.5	13.1	6.5	1.6	8.9	36.9	3.1	49
Infected people in the environment, 7th wave	58.9	49.6	55.9	44.6	29.6	8	32.2	75.3	16.6	8.9

Sources: Compiled by the authors.

Appendix C. Regression results of the fully specified model in stage 2

	Second wave	Third wave	Fourth wave	Fifth wave	Sixth wave	Seventh wave
R ²	0.285	0.313	0.359	0.332	0.374	0.263
Durbin-Watson	2.050	1.993	2.005	2.014	2.013	2.014
Attitude to personal risks of infection	-0.203	-0.211	-0.234	-0.206	-0.202	-0.212
Attitude to self-isolation	0.372	0.395	0.363	0.339	0.302	0.136 ¹²
Trust in official statistics	0.172	0.163	0.157	0.165	0.200	0.155
Sex	-0.169	-0.073	-0.035	-0.035	0.035	0.006
Size of community	0.042	-0.007	-0.059	-0.020	0.012	0.029
Age	0.087	0.051	0.081	0.069	0.013	0.041
Economic status	-0.042	-0.083	-0.050	-0.033	0.015	-0.034
Impact of COVID-19 on income	0.046	0.043	0.037	0.035	0.048	-
Impact of COVID-19 on spending	0.005	-0.005	-	-		-

Sources: Compiled by the authors.

Appendix D. Bivariate correlations¹³ at stage 3

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Assessment of the public sector's actions (1)	1							
Assessment of the public sector's competence (2)	0.296**	1						
Attitude to personal risks of infection (3)	0.304**	0.079**	1					
Trust in official statistics (4)	0.036**	0.074**	-0.284**	1				
Impact of COVID-19 on income (5)	-0.229**	-0.063**	-0.101**	0.012	1			
Attitude to self-isolation (6)	-0.280**	-0.041**	-0.461**	0.297**	0.127**	1		
Compliance with self-isolation (7)	-0.356**	-0.101**	-0.529**	0.195**	0.090**	0.418**	1	
Managed to adapt to self-isolation (8)	0.309**	0.169**	0.227**	-0.076**	-0.254**	-0.266**	-0.213**	1

Sources: Compiled by the authors.

¹² In the seventh survey, this question was formulated a little differently: "If there is a second wave, how fully will you comply with self-isolation measures?"

¹³ ** Significance level of 0.01 (two-tailed).

Appendix E. Results of factor analysis, sixth wave

Rotation matrix of components^a

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
Explained aggregate dispersion, %	22.247	10.240	8.228	7.643	7.419
The authorities are to blame for the emergence of COVID-19	-.015	.763	-.005	.008	.123
A global shadow government is to blame for the emergence of COVID-19	.643	-.047	-.063	-.131	-.149
Pharmaceutical companies are to blame for the emergence of COVID-19	.391	.268	.184	.273	.053
No one in my environment has contracted COVID-19	.088	.257	-.739	.198	-.293
No one in my environment has died from COVID-19	.141	.366	-.277	.549	-.226
Everyone I know who was infected had only mild symptoms	.080	.171	.810	.167	-.256
I have heard/read that COVID-19 is not dangerous	.091	.123	-.017	.040	.879
COVID-19 developed naturally without human involvement	-.184	-.330	.118	.738	.155
COVID-19 was created as a biological weapon	.535	.141	.075	-.178	-.067
COVID-19 was created for purposes of selling the vaccine	.593	.252	.037	.184	.060
COVID-19 was created to expand microchip implantation	.691	.120	-.058	.031	.096
COVID-19 was created to alter the human genetic code	.658	-.030	-.044	.104	.057
COVID-19 was created to distract people from current economic issues	.260	.662	-.022	-.099	-.007
COVID-19 was created to reduce the world's population	.700	.091	.021	-.061	.064

Notes: Factoring method: principal components.

Rotation method: varimax with Kaiser normalization.

a. Eight iterations per rotation.

Sources: Compiled by the authors.

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Original article

STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING GOVERNMENT SOVEREIGN WEALTH FUNDS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract. This paper examines the transformational shifts in investment strategies of sovereign wealth funds. It analyzes the basic theory of sovereign wealth funds and justifies the need for its development. It identifies the similarities and distinguishing features of sovereign wealth funds. Four types of sovereign wealth funds are characterized, and the key requirements for their management system are clarified. Analysis results for the changing capital among the world's largest sovereign wealth funds since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic are given. Market value trends of the Government Pension Fund Global (Norway) for 1998–2021 were revealed, and a prediction of its changes for the period until 2026 was created. The influence of the Covid-19 epidemic on the structure of investment portfolios (including the emergence of a new class of assets) was presented, along with GPF's investment strategy. Changes in the amount of NWF's funds (Russia) for the period 2008–2021 were presented and its growth for 2022–2023 was predicted. The transformation of NWF's liquidity regulatory structure was assessed. New trends in the investment activities of sovereign wealth funds, which occurred under the influence of the Covid-19 epidemic, were revealed. These include reduced risk appetite, increased investment activity, and a higher share of direct investments in asset portfolios. Individual sovereign wealth funds were used to compile a chart of their investment portfolios, which were diversified depending on investment goals and risk level. Recommendations for building the investment strategy of sovereign wealth funds were formulated, with a proposed algorithm for its formulation, including three consecutive stages. It is noted that the results of implementing the investment strategy of sovereign wealth funds directly depends on management quality, whose efficiency can be assessed using special indicators.

Keywords: sovereign wealth funds, counter-cyclical regulation, investment portfolio, investment tools, financial tools, financial assets, securities, investments resources, structure of liquid assets, investment strategies, investment horizon.

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JEL Classification: E12, E20, E44, H62, F21, G11, G20, G23, H54, O16.

Sovereign wealth funds first appeared in the 1950s (Kuwait, Venezuela), but it was only at the turn of the 21st century on the backdrop of fairly high prices on primary commodities that countries with various levels of economic development (mainly, with a high share of revenue from hydrocarbon exports) began accumulating reserves, predominantly to stabilize government budgets and neutralize the devastating effects of crises. During this period, governments around the world began creating various kinds of sovereign wealth funds or fiscal surplus funds. The conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic, which led to increased macroeconomic stability and a decline in economic growth rates, gave sovereign wealth funds an additional push to grow.

Sovereign wealth fund theory

According to the most widespread approach, a sovereign wealth fund (SWF) is a specially formed fund whose accumulated resources can be channeled to balance the government budget in the event of increased revenue shortfalls and/or to carry out urgent activities to neutralize the macroeconomic shock felt in countries whose revenue significantly depends on the conditions of the world's commodity markets.

Thus, the classical understanding of a sovereign wealth fund is essentially an investment fund (predominantly government)¹, whose asset portfolio includes government and corporate securities (bonds, stocks), investments in real estate projects and a number of other financial tools, denominated in the major reserve currencies.

The theory of sovereign wealth funds was largely influenced by the Keynesian concept of counter-cyclical regulation, aimed at supporting the economic environment and stimulating economic growth rates during economic recessions.

In this context, sovereign wealth funds can be used as one of the most important tools of a government's counter-cyclical economic policy, within which accumulated resources can be channeled to achieve priority macroeconomic goals: financing deficit budget, stabilizing the national currency's exchange rate, stimulating investment activity, etc.

The authors' research shows that sovereign wealth funds created in various countries around the world not only have similar characteristics, but also display

¹ Exceptions to this rule are, for example, China Investment Corporation (China) or Alaska Permanent Fund (USA).

significant differences. Traditionally, four main types of sovereign wealth funds are identified depending on their intended purpose (Fig. 1).

INTENDED PURPOSE	SOVEREIGN WEALTH FUND TYPE	EXAMPLES
PROTECT AGAINST THE VOLATILITY OF THE GLOBAL COMMODITY MARKETS AND MACROECONOMIC SHOCKS	STABILIZATION	▶ NWF (Russian Federation) ▶ Copper Stabilization Fund (Chile)
CONSERVE NATURAL RESOURCES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS IN CASE OF THEIR EXHAUSTION	SAVINGS / RESERVE	▶ Government Pension Fund Global, Norway
CARRY OUT LARGE INVESTMENT PROJECTS INCLUDING INFRASTRUCTURAL	DEVELOPMENT	▶ China Investment Corporation (China)
PRODUCE THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF REVENUE FROM INVESTMENTS IN RISKY ASSETS	INVESTMENT	▶ Government Investment Corporation (Singapore)

Figure 1: **Classification of the world's sovereign wealth funds***

* **Source:** proposed by the authors based on material from the Sovereign Wealth Fund Institute (<https://www.swfinstitute.org/>); International Forum of Sovereign Wealth Funds (<https://www.ifswf.org>)

A number of traditional requirements exist for the system of managing sovereign wealth funds, which are still relevant in conditions of the new economic “normalcy”:

- Produce the maximum level of revenue by forming an optimal structure for the investment portfolio.
- Ensure maximum transparency of investment activities.
- Comply with the established level of liquidity.

Questions related to the formation and operation of sovereign wealth funds are considered in the works of Allen, Caruana (2008); Balding (2008; 2012); Fernandez, Eschweiler (2008); Feng (2009); Levintal et al. (2009); Quadrio, Miceli (2010); Das, Mazarei, Hoorn (2010); Bolton, Samama, Stiglitz (2012); Castelli, Scacciavillani (2012); Clark, Dixon, Monk (2013); Bernstein, Lerner, Schoar (2013); Gelb, Tordo, Halland et al. (2014); Megliani (2015); Shemirani (2016); Rietveld, Toledano (2017); Leonov, Moiseev (2018); Alsweilem, Rietveld (2018); Braunstein (2019); Megginson, Gao (2020); and Ouni, Bernard, Plaisent (2020).

A growing interest in the role and activities of sovereign wealth funds has led to the need to build a corresponding theoretical foundation, which resulted in the establishment of the Sovereign Wealth Fund Institute (SWFI, 2007²) and the International Forum of Sovereign Wealth Funds (IFSWE, 2009³) in the early 2000s. Since their formation, these structures have published annual reports, which contain trends in the indicators of developing sovereign wealth funds around the world, summarize the experience of their activities and assess how efficiently assets are managed.

² URL: <https://www.swfinstitute.org/>

³ URL: <https://www.ifswf.org/>

At the same time, issues of creating investment strategies and (more so) evaluating how efficiently they are implemented remain beyond the scope of most research work dedicated to this subject.

Currently, there are more than 100 sovereign wealth funds in the world, whose growth is mainly due to increased wealth in developing countries and emerging-market countries. More than 75% of SWF resources are concentrated in these countries with few exceptions (e.g., Norway, France⁴). Most of the resources were derived in the Middle East or Asia-Pacific region.

According to data from JP Morgan Asset Management, in 2020, the world's sovereign wealth funds owned assets amounting to \$7.2 trillion, double the corresponding indicator for 2007 and surpassing the total assets of all the world's hedge funds and private investment funds. Around 60% of the capital goes to sovereign wealth funds, which are formed by revenue generated from exporting energy carriers (revenue from hydrocarbons).

Currently, the ten largest sovereign wealth funds in terms of assets include those from Norway, China, Abu Dhabi, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Singapore and Qatar (Fig. 2).

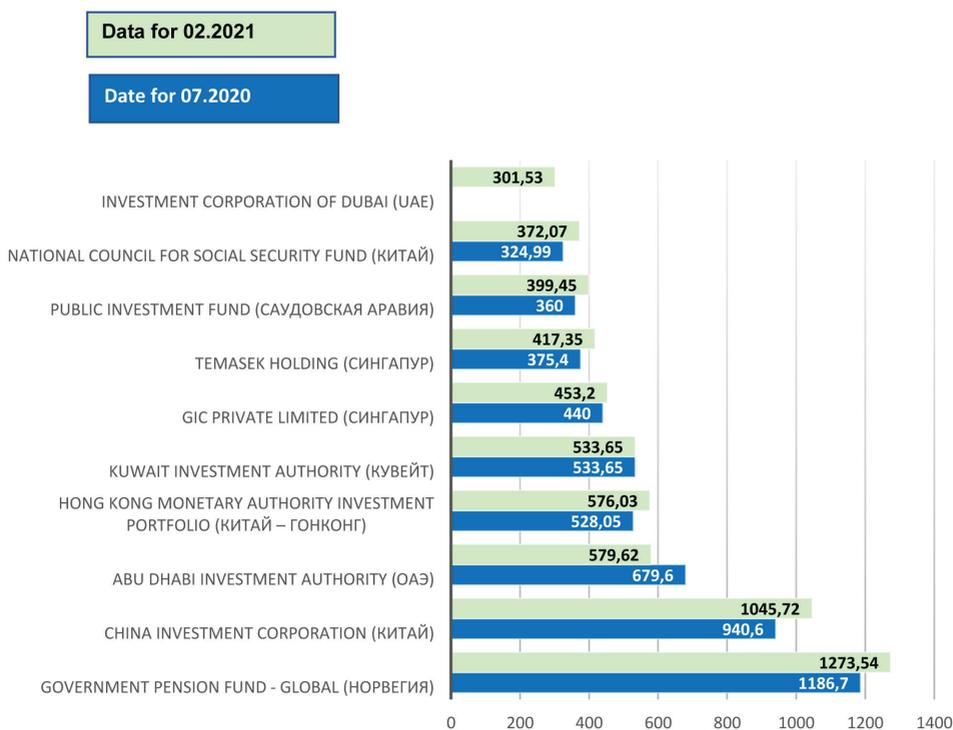


Figure 2: Leading Global Sovereign Wealth Funds (billion \$)*

*The world's largest sovereign wealth funds (billion \$), based on data from 01.03.2021**

*Source: based on data from: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/276617/>

⁴ Bpifrance International Capital, formed in 2012, sovereign wealth fund of France and national investment bank. URL: <https://www.bpifrance.com/>

The figure shows that over a seven-month period (July 2020 through February 2021) practically all global sovereign wealth funds (with the exception of Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (UAE), with a 15% reduction) increased their assets.

The biggest growth was seen by China Investment Corporation (China) at over 11% and by the remaining leader of the ranking, Government Pension Fund Global (Norway), at almost 7.5%. Out of the ten, a drop was seen by the 6th place holder, SAFE Investment Company (China), with assets of \$417.8 billion.

A newcomer to the ranking was the Investment Corporation of Dubai (UAE), whose assets in 2021 were estimated at \$301.53 billion.

Market value trends and investment portfolio structure of Government Pension Fund Global (Norway)

The world's largest Sovereign Wealth Fund (Government Pension Fund Global, GPF) was formed at the end of the 20th century⁵ in order to invest in long-term additional funds assets, generated from exporting crude oil (as tax payments from the oil sector); earnings from the government-owned portfolio⁶ of direct financial interest/state's direct financial interest (SDFI) by issuing licenses and permits for exploring and producing oil and natural gas on the Norwegian continental shelf; and dividends from government investments in the capital of the state company StatoilHydro, which patronizes all Norwegian business in the oil sector and in the area of hydropower.

The Norwegian oil fund was created in order to carry out responsible and long-term management of revenue from the kingdom's oil and gas resources in the North Sea to ensure a redistribution of wealth for future generations.

Over a 25-year period (1996–2020), the fund's market value grew from zero to \$1275 billion (Fig. 3). This is 11% more than the target projected value (\$1147.7 billion).

It should be noted that more than half of GPF's market value is made up of revenue created from the fund's investment activities. According to last year's results (2020), the Norwegian sovereign fund received investment earnings worth \$122.7 billion thanks to the significant price growth on existing assets in the portfolios of American tech giants (Apple, Amazon, Microsoft, Tesla), whose profitability neared 42%.

Annual government investment makes up around one third. Another important source of income is that obtained by lending to corporations and countries.

GPF's changing market value is influenced not only by the profitability of the investment tools used and the inflow and outflow of capital, but also by trends in the exchange rate of the Norwegian krone.

⁵ This fund was renamed in 2006 from its original name The Petroleum Fund of Norway.

⁶ Since 2001, portfolio management has been carried out by the Norwegian state company Petoro.

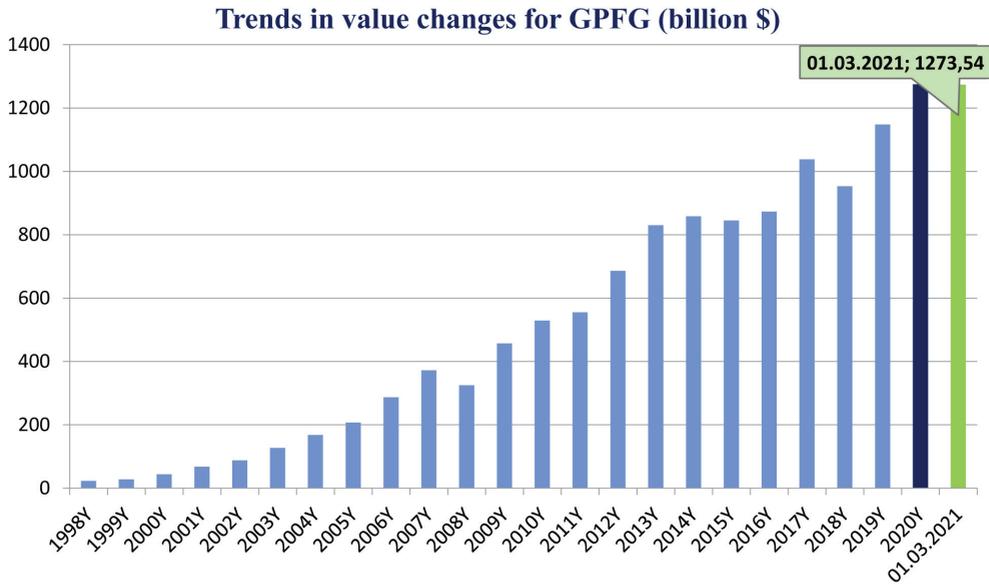


Figure 3: Trends in market value changes for Government Pension Fund Global (Norway), 1996–2020*

*Source: based on data from: <https://www.nbim.no/>

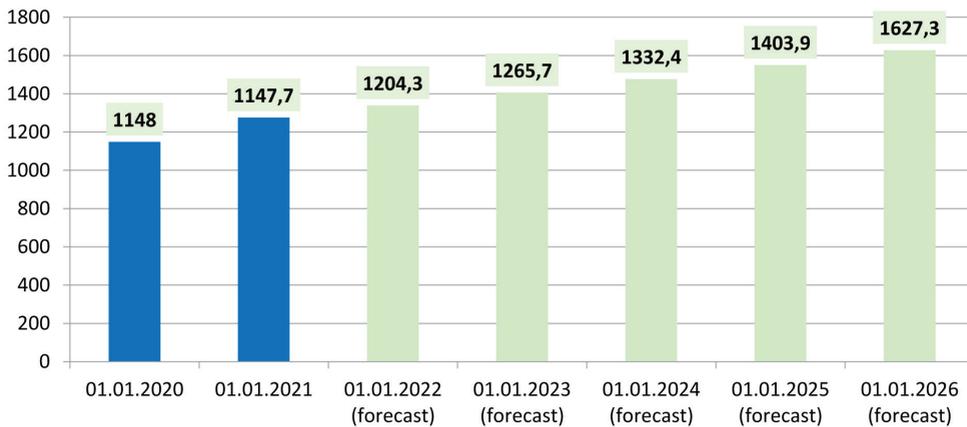


Figure 4: Forecast evaluations of market value changes for Government Pension Fund Global (2020–2026)*

*Source: based on data from <https://www.nbim.no/>

The fund’s general investment strategy, which is fixed in the Investment Mandate, is determined by the Ministry of Finance. GPFG’s first investments in 1996 were derived from bonds. The investment portfolio was completed with assets. In recent years, an important area of investment has become real estate in New York, London and Paris.

In accordance with the authorized Investment Mandate, the Norges Bank Investment Management (NBIM), which covers GPFG funds, contributes investment

resources to four main types of assets: equity investments, fixed-income investments⁷, real estate investments, and infrastructure for renewable energy⁸ (Fig. 5).

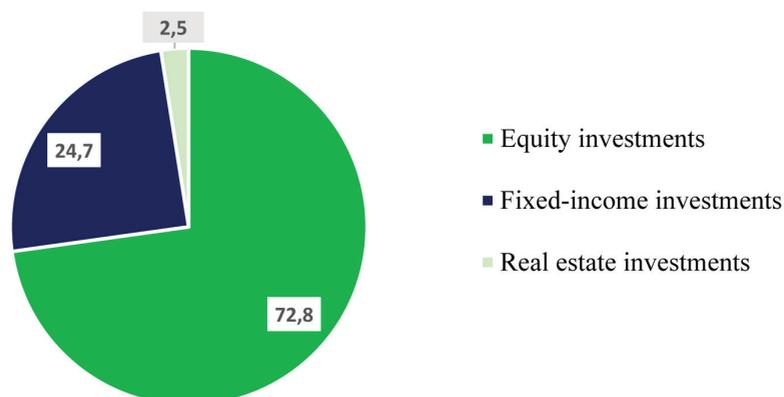


Figure 5: **Structure of GPFG's investment portfolio as of 31.12.2020***

***Source:** based on data from <https://www.nbim.no/en/the-fund/holdings/>

The global Norwegian fund traditionally invests in foreign assets to support a stable exchange rate of the national currency. GPFG's funds are distributed among 73 countries, including 9,123 companies around the world. The fund's portfolio makes up around 1.5% of all the world's assets. Since January 2020, investments in real estate have dropped from 6% to 2.5% and in bonds from 27% to 24.7%. The number of investments in assets have increased from 67% to 72.8%.

In 2020, the regulator (central bank of Norway (Norges Bank)), which is in charge of managing GPFG assets, made the strategic decision to withdraw resources invested in securities of large commodity companies around the world. In particular, there are plans to withdraw investments from corporations in three sectors: mining, electric power and oil production. This decision mainly concerns shareholdings of Sasol, RWE, Glencore⁹, AGL Energy, Anglo American, Canadian Natural Resources, Cenovus Energy, Suncor Energy and Imperial Oil. This reflects the reorientation of the fund's investment activities to implement principles of responsible finance management (ESG).

Total amount of assets and investment prospects of the Russian National Wealth Fund

The Russian National Wealth Fund, whose capital is generated by income from a certain share of earnings from export operations with hydrocarbon raw

⁷ Fixed-income investments are distributed into bonds, issued by governments and government-associated institutions, and securities, issued by companies, while up to 30% of GPFG can be invested in fixed capital.

⁸ In April 2021, 50% of the Borssele 1&2 offshore wind farms' capital (Netherlands) was purchased. This was the first time GPFG had invested in infrastructure for renewable energy sources.

⁹ For reference: at the end of 2019, the GPFG investment portfolio held 1.24% of Glencore shares, 2.4% of Anglo American and 0.6% of RWE.

materials and income from investment activities, places 14th in the global ranking of the largest sovereign wealth funds. According to data by the Russian Ministry of Finance, the total amount of assets reached \$187.57 billion, which makes up 11.7% of the country's GDP (Fig. 5).

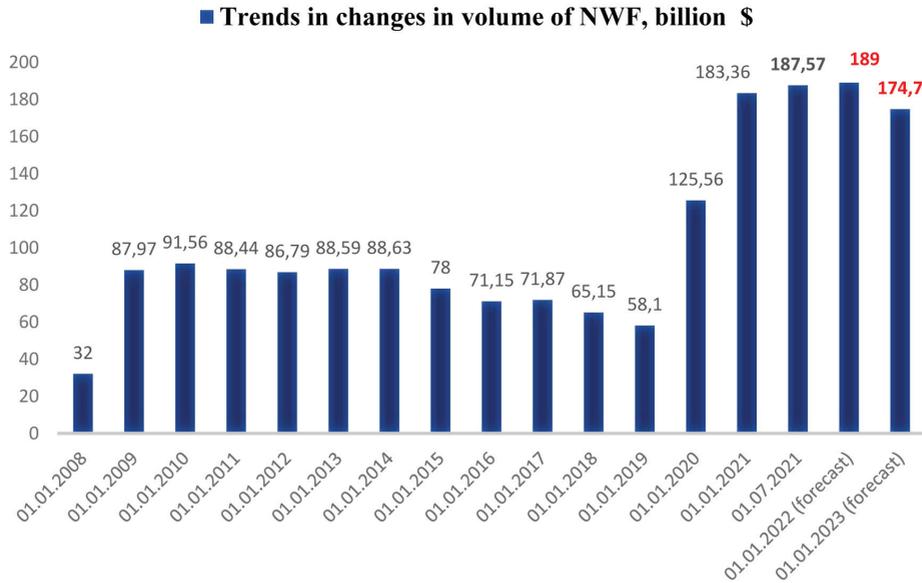


Figure 6: Trends in changes in volume of NWF in 2008–2025 (billion \$)*

*Source: based on data from <https://minfin.gov.ru/ru/performance/nationalwealthfund/>

Despite the existing economic slowdown, the growth of NWF assets in 2020 for the period from 01.01.2020 through 01.01.2021 equaled more than 46% (from 7.3% to 11.7% of the GDP).

To improve the efficiency of NWF activities, a new system for managing investment assets was introduced. This system:

- is aimed at increasing profitability from placing investment assets under the “budget rules” mechanism to support budget and financial sustainability in conditions of increased volatility of commodity markets.
- makes it possible to lower the level of budget and fiscal risks by forming a significant amount of liquid financial assets in the fund's financial portfolio to compensate shortfalls in budget revenue in the event of severe external stresses (such as the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, or the tightening of sanctions in relation to budget-forming sectors of the national economy).

In 2021, 91.1 billion rubles of NWF resources were used for urgent goals related to the need to compensate the forming deficit of oil and gas earnings in the revenue side of the budget. This included allocating 3.8 billion rubles of the sovereign wealth fund to co-financing the creation of pension savings for insured individuals, who paid additional insurance premiums for funded pensions. However, over the 2021 period, further growth of NWF assets is expected, which, given the exchange rate difference, will increase to \$1.43 billion.

In the current year (2021), significant changes to the structure of liquid assets can be observed. These are related to its exclusion of the US dollar (Fig. 7).

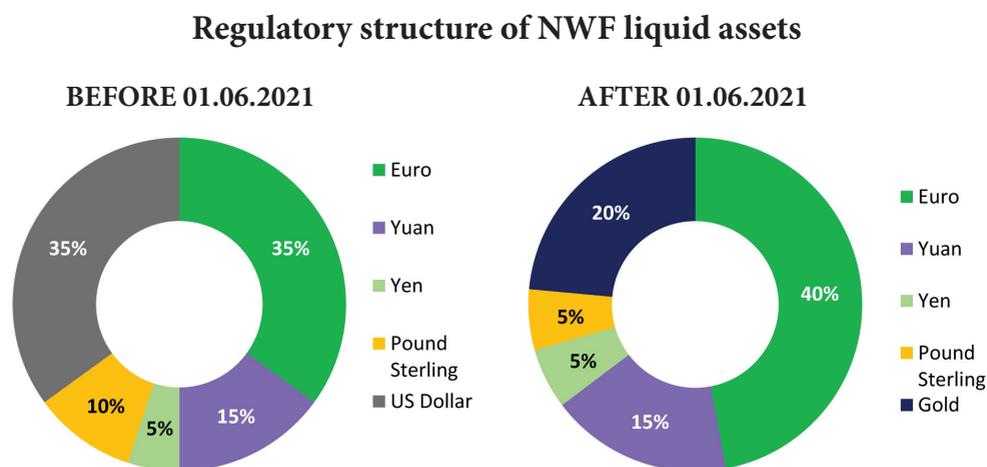


Figure 7: **Transformation of regulatory structure of NWF liquid assets in 2021***

***Source:** based on data by the Russian Ministry of Finance / <https://minfin.gov.ru/ru/performance/nationalwealthfund/>

Another introduction has been the inclusion of liquid assets of gold (20%) in the structure, which will be part of the fund's liquid assets in anonymized format (in the Central Bank of Russia's metal accounts). This decision, which is evidence of the transition to a conservative investment strategy, was reasoned by the need to increase protection against inflation risks during an unstable global economy. Thus, the regulatory structure of the NWF liquidity and the structure of the Bank of Russia's international reserves continue to converge. At the same time, there are risks of significant adjustment on precious metal markets, the appearance of which can negatively affect the value of liquid assets.

Furthermore, there are currently discussions going on about introducing changes to the NWF investment strategy, particularly, about using funds for a) carrying out priority infrastructure projects, b) lending to certain countries, c) modernizing utility networks, and d) further increasing the amount of liquid assets by purchasing gold.

Transformational shifts of SWF investment strategies

Starting in 2010, sovereign wealth funds started actively investing in various financial and investment tools: corporate and government securities, real estate projects and investment funds. Stabilized funds are largely characterized by conservative management (since they perform functions of hedging budgetary commitments, ensuring maximum liquidity and preserving capital).

In connection with this, the investment portfolios of such SWF contain predominantly government treasury bonds of economically developed coun-

tries (including those with a one-year maturity) and are placed in deposit accounts of highly reliable banking structures. National wealth and future generations funds, whose goal is to save funds from depreciating, use a wide range of financial (shares, corporate bonds) and alternative investment tools (real estate, venture capital investments, exchange traded funds (ETFs), primary commodities).

Currently, the majority of investments of sovereign wealth funds are made up of investments in corporate securities (55–60%), while no more than 25% goes to bonded debts and money market tools in general.

The available data suggests that in 2020 the number of assets invested by sovereign wealth funds in infrastructural projects increased, while their share in the investment portfolio structure decreased. Similarly, the share of real estate decreased significantly. This reflects the global long-term trend of reduced investment interest in “hard” assets.

Moreover, an analysis of the SWF investment structure showed the presence of a serious shift in the structure of their assets. One consequence of Covid-19 was the major shift in real estate investments: most funds replaced retail and office real estate for logistics real estate, whose share in investment portfolios grew from 15% to 22%. The distribution of SWF resources across various investment areas is presented in Figure 8.

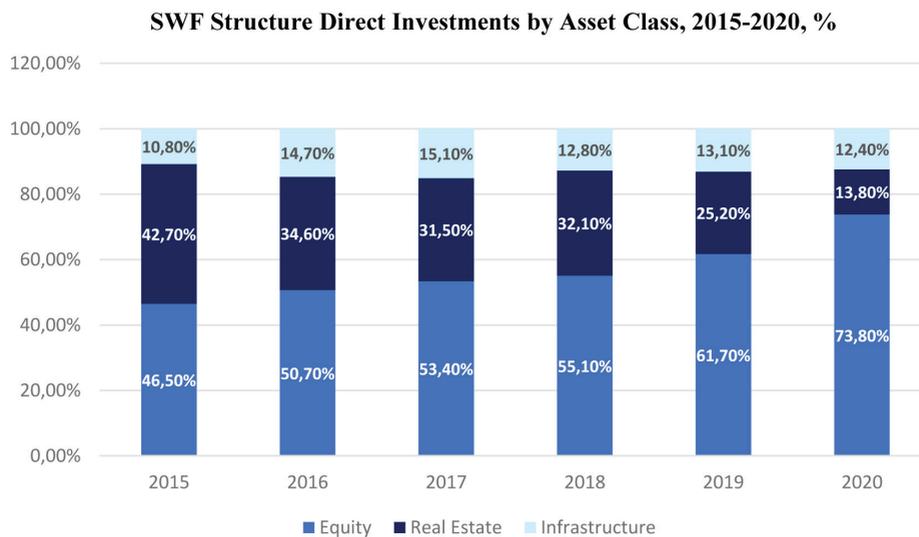


Figure 8. Trends in the SWF structure of direct investments by asset class, 2015–2020

***Source:** based on data from: <https://ifswreview.org/covid-response.html>

Until 2020, SWF investment strategies were largely defensive in nature. In the pre-pandemic year (2019), their investment portfolio included the lowest amount of direct investments since the start of 2015 (\$35.9 billion). Overall, 2020 resulted in it being one of the most active investment periods, during which the amount of SWF direct investments almost doubled from \$35.9 to \$65.9 billion (Fig. 9).

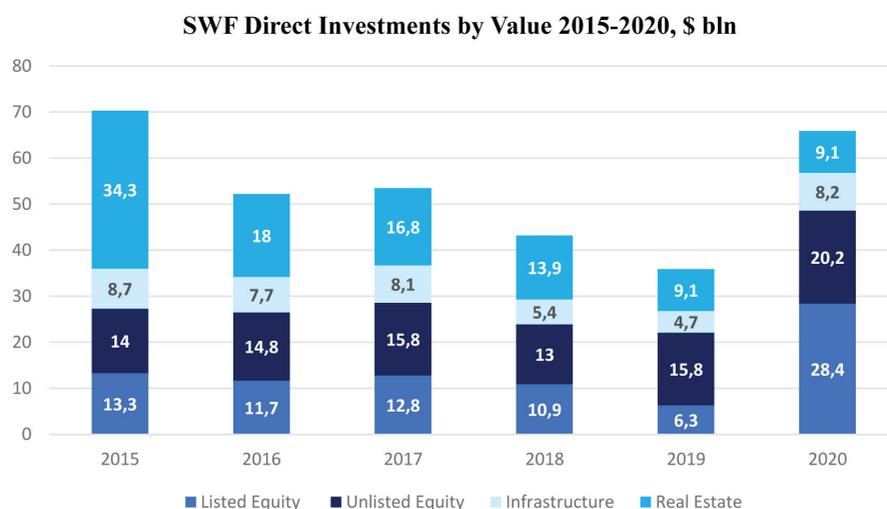


Fig. 9. Changes in value of total SWF investment assets for 2015–2020 (billion \$)*

*Source: based on data from <https://ifswfreview.org/covid-response.html>

Impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, new trends emerged in the investment activities of sovereign wealth funds. For the first time since they appeared, direct investments in 2020 (including strategic and hybrid) exceeded the overall savings funds (Figure 10).

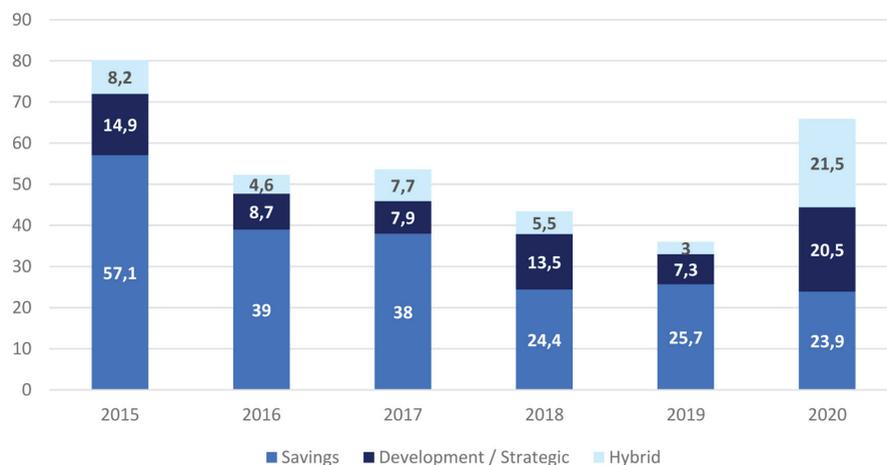


Figure 10: Ratio of savings, development/strategic, and hybrid investments of SWF 2015–2020, (billion \$)*

*Source: based on data from: <https://ifswfreview.org/covid-response.html>

The emerging new trends in the investment activities of funds are of interest and reflect a significant reduction in their risk appetite. Since the start of 2020, SWF around the world have preferred to invest in less risky assets on sovereign debt markets, corporate bonds and foreign currencies, while the level of liquidity was at the highest observed since the global financial crisis.

At the same time, the investment portfolios of various sovereign wealth funds are significantly diversified by risk level depending on the investment goals, determining the focus of the investment strategy (to support stability or increase profitability). According to this, a chart with the investment portfolios of sovereign wealth funds was compiled and is presented in Figure 11.

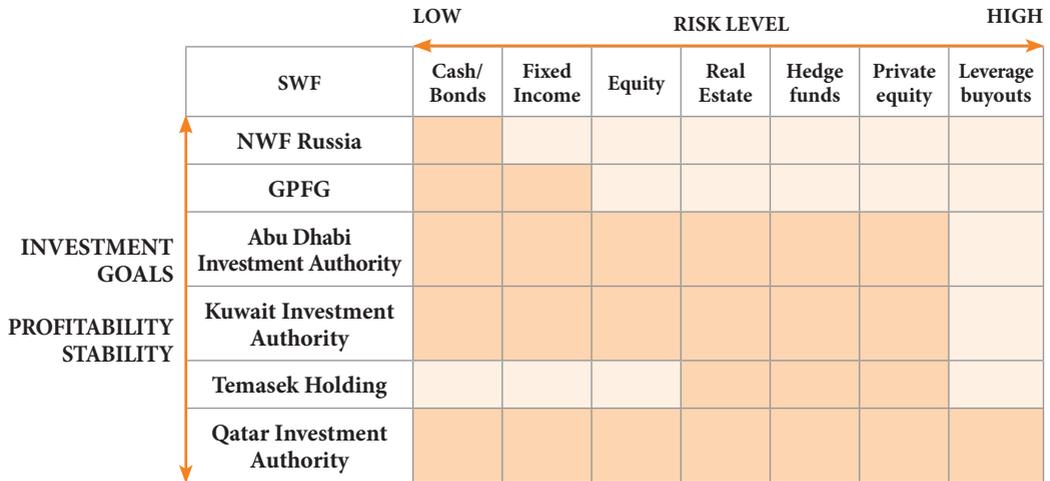


Figure 11: Chart of SWF investment portfolios according to investment goals and risk level for 2020*

*Source: based on data from: <https://ifswfreview.org>

The new economic reality requires not only to make serious changes to the management strategies of sovereign wealth funds, but also to apply certain algorithms for their formation based on the established investment horizon. According to the authors, the process of creating an investment strategy should include the following three stages (Figure 12).

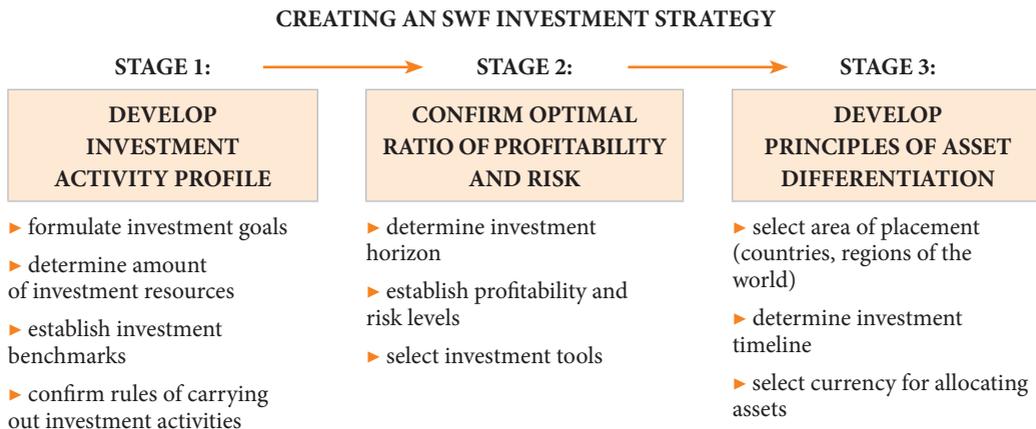


Figure 12: Creating a SWF investment strategy*

*Source: proposed by authors

What a sovereign wealth fund's strategy contains depends directly on the investment horizon, which in turn is determined by the type of sovereign wealth fund (future generations fund: long-term, reserve; stabilized fund; short-term). When determining the investment horizon necessary to establish the desired level of profitability and an acceptable risk level, the following factors should be taken into consideration: 1) uneven revenue from implementing raw materials and the uncertainty of their supply and mining; 2) the need for sovereign wealth funds to complete previously unforeseen obligations (for example, due to a new pandemic).

In terms of an optimal investment portfolio, it should be a specific combination of various financial and investment tools for each sovereign fund, depending on the type (focus). For instance, the asset portfolio of SWF whose resources are formed mainly by revenue from exporting hydrocarbons, should include tools with a negative or minimally positive correlation with the movement of global commodity markets. In connection with this, in order to most effectively diversify the investment portfolio, the investment strategy of the sovereign wealth fund should be tied to macroeconomic forecasts, according to which a preliminary evaluation of the potential combination options of financial and investment assets needs to be taken after identifying the types of correlations.

In order to more efficiently manage investment risks, it is advisable for a fund to geographically diversify its portfolio, making the most use out of a range of tools available on the global financial markets.

The results of implementing the investment strategy of sovereign wealth funds directly depends on management quality, whose efficiency can be assessed using a combination of the following indicators:

- minimal profitability level of invested funds (rate of return);
- maximum duration of a fund's invested portfolio (bond duration);
- maximum risk indicator value in invested portfolio, due to investment decisions (tracking error);
- maximum possible loss in a specific period (value-at-risk models).

In order to increase efficient management of investment portfolios of sovereign wealth funds when they are formed, it is necessary to take into account new trends in their activities, which can include:

- increasing investment activity;
- constantly increasing share of direct investments in asset portfolios;
- creating global alliances of sovereign wealth funds when carrying out joint investment activities;
- investing resources into government support programs for priority sectors and economic sectors, including carrying out large-scale infrastructure projects.

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Original article

PUBLIC MANAGEMENT REFORMS IN TURKEY

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Abstract. This article focuses on public management reforms in Turkey and how the reform trajectory has changed over the past two decades. Reforms in Turkey represent a mixture of ideas and reform elements that are constantly evolving under the influence of foreign actors, especially the European Union, efforts to respond to global reform trends, and domestic political developments. The article is divided into three parts. The first part gives a brief picture of the political-administrative structure of the country. The second part provides a landscape of the reform initiatives in the last two decades. The third part examines the main challenges Turkey might face in the coming years in terms of implementing reforms and provides a discussion on how they can be addressed.

Keywords: public management, reforms, Turkey, bureaucracy.

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1. Introduction

In the aftermath of the 1980s, a significant paradigm shift was observed in the area of government in line with efforts to reduce the size of the state while increasing its efficiency and effectiveness. Within the scope of reforms carried out in public management, concepts such as total quality, governance, participation, transparency, strategic planning, and performance occupy a special place¹.

¹ For detailed discussion of the content of public management reforms in the 1980s, see Radaelli and Meuwese (2009), Schick (1996), Piotrowski (2008), Ongaro (2009) and Rouban (1999).

In the following sections, the public management reforms in the post-2000 period will be evaluated in the context of both national and international actors and major legal regulations. The aim here is to present recent dramatic reform initiatives without overlooking the impact of the European Union accession process and to evaluate the main challenges Turkey might face in the coming years in terms of implementing reform and discuss how they can be addressed.

2. The political-administrative context

Restructuring efforts in Turkish public administration date back to the 19th century. In the beginning of the modernization process, the Turkish public administration system was inspired by the French system as a result of Westernization efforts. Its change over time was again largely parallel to the developments in Europe. Thus, it can be claimed that reform efforts in Turkey have been an important issue since the Tanzimat era (1839–76). Especially during the Tanzimat, First Constitutional (1876–78) and Second Constitutional Eras (1908–1918), reforms and reform efforts gained momentum, which continued in a similar pattern in the Republican period.

Early reform work in the Republican period consists of reports and projects. The most distinctive feature of the administrative reform efforts of this period is that these reforms were prepared by foreign experts and were carried out especially after the 1930s. The reforms were named after the foreign expert who prepared the reports. The Dorr Report, Neumark Report, Barker Report and Martin-Cush Report are the main examples of these reform efforts.

The first most comprehensive and detailed reform study of the Republican period was the “Dorr Report” prepared by Goldthwaite H. Dorr in 1933. In this document, it was mentioned that development could be achieved by focusing on private enterprises. In addition, it was stated that red tape, which was one of the biggest obstacles to development, should be eliminated and public administrators should devote more time to important issues by transferring their powers arising from centralization. The report was not limited to these problems and suggestions, and tried to cover a wide range of issues by addressing almost all of the national issues of the period, which made implementation of the recommendations in the report difficult (Daniel, 1967).

The “Report on Rational Working Principles in State Departments and Institutions” prepared by Prof. Dr. Fritz Neumark, a faculty member of Istanbul University, is the result of another reform work in Turkey. In this report, by researching the Turkish personnel system, Neumark suggested strengthening the deficiencies of the personnel system, to ensure a balanced distribution of public personnel, to improve the salary system, and to reduce unnecessary personnel costs. In addition to the problems related to personnel, the Neumark Report also examined the deficiencies related to the organization, the inadequacies of the laws, the problems caused by the paperwork and formalities, and the problems caused by the inspection and control system were also evaluated (Ege and Hagemann, 2012, pp. 955–961). These are important problem areas that still exist today. The report approached the problems in Turkey in a sincere and realistic way.

Another important reform effort carried out in this period was the study prepared in 1951 which is known as the Barker Report. The recommendations of James M. Barker can be categorized into two main groups: (i) coordination of economic problems, establishment of a better management mechanism, strengthening private enterprise, ensuring financial stability, regulating education and health problems, and (ii) handling agricultural problems and training technical and administrative staff (Zanotti, 2016). In the report, besides the inadequacies of civil servants and organizational deficiencies, the inconvenience of the laws, excessive paperwork and the problems in the inspection-control system were also listed (Yayman, 2008, p. 131).

The Martin-Cush Report, which foresaw the restructuring of the Ministry of Finance and was published at the same time as the Barker Report, was a reform project focused on the administrative, economic and social problems of the period (Altan, 2016).

The reform studies in the period of 1960 and 1980 were not comprehensive. The most important reform of the period is the Central Government Organization Research Project, and it is the first comprehensive study on Turkish public administration to consider the organization and its functioning as a whole (Sezen, 2011, pp. 333–337; Kapucu and Palabiyık, 2008).

The period of 1980 and 1990 was a time when reform efforts were in line with development plans and were influenced by international trends, especially the new public management (NPM). During this period, the Public Administration Research Project, the January 24 Decisions and the change in the economy (transition from the import substitution model to the export-based economy) made public administration reform obligatory. Between 1990 and 2000, steps that could be considered as part of public administration reform could not be taken. The main reasons being that there was an economic crisis in 1994 and a politically unstable landscape (Gül and Kiriş, 2015). Privatization and deregulation continued at full speed.

The reform efforts continued parallel to the NPM as well as the interaction with supranational organizations such as the European Union and the pressures of domestic political developments. The reconstruction efforts became more concrete in the last two decades when they finally reached a certain level within the framework of the reform packages predicting a holistic change in public administration in early 2000s. In this context, the traditional tendencies that dominated the central and local governments in the Turkish political system in terms of administrative, political and financial organization of the state apparatus, and relations between central authority and other actors in the society began to change (Sezen, 2011). This could well mark the beginning of a transition to a public administration approach that is in line with contemporary forms introduced by the new public management paradigm which, for example, argues that local governments should be strengthened in terms of duties, powers and resources, and governance should become more participatory and democratic in operation.

3. New Public Management Reforms in the 2000s

The 2000s have been the years when reforms were introduced and implemented in the Turkish public administration especially within the framework of NPM

understanding. In this period, apart from the discourses and practices that include principles such as downsizing the state, reducing bureaucracy, increasing competition, focusing on private sector techniques, and increasing localization, which are major arguments of NPM, a special importance has been given to principles and values such as the right to information, openness, transparency and participation.

Considering the history of public administration reforms in Turkey in the early 2000s, it can be seen that issues are classified in terms of financial management, local governments, and oversight of the government (Gül and Kiriş, 2015; Kapucu and Palabıyık, 2008). In fact, 2003 can be considered a turning point as regards administrative and financial reforms of Turkish Public Administration. In terms of public finance, the General Accounting Law, which remained from the Ottoman period until that time, was in effect for many years until 2003 when the Public Financial Management and Control Law No. 5018 was enacted and a new management understanding and implementation was initiated. With this law, a management approach based on strategic management and performance was put into effect for the first time in public administration. In the first article of Law No. 5018, the purpose of the law is described as ensuring the provision of public resources effectively, economically and efficiently, as well as accountability and financial transparency. In the law, accountability is defined as the responsibility of those who are assigned and authorized to use resources for any misuse and illegal use of resources towards the competent authorities. Financial transparency (art.7) is defined as informing the public in order to ensure control of obtaining and using resources.

In 2003, under the leadership of the Prime Ministry, a report titled “Change in Management for the Management of Change” (Dinçer and Yılmaz, 2003), which had a content that was compatible with the principles of new public management, was published under the auspices of the prime ministry. Focusing on reform efforts in public administration, the purpose of the report was revealing the need for reform, which should be done within the framework of the NPM understanding and vision of the twenty-first century, with mentality, strategic design and organizational dimensions, where competition and the individual would be at the forefront in accordance with the concepts introduced by globalization and information society (Dinçer and Yılmaz, 2003, p. 11). In this way, it was emphasized in the report that the public administration should catch up with the global changes through reforms.

3.1 Right to Information

Law No. 4982 on Right to Information was enacted in 2003 in order to ensure openness and participation in public administration. The purpose of this law (Art.1) has been determined as regulating the right of individuals to obtain information in an equal, impartial and open understanding in ensuring a democratic and transparent administration. It is stated in Law No. 4982 that everyone has the right to obtain information (Art.4) and that the relevant institutions and organizations are liable for the use of this right (Art.5) with certain exceptions.

The Right to Information Act was intended to ensure openness in government (Özdemirci, 2008). With this right, citizens are given the opportunity to re-

quest all kinds of data, information and documents from all public institutions. The Right to Information Act made access to information the rule and restriction the exception. All an individual has to do is apply to the information offices of the relevant institutions and to request the information they want in order to benefit from this right. Government agencies must answer these applications within 15 working days. The existence of the right to information, in a sense, gives every citizen the role of honorary inspector, and ensures that the bureaucracy is controlled by the public. Thus, such openness is expected to make decision-making procedures known and aims to prevent public employees from violating the rules. With this law, the increased visibility of public activities made it difficult to cover up mistakes and arbitrariness.

3.2 E-government

E-Government refers to the structures that ensure the delivery of public services to the citizens, institutions and organizations that will use this service through information technologies (Fang, 2002, p. 2). In this way, faster, cheaper, efficient and reliable public service provision is targeted. The main objectives of e-government applications can be listed as follows:

- reducing red tape and time loss in institutions;
- decreasing service costs;
- increasing individual participation, which will contribute to the development of democratic culture;
- eliminating repetitions through intensive communication between institutions and preventing waste of resources².

Electronic Signature Law No. 5070, which is an important step in the transition to e-government application, entered into force in 2004. With this law, the foundation of the infrastructure that will allow official correspondence to be made in an electronic environment was laid. Systems such as MERNIS (population services), SAY 2000i (Information Flow between Accountants of the Ministry of Finance), UYAP (National Judicial Network), POL-NET (Police Services) can be cited as examples of e-government applications in Turkey.

3.3 Public Sector Ethics

In 2004, the Law on the Establishment of the Public Servants Ethics Board was adopted, the principles of ethical behavior that public officials should comply with while performing their services were determined, and the Ethics Board for Public Servants was established accordingly. The purpose of the law (Art.1) is determining and observing the principles of ethical behavior such as transparency, impartiality, honesty, accountability and observance of the public interest that public officials must comply with. Indeed, ethical principles are important in terms of ensuring the trust of the people in the administration and improving the quality of public services (Le Grand, 2009; Kirkpatrick et al., 2005). In 2004, the text of the “Draft Law on the Basic Principles and Restructuring of Public

² The list is essentially valid for developing countries. It is compiled from Alhomod et al. (2012), Basu (2004), and Chen et al. (2006).

Administration” was prepared, which envisaged the re-sharing of duties, powers and responsibilities of the public administration within central government and between central and local governments. The text of the draft included programs on the downsizing of the state and reducing the bureaucracy, which is one of the basic principles of the NPM understanding. However, this draft law was canceled by the Constitutional Court of the time upon the application of the president. Nevertheless, the draft law inspired subsequent reform studies to a certain extent and influenced them in significant ways including public sector ethics (Ataay, 2008).

3.4 Ombudsman

Due to developments in the world and in Turkey, the “Ombudsman Office” was introduced as a constitutional institution by making amendments to the Constitution with a referendum in September 2010. The office was expected to examine or alleviate the complaints of the people about the administration. Two years later, the Law on the Establishment of Ombudsman Institution was enacted and the institution became functional in 2012. With this law, the Ombudsman Institution was established for the first time in Turkish history and it was charged with the duty of examining, investigating and making recommendations regarding the functioning of public services so that all kinds of acts, transactions and behaviors of the administration could be performed based on human rights, law and fairness (Law No. 6328, Art.1). In addition, with the relevant law, it was stipulated that no body or authority could give orders, instructions or express opinions to this public legal entity (Article 4) and ombudsmen (Article 12), thus ensuring the impartiality and autonomy of the institution.

3.5 Local Governance

With Law No. 5216, which was enacted in 2004 as the first of a series of local government laws, administrative tutelage over metropolitan municipalities was eased. In the previous law, some transactions of the metropolitan municipality, such as the budget, were enacted with the approval of the appointed governor. In the new law, the implementation of the approval of the metropolitan municipality’s operations by the governor, including the budget, has been ended. In addition, with the new law, the governor’s supervisory authority over the processes of the decision-making bodies of the metropolitan municipality was terminated by removing the authority of the governor to appeal against the decisions of the metropolitan municipal council and the district municipal councils (Torlak and Sezer, 2005, p. 103). As can be seen from all these regulations, the administrative tutelage and auditing authorities of the central government over local governments has been reduced, while internal auditing and external auditing by the Court of Accounts have been strengthened (Eryılmaz, 2008, p. 154). In addition, with the Metropolitan Municipality Law No. 5216, attempts were made to integrate actors such as non-governmental organizations and universities in the decision-making processes. This practice was expected to create a local government which gives priority to participation and increase efficiency and productivity in services.

Other comprehensive legal regulations regarding local governments are the Provincial Special Administration Law No. 5302 and the Municipality Law No. 5393,

both issued in 2005. The handling and regulation systems of the laws are very similar. In both laws, it is seen that local councils came to the forefront, the tutelage powers of the central government and its provincial extensions were softened, local powers and duties were increased and their autonomy emphasized, flexible organization was adopted, and new methods and concepts such as norm staff and strategic management were emphasized. With these new regulations, local governments gained a more pro-active and participatory management approach than in the past.

3.6 Influence of the European Union

The EU integration process represents the most important project in the Turkish modernization history and modernization effort. This project, which started in the second half of the 20th century, has reached the stage of negotiations with the EU (in 2005) on the way to full membership. As a requirement of the stage reached in this process, Turkey tries to realize the legal and institutional transformations proposed by the Union and modernization trends in its countries (Kukovič, Justinek, 2020). The EU considers it safer to negotiate full membership with a candidate country that has adopted its standards in all areas, and also as a prerequisite for the Union to accept the candidate country as a member state.

The reason behind the European Union's orientation towards an effective, quality and efficient public administration is to arbitrate and build a managerial adaptation capacity that will enable candidate countries to implement social, economic and technological reforms. For this reason, the EU closely monitors the Turkish public administration's alignment with the European *acquis* and makes a due diligence, which includes recommendations and reports, prepared regularly every year. Through the reports, capacity competence is determined for the ability of "effective monitoring, supervision, surveillance and reporting" in terms of sectoral units of the public administration field. Turkish public administration is also expected to reorganize on the basis of the expectations, suggestions and evaluations expressed in the progress reports and to realize transformative-regulatory reforms that strengthen adaptation with the EU administrative space³.

It should be noted that the reform proposals directed to the candidate countries in the progress reports are based on a specific system and do not lack an intellectual background. Providing examples of structuring such as subsidiarity, effective-regulatory state, downsizing of the public sector, political-administrative-legal accountability, simplification of administrative procedures, making ethical principles effective in public administration, and expanding the governance and performance system, the new public management / entrepreneurial governance approach forms the main motivation and driving force of Turkish public administration reforms through the determinations and recommendations reflected in progress reports, and mediates the integration of global management values with the Turkish bureaucratic structure.

³ For analysis of Turkish public administration reforms and EU administrative space, see Soós (2016), Sungar (2005), Sözen and Shaw (2002), Koçak (2009).

4. Future Challenges of the Reforms in Turkey

4.1 Subsidiarity vs. Recentralization

Subsidiarity is defined as the intervention of central public authority only when the local bodies cannot overcome the problems of the public (Van den Bergh, 1994; Follesdal, 1998). In this respect, in accordance with the subsidiarity principle, services should be provided by the administrative unit closest to the public (Mäeltseemes, 2013; Vischer, 2001). In this sense, it requires an organization from the bottom up, not from the top down. The relevant administrative unit should be determined depending on the scope, quality, efficiency and economy of the service⁴ Frieden (2004, p. 2265) states that the concept has an international dimension and that relations between international organizations and member states gain importance at this level. With these aspects, localization evokes a concept that has political, managerial and financial dimensions. In this context, it is argued that the process implies some dissolution of authority (Rhodes, 1996, p. 661).

On the other hand, transferring authority and duties to local organizations without improving the management capacity of local governments can make these organizations rather cumbersome and inoperable. While implementing the reform, the adequacy of local administrations in terms of personnel, technical and administrative capacity should also be evaluated vis-à-vis the scale of service delivery, public benefit, public service, impartiality, economy, accessibility of services, equality, and equity (Ayeni, 2002; Ohemeng and Owusu, 2014).

An evaluation of the local government reform in Turkey in terms of EU criteria shows that Turkey has complied with the European Charter of Local Self-Government and other relevant EU legislation to a certain extent. However, some problems can be pointed out in the establishment and implementation of the new governance understanding and culture envisaged by the reform (Loewendahl-Ertugal, 2005; Sözen, 2012). While the aims and steps towards decentralization were witnessed in public administration reforms between 2002 and 2011, practices towards centralization began to become more concrete in 2011. In this context, the authorities and tasks that were first delegated by the central government started to be taken back over time. To put it with more concrete examples, while the special provincial administrations were the most important administrative units of localization, they were later closed down with the Law No. 6360 which was enacted in 2012⁵. In addition, local governments over time lost some of their important powers to relevant ministries, especially the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization (MoEU). The Presidential Decree No. 1 which was put into force in 2018 required that local governments and relations between them would be regulated by the MoEU. According to this decree and following regulations, the powers and duties previously delegated to the local governments in early 2000s were transferred back to the central government. For example, while the authori-

⁴ Cass (1992) provides a comprehensive discussion on the legal and efficiency-related aspects of the principle of subsidiarity.

⁵ Law No. 6360, Article 1(5) required that provincial special administrations in 30 of the 81 provinces would be abolished as of 2014.

ties and duties regarding urban transformation were given to the local government units in the previous regulations, they were transferred to the Housing Development Administration of Turkey (TOKİ), which is affiliated to the MoEU, with the decrees issued in 2018 and 2019. Zoning, environmental and planning authorities were also in the local government units before they were transferred to the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization with the Presidential Decree No. 1 in 2018.⁶

Another example that can be given regarding the steps taken towards re-centralization is the Law No. 6360 enacted in 2012. As can be seen in the objectives of the law, such as making use of economies of scale sufficiently, ensuring more efficient use of resources, preventing waste of resources, and creating strong local government structures, economic reasons in particular were brought to the fore. However, it is clear that in this regulation, economic reasons were followed by political reasons and the boundaries of metropolitan municipalities were expanded to the provincial administrative boundaries, subjecting locally centralized bodies to the authority of a single elected metropolitan mayor. Law No. 6360 also poses an important problem in representation. In an environment where thousands of local government units have been abolished, the metropolitan municipality structure is given under the authority of a single elected mayor who is equipped with many duties and powers, in terms of both service provision and coordination (Savaş-Yavuzçehre, 2016).

The last step to be considered in the direction of re-centralization is the regulation that caused the supreme boards to be under the control of the ministries in 2011. Supreme boards, also known as independent administrative authorities, were established in the fields of banking, energy, competition and finance, known as the “sensitive sectors” in the 1990s. The main reason for these organizations to come to life is to provide an understanding of management that is far from the damaging interventions of politics for the sake of daily interests. It was claimed that over time, these organizations have almost declared their independence and that politics is the only structure that is accountable to the voters due to the economic problems experienced.⁷ These allegations were voiced strongly by many politicians over time, and the process resulted in the ministerial control of the supreme boards in 2011. New legislation stated that the ministers would supervise all kinds of activities and transactions of the relevant higher organizations, and thus a significant centralization was achieved on the supreme boards.

4.2 Information technologies and transparency

As regards e-government applications, it should be stated that the desired success has not been achieved due to reasons such as insufficient awareness of citizens on this issue, the fact that internet use is not widespread in all segments of society, lack of legal infrastructure, and insufficient investment in the sector due to limited financial opportunities. Turkey appears to rank last among Euro-

⁶ Detailed discussions of the issue can be seen in Angın and Övgün (2020), Bahçeci (2017) and Akbay (2020).

⁷ For comparative perspectives and case studies on the matter, see Grant and Keohane (2005) on USA, Follesdal and Hix (2006) and Olsen (2017) on the EU, Cox and McCubbins (1997) on Latin America, and McNamara (2002) and Goodhart and Lastra (2018) on central banks.

pean countries in information technologies (Özcan, 2018). This means that even if the state is fully transferred to the electronic environment, a significant portion of the citizens will not have access to these services. It would thus be too optimistic to increase efficiency in public administration by purchasing computers for public institutions and preparing web pages. In other words, e-government studies are not only activities with technical dimensions, it will be beneficial to consider the issue with a more holistic perspective. For example, priorities such as continuous training of personnel working in public organizations, informing citizens as much as possible at different levels, and expecting that newly employed personnel are knowledgeable on information-communication technologies should be emphasized. In that way, information technologies, which are an important catalyst in the change process in public administration, can be used to the maximum extent.

One of the areas where the right to information is used most widely in Turkey is employees reviewing their performance evaluation results (Aydın, 2019, p. 135). Although it is a useful practice for the evaluated public official to see his / her own performance, it is a regulation that should be applied carefully in terms of the potential for conflict in superior-subordinate relations. Especially in a bureaucratic structure in which the merit system cannot be fully implemented in all aspects, this tension is likely to increase and in some cases serious conflicts may be the result between the evaluated personnel and the evaluating supervisor, which reduces the institutional efficiency.

Examination on the websites of provincial municipalities within the framework of the provisions of the Regulation on Principles and Procedures Regarding the Implementation of the Law on the Right to Information revealed that all provincial municipalities have deficiencies in the context of the right to information at varying degrees (Özdemirci, 2008, p. 308). Most of the information or documents required to be shared with the public within the scope of the right to information are not published by the municipalities (Sözen, 2012). More recent studies on the subject matter provide evidence that problems continue to plague transparency and accountability of government in Turkey. For example, most metropolitan municipalities do not publish the information and documents required to be published on the website in accordance with the provisions of the Regulation on Principles and Procedures Regarding the Implementation of the Law on the Right to Information. Most of the information and documents that the same regulation requires to be published in order to reduce the workload arising from applications for obtaining information are also not available on the internet pages (Emini and Ayaz, 2018).⁸ Another aspect of the right to informa-

⁸ Authors examined the web pages of 30 metropolitan municipalities and determined that there were no municipalities that included all of the mandatory elements specified in the regulation. İzmir Metropolitan Municipality is the only municipality that included 8 of the 9 mandatory elements subject to examination, and all information and documents are available on the website, except for the audit report. However, there was no link or form on the website of 6 metropolitan municipalities (Gaziantep, Kayseri, Malatya, Mardin, Şanlıurfa and Van) regarding the application for information. On the website of Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality, it was stated that the form in the contact section must be filled in for information access applications, but there is no option to obtain information in this form. Adana and Tekirdağ Metropolitan Municipalities redirect the applicants to the Presidential Communication Center (CİMER) page for information requests.

tion is related to the low awareness level of the public as regards their rights to obtain and the duties of the government to provide information. Several studies indicate that since the effective date of the Law on the Right to Information, there are still serious deficiencies in knowledge about its content and using it for its purpose. İbiş and Akdağ (2015) found that in the case of Erciyes University the frequency of benefiting from the Right to Information Law was low and that the majority of the applications made to the unit consist of applications that did not comply with the content of the law.

Further problems are being experienced with the right to information and accountability of government in the case of applications filed to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman Institution, which was introduced in Turkey in 2012 with the Ombudsman Law No. 6328, was established as a channel where the citizens can convey their complaints and requests in their relations with the administration (Demir, 2020, p. 99). Applications to the Ombudsman can be made to the governorship and district governorship in places where the institution does not have a communication office. Although applications to the institution can be made via e-mail, some documents still have to be delivered to the institution. Therefore, a completely paperless process has not been established. Kağıtçioğlu (2018) provides evidence from field studies showing that in order for the Ombudsman's Office to include a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles, in addition to its current duties, it should be emphasized that it could conduct research in the field of human rights, engage in awareness and education activities, and improve human rights. In addition, it is essential that issues related to anti-discrimination and equality be included in the duties of the institution. According to the author, the duty field of the institution should not be limited to the operations and actions of the administration. In addition, the fact that the Ombudsman Institution does not have the authority to act *ex officio* constitutes a violation of the Paris Principles⁹ (Güneş, 2018).

The current situation defined above, which is incompatible with the transparent and accountable government principles as well as the legislation, reveals that the accountability responsibility is not completely fulfilled. Although required by legislation, municipalities avoid sharing their basic decisions, tender processes, projects, annual reports and audit reports with the public. This situation is incompatible with the principle of openness, which is listed among the purposes of the Law on the Right to Information, and reveals that many critical processes are carried out in secrecy despite the legal regulations. In the current situation where the accountability of the management is not fulfilled and despite the legal regulations, the administrative processes are practically confidential, it becomes unreasonable to talk about the full use of the right to information. Restricting or even blocking access to information is also a serious obstacle to participation in governance.

⁹ The Paris Principles are a set of international principles, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1991, which frame and guide the work of national human rights institutions (NHRIs). These principles require that these bodies be independent and have a broad human rights mandate, be adequately funded, and be appointed on the basis of an inclusive and transparent selection and appointment process. These principles set a standard for assessing the legitimacy and credibility of NHRIs. For detailed information see Duyck et al. (2018).

4.3 Evidence-based policy-making

In the new presidential model, ministers and the president determine the policy agenda (for example, which law proposal will be enacted first), but this power is limited by the framework drawn by political, economic and social dynamics. The legislative and judicial bodies, academia, non-governmental organizations, think tanks, interest groups, the media and public opinion affect politicians in the public policy process. In addition, occasional situations such as disasters, major crises, and international opportunities also play an essential role. In other words, the power of ministers and the president to set the agenda is limited by many actors and factors. In addition, because of the limited number of laws that can be enacted in a legislature, which Simon (1972) calls the sequential process, politicians have to prioritize among problems under time pressure. In this prioritization, the promises given to the voters, the political party program and the desire to be successful are effective.

The appointed and elected directors of an administration that can collect evidence from within their own organization and do not share it with other administrations gain power and reputation in the process of public policy due to the information asymmetry. On the other hand, sharing evidence enables other actors to criticize the government's public policy and to come up with new policy recommendations. This leads to the administration's reluctance to share evidence. In the literature, it was stated that "information hiding" is essential and a widespread practice among administrations in Turkey (Öktem and Çiftçi, 2016). The fact that administrations do not share data and evidence with other administrations and other actors causes a lack of coordination in the production and presentation of evidence. The administrations produce data independently of each other on issues where their areas of duty intersect, and from time to time, inconsistencies arise between these data (Aydınoglu and Kara, 2019). On the other hand, the capacity of administrations to provide evidence is limited by the lack of qualified personnel and difficulties in procuring services. Particularly, the contribution of civil servants in producing evidence seems important. In addition, it has been noted in the literature that Turkish administration is generally not sufficient in classifying the data it obtains and reporting in a way to detect meaningful patterns¹⁰. Although there is an opportunity to cooperate with the academy in this field, this mechanism is not operated adequately. The desire of politicians to rapidly implement their own agendas requires administrations to rapidly prepare a law proposal in some public policy areas and may force them to work with existing evidence instead of producing new and more up-to-date evidence. Efforts to quantify social benefits and costs incurred such as utility cost analysis and economic modeling are carried out in a very limited manner within the administration. Most studies attempt to prove the economic impact of one policy or another based on empirical evidence. Examples include evaluating evidence in health economics (Karaca and Atılgan, 2020), developing symmetric and asymmetric conditionally variance

¹⁰ For discussions related to specific areas in Turkey, see İçduygu and Toktaş (2002) on migration, Keers et al. (2013) on hospitals, Sözbilir and Kutu (2008) on education, Isik and Singh (2008) and Onat and Ersöz (2011) on resource management, and Öztürk (2015) on urbanization.

models to detect exchange rate volatility (Güler, 2017), testing the effectiveness of export-based development policies (Kara, 2020), investigating the correlation between military spending and economic growth (Topal, 2018), and measuring the welfare and growth costs of population policies (Attar, 2020).

It is argued that administrations may hide some data when presenting evidence to ministers, but will not deliberately distort the evidence. However, politicians can distort the evidence while sharing it with the public. Sharman and Holmes (2010) provided some insight into this problem in the case of biofuels. Beswick and Elstub (2017) offered detailed accounts of selective and biased use of evidence by lawmakers. Mulgan (2007) showed that evidence could easily be politicized, if not distorted, when it comes to sensitive issues such as national security. The decision-makers, on the other hand, have to make a decision by taking some of the evidence into account, since they do not have the time to examine and duly evaluate all evidence.

One of the most important functions of evidence-based policy making in Turkey is to increase the transparency of the administration and to ensure participation in policy making and accountability after policy implementation. Evidence is not neutral facts about social problems that merely show cause and effect relationships. Conflicting evidence and interpretations can be found on the same topic. In other words, the capacity of the evidence to define the problem and predict the consequences of the implementation of public policy is limited.

5. Conclusions

In the 2000s, Turkey witnessed major and important reform moves in many areas, especially in the economy, politics and social life. One of the most important areas of these reform moves is undoubtedly public administration. Establishing a structure based on the new public administration approach by getting rid of the traditional understanding of public administration has been among the main objectives of these efforts, and it has been declared repeatedly that the public administration would free itself from the cumbersome and bureaucratic structure as a result of this process (Kettl, 2015; Rhodes, 2000; Box et al., 2001). Thus, the legitimacy of state administration, which allegedly had been damaged to a great extent, would be restored by public administration reform. Public administration reform, which is among the most important projects of the governments established in the 2000s, embraces most areas of government from central government to local governments and from public finance to transparency of government.

With the reforms implemented in the Turkish public sector in the last 20 years, it is seen that an important transformation has been experienced. The starting point of these regulations is the new public management approach. Time is needed to see the extent and results of the principles adopted to provide answers to the social, economic, political and historical problems Turkey has been experiencing. The restructuring efforts in public administration, which seem in harmony with the efforts to articulate the European Union institutions and culture, also reflect concrete indicators that the strategy to catch up with global standards is being implemented. However, while the aims and steps towards decen-

tralization were observed in the public administration reforms between 2002 and 2011, practices towards centralization began to become more concrete in 2011. In this context, the authorities and tasks that were first delegated started to be taken back over time. To put it into more concrete examples, while the special provincial administrations were elevated to the position of being the leading actors in terms of local development (Akillı and Akillı, 2014, p. 683), later they were either abolished (in metropolitan areas) or lost their leading position to municipalities as the main competent bodies in the field of development. Within a few years, they lost some of their remaining important powers to the Ministry of Development (Çetin, 2015; Çiner, 2014).

The results of public administration reforms in Turkey have been assessed by several international actors in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. For example, worldwide governance indicators of the World Bank evaluate the performance of countries in six dimensions: voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence/terrorism, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption. Each of these indicators are related to the public management reform processes discussed in the previous sections. When the figures for the selected years of 2009, 2014 and 2019 are examined, it can be seen that Turkey experienced a decline in all of the six indicators¹¹, the most dramatic decrease being in voice and accountability indicator which fell from -0.06 to -0.81.

The United Nations publishes EGDI indicators for 193 UN member states based on an assessment of national websites and how e-government policies and strategies are applied in general and in specific sectors for delivery of essential services. The e-government survey for the year 2020¹² shows that Turkey moved from “high” EGDI group to “very high” EGDI group for the first time in 2020. In terms of online services indicators, Turkey is placed among very high EGDI countries as well. However, it is commented in the report that despite having highly developed human capital, Turkey’s infrastructure might “be impeding further progress in e-government development” (p. 21). Turkey ranks 53rd among 193 countries evaluated by the UN in this regard, representing considerable improvement from its ranking at 80th in 2012¹³.

The OECD is another institution which provides evaluation of member countries in terms of governance. The “OECD government at a glance” reports published every two years are based on “outcome indicators which cover core government results (e.g. trust, political efficacy, inequality reduction) and indicators on access, responsiveness, quality and satisfaction for the education, health and justice sectors”¹⁴. For example, in terms of trust in government and in political parties, Turkey scored considerably higher (around 50%) than the OECD average in 2013, which was 30 percent. In terms of fundamental rights, Turkey scored 0.46 compared to the OECD average of 0.78. The regulatory enforcement score

¹¹ <https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/Home/Reports>.

¹² [https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/Portals/egovkb/Documents/un/2020-Survey/2020%20UN%20E-Government%20Survey%20\(Full%20Report\).pdf](https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/Portals/egovkb/Documents/un/2020-Survey/2020%20UN%20E-Government%20Survey%20(Full%20Report).pdf).

¹³ <https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/Portals/egovkb/Documents/un/2012-Survey/Complete-Survey.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://www.oecd.org/gov/government-at-a-glance-22214399.htm>

of Turkey was 0.55, whereas the OECD average was 0.72. As for civil justice, Turkey performed lower (0.58) than the OECD average (0.69). When we talk about the level of disclosure of private interests and public availability of information, which is an essential element of open government, Turkey's score was 50, which was almost equal to the OECD general score. In addition, citizens' confidence in local police, satisfaction with the education system and schools and satisfaction with the availability of quality health care was well below OECD average scores.

The 2021 report shows that between 2013 and 2021 confidence in the national government increased from 50% to 55% in Turkey whereas fundamental rights avalanched to 0.3 from 0.46 and the perception for effective enforcement of civil justice remained almost unchanged (60%). Citizen satisfaction with the education system and schools, as well as citizen confidence in the judiciary system and the courts and the health care system, fell dramatically.

Finally, the United Nations Development Program's Turkey mission offers some valuable insights into the local governance reforms put into practice between 2003 and 2013. Emphasizing the strategic management dimension, the UNDP comments that success of strategic management in local governments has been limited, and "the planning, programming and budgeting functions of the strategic management framework do not work coherently".¹⁵

In summary, it can be concluded that public management reforms which were introduced in Turkey in the first two decades of the 21st century have produced mixed results. It is not plausible to claim that the reform climate continues today in Turkey where public reforms are no longer a priority item on the political agenda (Öniş and Yılmaz, 2009; O'Connor et al., 2019; Bozkurt-Güngen, 2018). There are not any signs that the enthusiasm with reforms continues in central institutions and local governments. It is also difficult to see that the reforms made are fully implemented because legislative change often cannot radically change the functioning of public administration. The traditions and corporate culture that have emerged over the years may find ways among public officials to continue their old habits in the new public management era, but the requirements of the time and related concepts and processes will undoubtedly play a leading role in the continuity of the reform process in the public sector. These conclusions are in agreement with the findings of Sözen (2012), Gül (2016), Köseoğlu and Morçöl (2014), Akyüz and Hess (2018), Üstüner and Yavuz (2018), and Demir (2018, 2020).

This paper provides an evaluation of the evolution of public administration reforms in Turkey in the last two decades and argues that several factors come into play in urging decision-makers to introduce reforms in the public sphere. It can be seen that these reforms have not always been in line with international standards and tend to be influenced by the political-administrative landscape of the country. As a result, it can be claimed that several reform initiatives in Turkey have been tailored to meet the needs of political actors, first and foremost the central government.

¹⁵ https://www.tr.undp.org/content/turkey/en/home/projects/tuerkiye_de-yerel-yonetim-reformu-suerecinin-kurumsallamas-proj.html

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Original article

DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INTERVENTION? REVISITING CRITICISM OF HUNGARIAN DEMOCRACY¹

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Abstract. Hungarian public administration culture has traditionally been considered as overtly legalistic and proceduralist, which appears to be in contrast with claims of weakening the rule of law or facing sanctions under Article 7 of the Treaty of the European Union. This article offers an overview on the criticisms put forth by academic writers and EU institutions regarding the Hungarian development path and puts them into the wider context of democratization through transaction (transitology, democracy export) theory.

The article compares findings of contemporary interventionist authors with the propositions of such iconic writers as Dankwart Rustow (1970) and Samuel P. Huntington (1984) and attempts to connect the dots between these realms of thought. These authors all share the view that democracy shall be exported the more and quicker the better. Transitology, though, has had its critics, while contemporary interventionist theory appears to be rather monolithic without considerable criticism. The article uses the approach of Payne (2006), and of other authors, to question various statements of contemporary interventionists.

Not least, recent developments in Afghanistan provide historical evidence that the ambitions of transactional democratisation are predetermined to fall short on non-democratic institutions imposing democracy using non-democratic measures on recipients of various sorts.

Keywords: public administration culture, democratisation, interventionist theory, transitology, transactional democratisation.

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The realm of transitology – an almost forgotten approach: transition by transaction

Article 7 of the Treaty of the European Union and its potential or actual application against Hungary and Poland created a new sub-field of scientific research and debate in academic law, political science and public policy. In the following, I put forth a potential conceptualization regarding the Hungarian and (partly on the) Polish examples of paths to democratization.

In this section, I put forth the most important findings of transitology in order to highlight how contemporary interventionist theory developed. ‘Interventionist’, ‘transitology’, and ‘democratise by transaction’ are expressions that refer to the same phenomenon: certain countries’ ambitions to spread their interpretation of democracy to other countries. The means have evolved throughout history but the ends have remained basically unchanged.

“Democratization from authoritarian rule has been one of the most intensely studied topics of the 1980s” – said Donald Share at the 1985 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association in New Orleans (Share, 1987).

Dankwart A. Rustow (1970), Samuel P. Huntington (1984), James L. Payne (2006) and Jeffrey Sachs (the latter being in the field of economics and known to be the promoter of mass-privatisation; not discussed here in detail) are probably the most renowned authors in ‘transitology’ applied to the democratisation of Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe. The common view they held was that democracy is not necessarily a result of socio-economic forces that organically grow in the womb of history. On the contrary, it is possible, furthermore, desirable to export democracy if one has the proper means to do so.

Seymour Martin Lipset (1959) called the attention to widespread literacy and urbanisation as necessary preconditions of democracy. Others focused on economic circumstances such as per capita income (Cutright, 1963). A good public sentiment for participation in elections and in civil groups is considered beneficial for the development of democracies (Lerner, 1958; Almond and Verba, 1963).

As Dankwart Rustow put forth in his seminal article of 1970, there is a long-observed tendency in human nature that underpins the tendency for democracy (Rustow, 1970), this remark of his having a certain Hegelian flavour. Rustow differentiates authors who put emphasis on consensus or at least having certain elements of consensus among the political actors, mainly consensus in the rules of the game (Barker, 1942) whose line of theory can be led back to Hobbes and Montesquieu in terms of the principle of society founded on consensus. Rustow (1970) identifies a large chunk of academic writing using circular arguments on how existing

democracies might be able to be preserved against non-democratic tendencies, at that time personified by the Soviet Union.

What puzzled ‘transitologists’ in the 1970s was that the Anglo-Saxon culture yielded democracies that proved to be stable over time whereas Germany and France, not to mention Mediterranean and non-European countries, had merged from democracies to non-democratic regimes (back and forth) at various points in history. Rustow’s main argument – that made him the central author of transitology – was that democracy’s *genetic and functional* prerequisites ought to be differentiated, reminding us that variables of correlation and causation have to be thoroughly separated. He does not accept the tacit assumption that cultural and socio-economic realities are deeper than political-institutional superstructures. “...to promote democracy you must first foster democrats – perhaps by preaching, propaganda, education, or perhaps as an automatic by-product of growing prosperity. Instead, we should allow for the possibility that circumstances may force, trick, lure, or cajole non democrats into democratic behavior and that their beliefs may adjust in due course by some process of rationalization or adaptation” (Rustow, 1970, pp. 344–345). Seeking causality – according to Rustow – requires precise adaptation to the given circumstances of the country in question, thus, there is no universal pathway to democracy, indeed, there is no universal time-frame for democratisation: certain cases may last several generations, such as Britain, but others – given the proper examples and external actors – can be speeded up. Rustow proposes the following scheme for democratic transitions:

1. Certain ingredients are indispensable to the genesis of democracy. For one thing, there must be a sense of national unity and stable borders.
2. Entrenched and serious power conflict.
3. Conscious adoption of democratic rules.
4. Habituation: both politicians and electorate must be habituated to these rules.
5. Additionally: the phases shall be performed as a concentrated sequence of events, in a relatively short period of time.

Share classifies the democratisation proposed by Rustow as “transition through transaction” in contrast to incremental democratisation and democratisation by “protracted revolutionary struggle” and rupture (inclusively revolution, coup, collapse, extrication) (Share, 1987). Share mentions the historical example of Carlos Arias Navarro’s attempt to implement certain liberal reforms without altering the authoritarian basis of the Franco regime of Spain. This serves as an argument that liberalisation can happen without democratisation and institutional democratisation may follow afterwards. In hindsight, this is the same pattern of events that actually took place in Hungary: new economic reforms from 1968 allowed small private ownership in agriculture, later the Presidential Council (the equivalent of the Government) of the People’s Republic of Hungary issued the Decree of Law-force No. 15 of 1981 that opened the possibility of private ownership in small industry. In 1988 – still under massive dictatorship – the Act on Company Law was issued (No. VI. of 1988) that hallmarked the wave of “spontaneous privatisation” signifying the conversion of political clout and connections acquired in the People’s Republic to be transferred as economic power and ownership in the young democracy.

The influence of transitology on contemporary thought: The EU becoming the vehicle of democratisation

Authors in the 1990s agreed that the changes were ‘exceptionally speedy’ (Kornai, 1996). Speediness, however, can be viewed as an optical delusion given that changes of liberalisation started in the 1960s. In 1967 (7th of March), the Political Commission of the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party gave its consent to engage in informal consultations with international financial institutions, which materialised into becoming a member of the IMF in 1982. Another source of delusion of analyses regarding the Hungarian development path may be the question as to whether these speedy changes were complete or not. It would have been possible to take Rustow’s analysis seriously that there should be a serious power conflict between the supporters of dictatorship and democracy. In Hungary, such conflict was intangible except for the taxi drivers’ blockade in 1990 which happened to use public action against the democratically elected government of the day. The open questions on whether democratisation was complete or not puts the lack of lustration or the alleged economic power grab or the retirement rules of the judiciary into an entirely different context. If one uses the incompleteness of democratisation as a premise, it appears logical to assume that certain steps that may appear as a backsliding of democracy are indeed against the former beneficiaries of the dictatorship who had entrenched themselves in the institutions of the new era.

In her recent published research, Zsuzsanna Borvendég, a historian, stated that the darkest years of the cold war created enormous business opportunities for east-west trade which were exploited by both sides as early as 1945, right after WWII (!) and came to flourish during the 1970s and 1980s through entitled export-import companies, some of which still exist (Borvendég, 2020). These remarks underpin Rustow’s theory of externally driven democratisation or Share’s transactional democratisation theory from the historian’s perspective.

Rustow’s proposition on democracy export through transactional democratisation received recognition by no less influential an author than Samuel P. Huntington (1984). According to Huntington’s view put forth in 1984, the US, and especially the Reagan Administration, had a historical mission of spreading democracy in the world which was in line with American interests. Admitting that Rustow’s approach is relevant, Huntington emphasizes that democracy is more than transaction and more than exporting democratic institutions: it does have substantial preconditions such as economic wealth and equality, social structure (especially civic participation and autonomous intermediate groups, pluralism), market economy and external factors (military conquest or colonisation by a democratic power for example). Regarding Eastern Europe, Huntington proposes the following policies:

- assisting economic development and promoting equitable income and wealth distribution;
- fostering market economies and the “development of vigorous bourgeois classes” (p. 218.);

- refurbishing American economic, military and political power in order to be able to promote democracy by greater influence;
- develop, encourage, help and train elites of countries entering the transition.

Democratisation through transaction has been a massive line of thought regarding Central and Eastern Europe ever since. There are two major differences though compared to the period analysed by Rustow and Huntington: the number of international stakeholders with the ambition of democratising countries increased in recent decades while their influence deepened. “In virtually any area of policy in Central and East European countries, one can find transnational actors assisting state reforms and societal organizations active in that area. International organizations and expert networks have provided critical aid to economic reform teams...” (Orenstein, et al., 2008, p. 2). The comprehensive work of Iwona Sobis and Michiel de Vries (2009) on the details of how such expert networks and international stakeholders actually worked during the 1990s and early 2000s shall be mentioned in this context. Their judgement is far from idealistic regarding the process of democratisation in the region. They argue that international technical assistance (worth approx. USD 40 Billion) served the interests of the assistants rather than those of the countries being assisted.

Vachudova (2008) depicts the role of the European Union as the “causal Behemoth” of influence. She accepts the Rustowian approach of transactional democratisation in the sense that democratisation relies more on concrete international and domestic actors than subtle socio-economic conditions. Vachudova (2008) commences her analysis on the role of the EU in democratising Central and Eastern Europe by hinting that these countries have been traditionally close to or had even been internal colonies of either Moscow or Berlin and becoming members of the EU club represented a “huge reversal” (p. 20.) for them.

Criticism and alternatives to the Rustowian approach

The example of Iraq’s democratisation was used by James L. Payne (2006) to demonstrate his criticism of ‘democratisation by transaction’ theory and practice. He uses the failure of democratisation in Iraq to establish his argument contrary to Harvard Professor of Human Rights (and president of Central European University in Budapest) Michael Ignatieff (2005) who had urged an “American crusade” to spread democracy. The blueprint was taken by Ignatieff from Diamond, Linz and Lipset’s (1989) work on the example of the post-WWII era claiming that democracy was successfully “imposed” on Germany, Italy and Japan. In agreement with Huntington (1984) and Share (1987), Payne (2006) emphasizes the necessity of wealth accumulation as being in a causal relationship with democracy. However, Payne refers to the American privation policy towards Germany which aimed at punishing the country in economic terms, furthermore, foreign aid programs are definitely not connected by causality to the establishment of democracies. Education for democracy (such as nazi education previously) proved futile in terms of influencing the political behaviour of the German population. Even further, Payne concludes that Americans had no considerable role in creating the German constitution.

Payne's approach is diametrical to Ignatieff's. He summarises his position as follows: "The factor I would propose is a variable that has been strangely neglected in the study of democracy: *moderation of the amount of leadership political violence*. Where political leaders are inclined to use violence against each other – violence in the form of political murders, gang attacks, and armed revolts – democracy cannot survive. It will tend to collapse into civil war or a repressive dictatorship." (Payne, 2006, p. 219) Payne sees the sources of democracy and democratisation as endogenous factors, out of which internal security and nonviolence are endemic. Ignatieff (2005) however, views democracy as a simple matter that can be imposed by sanctions or even by the use of military violence.

Democracies have better and worse periods (Fukuyama, 2012). According to Fukuyama's account, American democracy underwent a devastating phase whereas 'liberal populism' failed to live up to its promises, distorted trust and removed the general public's sentiment of a middle class and egalitarian society. As such, Fukuyama allows that democracy has its own internal mechanism that moves it towards development or degradation. As long as it keeps its internal stamina, it can correct itself sooner or later. Yoram Hazony (2018) also occupies a stance that describes democracy as an organic and context-bound phenomenon. According to his account, democracies by definition constitute national level democracies and reject supra-national polities such as empires.

Complexity theory applied to public policy also supports the latter idea. If the general course of collective action (democracy) is imposed or controlled by another system, the complex (adaptive) system of the day will struggle to turn back to its own development path. If this path of return to its own systemic normality is blocked, the system cannot be called a system any more (Morçöl, 2014).

Joseph Ratzinger also occupies the stance of the moral-organic-consensual nature of democracy (Ratzinger, 2007, p. 738). Even Jürgen Habermas and Joseph Ratzinger occupy the consensual-organic view of democracy and modern state in their famous discussion (2007) starting with the 'Böckenförde theorem' ('Can a secular state guarantee its own moral basis?') although with different viewpoints (Habermas and Ratzinger, 2007). An organic-sustainable vision of democracy is also supported by Shiva (2005, 2015), whereas duties and responsibilities are emphasized, such as rights.

The list of influential contemporary thinkers emphasizing various organic and/or context-bound views of democracy in contrast to transactional/imposed concepts of democracy could be extended at length. The cited authors' works demonstrate that the former is by no means inferior to the latter, however, EU institutions appear to occupy the position of bureaucratized-transactional democratisation.

Country-specific critical theories

Democratic backsliding theory

It is worth noting that in Hungary one can observe a steadiness of general consensus regarding the political cycles: power has always been handed over on time and election cycles have never been shortened or extended between

1990 and the present. The adamant adherence to the democratic procedure is a characteristic that would fall into Rustow's (1970) category of habituation. Another important element of steady consensus is that of refraining from violence towards political opponents fulfilling the paramount criterion of Payne's (2006) analysis. Violence directed against the political opposition appeared only in October, 2006 when armed police battalions – using potentially lethal rubber bullets, telescopic batons, plastic cable ties, and makeshift detention centres – and flawed judicial proceedings were applied against Fidesz supporters and MPs by the Socialist-Liberal government².

According to Ágh (2013), in the early years of the second Orbán Government³ there were such immediate changes in the previously relatively steady development path that the new phenomena should be considered as backsliding in democracy. Attila Ágh, turning away from his previous thoughts of desirable development (Ágh, 1975a, 1975b, 1984) emphasized a change of style in politics, politicisation of the civil service and centralization of public administration as non-democratic tendencies: taking control of the media and changing election rules, the Parliament electing a politically loyal attorney general, and dismissal of civil servants have to be considered as political cleansing. The forms of tripartite consultations (employers, employees, government) were substituted with separate consultations and numerous professional chambers (Agricultural Chamber, Lawyers Chambers, Medical Doctors' Chamber, Chambers of Commerce and Industry, etc.) were entitled with public duties and rights which was considered corporatist and therefore per se antidemocratic by Ágh (2013). Ágh appears to accept Rustow's theory of transactional democratisation emphasizing that in theory the transitional period (exporting and implementing institutions) would result in consolidation (habituation) of the new institutional order. According to him, the cause of this abrupt change is that one party achieved a landslide victory at the 2010 elections acquiring a supermajority (political cause). This brought to the surface the asynchronous nature of the development of polity, economy and society, and sure enough, adaptive Europeanization was incomplete which in itself refutes mainstream theory that views democratisation as a constant evolutionary process. The main elements of structural distortions of the beneficial evolutionary development path were poverty due to loss of Eastern markets and unjust redistribution via giveaway privatisation completed with the loss of civic participation.

Ágh views 2006 police brutality and judicial oppression of democratic participation as a violent remobilization of a right-wing mob. At this point in time, history apparently refutes him⁴. Ágh is also mistaken in that extreme-right Jobbik would ever have been a twin party of Fidesz. In fact, it formed a unified

² URL: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2006/10/23/street-protests-intensify-in-budapest> (accessed 22 August 2021)

³ Viktor Orbán was the first prime minister of Hungary between 1998–2002, and 2010–2014 was his second term.

⁴ For more information: Civil Jogász Bizottság jelentése a 2006 szeptember-októberi emberi jogsértésekről. [Report of the Civic Lawyer Commission on the breaches of human rights September-October, 2006] Kairosz Publisher, 2007.

opposition with socialists and liberals who were not bothered by its apparent anti-semitism.

Ágh (2013) – as Vachudova (2008) – views the EU as a powerful actor of democratisation despite its apparent democratic deficit.

The abrupt change theory – interventionist approach

Pech and Scheppele link Viktor Orbán's speech on illiberal state to Art. 7 of the Treaty of the European Union, which regulates the so-called 'nuclear option' (Pech and Scheppele, 2017b). The authors as such link research on political science to legal research and furthermore to legal argumentation.

Pech and Scheppele (2017b) agree with Kochenov (2008) that the establishment of a nuclear option had highlighted certain regret or leaning towards retrospective correction of the Copenhagen criteria or even the entire decade-long accession period. According to Pech and Scheppele (2017b), the EU Commission wasted too much time on futile discourses with Poland and Hungary, whereas the Commission should instead have launched pre-emptive 'nuclear' strikes on these countries in order "to prevent the occurrence of a consolidated autocracy in violation of EU values is to act fast as soon as the danger signals are clear." What the latter words on timing mean in substance, they fail to describe, except for their emphasizing a "recommendation for speed".

Unlike Ágh (2013), Pech and Scheppele (2017b) do not elaborate on explanatory research on the causes of democratically elected political leaders' turning into autocrats overnight (as suggested in stage 2 of Pech and Scheppele) or how come that given the public resistance, such new autocrats can win several elections or even lose elections in certain important constituencies (as happened at the municipal elections in 2018 in Hungary). In fact, the so-called new autocrats perform rather badly in suppressing opposition, perhaps even so much that they do not live up to their reputation of being autocrats at all. The authors rather promote the idea that the EU should *intervene in order to restore democratic processes* by initiating Art. 7 TEU. How exactly the Art. 7 procedures would be in a causal relationship with the change of a democratically elected government in the Rustowian sense remains unclear. As a bottom line, the authors opt for a new institutionalization of Europe as a two-tier polity.

Kelemen and Blauburger (2017) promote the idea that Orbán undermined the independence of the judiciary and, furthermore, engaged in illiberal democracy, therefore he should be sanctioned, but actually imposing Art. 7 sanctions on Hungary were unlikely because of the internal power composition of party politics of the European Parliament. Soyaltin-Colella (2020) also promotes the idea that Hungary and Poland should be sanctioned by the EU, indicating that a large chunk of academic work deals with inter-institutional power struggles between EU institutions regarding Art. 7. The European Parliament has never been meagre on harsh communication towards Hungary and Poland and has always been ready to defend the democratic and liberal democratic path of development. Unlike the EP, the Council of the EU demonstrated a marked reluctance to apply sanctions. Soyaltin-Colella (2020) provides a list of actions that support the backsliding theory:

- Changing the powers of the Constitutional Court by the new Constitution.
- Lowering the judicial retirement age and stacking courts with loyalists.
- Accountability and legal oversight of numerous government institutions has been changed, notably the Central bank and the data protection ombudsman.
- Restricting the freedom of the press.
- Rigging the electoral system.
- Stifling independent civil society organisations.

Similarly, according to Attila Ágh's account, Soyaltin-Colella appears to be refuted by history that elections were "rigged" or there would be government oversight of the Central Bank.

The practical applicability of Art. 7 TEU

A large chunk of corresponding theory deals with the technical details of the actual application of Art. 7 TEU.

Kelemen and Blauburger (2016) emphasize that all member states, including Hungary and Poland, committed themselves to Art. 2 values, thus there is a certain level of consensus among all countries, even the ones about to be sanctioned. With this argument, the authors offer a reply on the fundamental question of whether sanctioning certain member states affects the consensual element – and implicitly the cohesion – of the Union.

Rech (2018) takes a critical view of Ignatieff's (2005) stance according to which strengthening liberal democracy by coercion was a valid application of actual democratisation. Rech suggests the logical remark that the EU may risk its liberal and democratic values by imposing monism of values on countries instead of pluralism of values (Rech, 2018, p. 335). In fact, Poland and Hungary were both disciplined by the EU when they intended to modify retail sector taxation in favour of small businesses. Such policy steps are sympathetic to the electorate and suppressing them undermines public support of the EU as a promoter of democracy and public good. Rech (2018) offers an overview of various concepts of democratisation within the EU:

- Agreement by all member states to be democratised (minimalist-positivist argument).
- Upholding constitutional values is necessary to maintain a supranational entity (existential argument).
- Upholding rule of law and democracy contribute to the stability, peace and prosperity of the EU (teleological argument).

These arguments are usually mixed and used interchangeably in EU documents but these do not necessarily support the legal homogeneity let alone a common political culture (Habermas, 1996) and, as such, there ought to be a right for dissent but this appears not to have such ample institutional leverage as homogenisation (Ropret, Aristovnik and Kovac, 2018).

Hellquist (2019) uses the metaphor of ostracism to describe the relationship of the EU and countries under Art. 7. Ostracism is a way to silence dissent in the form that uses the power of multitude against a minority. According to her analysis, sanctioning and being sanctioned create moral superiority for the actor of the sanctions and renders the other party morally inferior. Citing Jean-Claude Juncker

and Federica Mogherini, Hellquist (2019) throws light on the fact that the leaders of the EU were thinking about sanctioning internal and external entities in order to maintain (their) “credibility”, however, the practice of sanctioning internally and externally reveals grave discrepancies. Hellquist rightly captures that internal sanctioning does not create European unity of cooperation and thus causes the dilemma of mutual harm of the actor and receiver of sanctions. Furthermore, Hungary and Poland hold a trump card as being democratically elected unlike the Commission. On the other hand, Hellquist (2019) is obviously mistaken that the far right were part of the government coalition in Hungary (it has never been, and it is part of the united opposition with liberals and socialists – a repetitive error of international authors).

Closa (2019) also assumes that there was an actual rule of law crisis in Hungary and in Poland, citing interventionist Pech and Scheppele (2017a). After interviewing Commission officials, Closa found that (interventionist) scholarly criticism by Kelemen (2017), Pech and Scheppele (2017a, b) and Kochenov (2016) made Commission officials justify their actions as to why they had been limited to infringement procedures. One of the justifications was that the EP was not ready to act politically. Officials had to calculate the chances of getting a 4/5 majority in the Council where the voters had to consider the political costs of their vote (e.g. Slovakia would have to consider that it would get into a semi-isolated position between Hungary and Poland. The Baltic States, or Romania would feel cut off.). Hungary and Poland would also mutually defend one other. The author concludes that the EU lacks last instance coercion to overcome recalcitrant governments regardless of there being democratically elected.

Appel (2019) continues the legacies of democratisation by transaction urging a joint international effort combined with street demonstrations to overturn current policies and possibly the democratically elected governments as well.

Kazai (2021) joins the interventionist choir by scrutinizing legislative processes in Hungary by quality and quantity. He does not put his analysis into a wider perspective. Legislation has always had its flaws in Hungary such as annual budgets being regularly accepted overnight during the last days of the year in the 1990s, but viewing law itself as an adversary of rule of law is a contradiction of terms in a traditional *Rechtsstaat* country where hard law published in the Official Journal of the country has always been paramount to soft law or judicial practice.

Ovádek (2018) accepts the existential position emphasizing that the punishment of Poland and Hungary is necessary for the unity and cohesion of the EU as a community. Ovádek (2018) puts forth the difference of legality as the thin concept of rule of law from the thick concept that embraces fundamental rights and democracy. This distinction reflects the distinction between democracy as a procedural value and as a substantial value. At this point the democratic divide of the EU and the alleged rule of law deficiencies of democratic Polish and Hungarian polities collide to the extent that it makes it awkward for the EU to sustain the by acting punitively towards its symbolically substandard members. However, Ovádek argues that Art. 7 justifies intervention without regard to the scope of EU law. Ovádek argues that EPP gives protection to the Fidesz

party – which cannot be a source of concern after the split of EPP in 2021. In addition, Ovádek rightly indicates that interventionist publications are widely void of legal theory or methodology (empirically studying 80 publications, none of them turned out to use legal methodology).

Blauberger and van Hüllen (2021) focus on the issue of ‘money for democratisation’ that resembles the first wave of structural changes in the transition countries scrutinized amply by Sobis and De Vries (2009). Blauberger and van Hüllen (2021) agree with Kelemen (2017) in the twisted argument that the non-elected Commission is more democratic than elected national governments. The authors contemplated the potential outcomes of actually applying conditionality of EU funds. They are not entirely sure whether such a step would play out beneficially for democratization. If open coercion by economic force takes place, the EU evidently loses its posture of being a club of shared values. Furthermore, the authors hint that there might be a cold calculation between costly compliance and premeditated non-compliance beneficial for competitiveness. In such a case, insisting on a coercion policy may appear grotesque when being punished would pay off better than weathering the storm in relations with the EU institutions.

History appears to justify Blauberger and van Hüllen (2021) regarding their statement that the Commission will hardly settle debates with the recalcitrant member states. In fact, the Commission appears to deliver sanctions without bothering with the due process of law by denying access to COVID recovery funds⁵. Such a step can be taken as brinkmanship or harsh negotiation tactics but would be difficult to justify by the principles of the rule of law.

Whether the actual freezing of access to cohesion and structural funds would be beneficial to democratic development or to the prosperity and security of the EU as a continental entity, is highly questionable. It is clear that in such a case funded cohesion and structural development would halt or would take a different route from EU strategies given a prolonged period of sanctions. If agricultural subsidies were also to be held back, this would entail an abrupt change in land prices, food prices and food market in the given country. The given recalcitrant member state might be forced to install protective steps to uphold its agricultural production capacity, internal food supply and agricultural exports. One percent of the GDP of the EU is redistributed by EU institutions while EU funds provide for an important non-indebting source of external financing that had a historical role of boosting development in transition countries. But assuming that this development has been successful, the marginal utility of EU funds is expected to decrease gradually. Sure enough, the occurrence of a long sanctioning period (similarly, to decade-long sanctions against Russia) might ruin the efficacy of billions of ECUs and euros spent before and after the accession of Hungary and Poland while opening independent development perspectives for them. *Ceterum censeo*, the United Kingdom opted for the independent development path and according to Sti-

⁵ URL: <https://www.politico.eu/article/brussels-turns-down-hungarys-recovery-plan/> (accessed: 08 August 2021).

glitz (2017), cool, selfish economic calculation may cause the disintegration of certain institutional elements of the EU.

Major flaws in the abrupt change theory – interventionist argument

Lack of methodology or flawed methodology

In order to perform proper research, appropriate methodology is required and the same applies to legal studies. Ovádek (2018) recognised this as a general intellectual shortcoming of the interventionist school. Albeit, legal research – according to Levi (1948) – shall be performed with the awareness of social theories and changes in society that are relevant in mitigating ambiguities that might occur during legal reasoning, not without respect to the fact that law itself consists of social artefacts. The main social artefact regarding law is legal grammar itself. “Legal grammar is not really ‘neutral’, but unavoidably situated within a cultural horizon.” (Ballin, p. 5). As such, the ontological paradox of jurisprudence regarding EU law surfaces: Which meaning of highly symbolic terms should be applied when making a judgement on the applicability of Art. 7 of TEU if basic notions that are widely considered equivalent actually differ profoundly? The best example of this is the difference between ‘Rechtsstaat’ and ‘rule of law’. While the former refers to the state that has to maintain and enforce law and justice, the latter emphasizes a more common law-like viewpoint according to which law is inherited and preserved, therefore it has to be fulfilled by public and private entities alike; enforcement relies heavily on the judiciary, while a chartered constitution – and many other elements of written hard law – are not necessarily required. The importance of understanding Rechtsstaat as a concept has long been evident for many authors of public administration theory (Hajnal, 2003; Hajnal, 2008, p. 132; Hajnal, 2014; Hinteá-Ringsmuth-Mora, 2006; Drechsler, 2005) with regards to Hungary.

Furthermore, being interventionist first and doing research afterwards creates serious research bias that has not yet been scrutinised sufficiently. Interventionist literature uses shortcuts that consist of semantic bubbles such as “elections were rigged” and “the extreme right is part of the ruling coalition” or the charge of being “anti-semitic”⁶. These are hardly scientific affirmations; instead, such remarks indicate the bias of authors who use them in their writings without critique.

Historical analogies with regards to the country-specific interventionist theory

Ágh (2013a, 2013b) refers to the discreditation of Western influence because of poverty and pain caused by liberal reforms, while Pech and Scheppele (2017) on the other hand call for quick and decisive intervention by EU institutions. Interestingly enough, similar proposals were aired regarding Tri-Zone Germany in 1949 “We must face the fact that the contradictions, vacillations, and reactionary manifestations of Western occupation policy have appallingly discredited democracy in Germany, both as a political system and an intellectual outlook” (Gurland, 1949, p. 235). The analogy comes from Payne (2006) who uses the ex-

⁶ The contrary is true according to Köves, Slomó. URL: <https://hungarytoday.hu/hungary-safest-europe-jews-rabbi-koves-first-site-conference/> (accessed: 08 August 2021).

amples of post-war Germany and contemporary Iraq as examples to illustrate that coercive democratisation is doomed to fail. Kinzer (2007) provides an exhausting enumeration of failures of interventions in the 20th century to be used as historical evidence that interventions with the purpose of democratisation tend to backfire.

Lacking the explanation of why the supposed development path of democratisation changed abruptly in Hungary is crucial regarding the applicability of Art. 7. The application of Art. 7 requires a legally relevant purpose, namely, to put back on track the derailed democratisation process of the given country. If, however, measures taken by Art. 7 do not correspond to the causes of the supposed de-democratisation tendency, application of Art. 7 is doomed to fail in content, furthermore, it will have no causal connection with its legally relevant purpose. Sanctions applied without a sound legally relevant purpose of betterment do not fulfil the criteria of the rule of law. (The law developed the notions of general and special prevention to grasp this problem.)

Unlike other authors of the ‘abrupt change – interventionist’ school, Ágh (2013a; 2013b), Pech and Scheppele (2017) and Kelemen and Blauburger (2017) make at least certain attempts to explain the causes behind the abrupt change of former democratisation. The majority – and the Sargentini report itself – lacks circumstantial inquiry in this regard. This is a decisive shortcoming not only in social science but in legal methodology as well. The Sargentini report – itself a legal document – ought to meet the requirements of proper legal inquiry.

The promoters of the theories of abrupt change do not take into account Francis Fukuyama’s explanation of why traditional leftist parties tend to lose ground in industrialised countries (Fukuyama, 2015, pp. 436–440). In his magnum opus, Fukuyama describes how traditional leftist parties had to see the structural decline of their support because of manufacturing industries being relocated to Asia and either diffused into a larger middle class or descended into a diverse lower class. As the lower classes in services became more diverse, leftist parties turned to identity politics and turned away from social mobilisation by class and labour issues.

The lack of explanations on why the development path changed abruptly becomes more peculiar as theorists do not tend to think that bad policies delivered by leftist parties between 2002 and 2010, or furthermore the foundations of the regime change decisively influenced by policy transfer mechanisms and technical assistance of the 1990s (Sobis and De Vries, 2009), might have had a causal relationship with certain elements of the development path that were used as circumstantial evidence against Hungary under Art. 7.

‘Backsliding’ assumes a prior, higher position in democracy that actually never existed

The theory of backsliding (in legal terms: serious breach of the rule of law ought to be in a causal relationship with the potential or actual detriment of Art. 2 values) – can be conceived only if there had been a higher level of democracy that is now deteriorating. Still, authors do not offer a point of reference from where the backsliding could have possibly started or how it could be measured. In fact, universal backsliding could not be substantially underpinned if one took into account the police brutalities of the Socialist-liberal

government in 2006 covered up by the judiciary (or threatening church schools of withdrawing their finances, mass layoffs in public administration on political basis, outright corruption cases and excessive foreign currency loans, curtailing the competencies of the Constitutional Court by so called ‘harakiri-norms’⁷, etc.). Bad policies⁸ brought tremendous pain, poverty and suffering to the public (such as the decrease of per capita GDP) that are generally considered perils for democracy (Share, 1984; Huntington, 1985; Ágh, 2013a).

The lack of understanding of the development path of the regime change

The lack of contextual analysis is obvious when neither authors of political science (post-communist studies) nor of legal studies engage in the lasting consequences of the lack of lustration in Hungary (Coman, 2014). This is a major shortcoming of comprehending the current context of Hungarian democracy. Authors do not discuss the fall of Socialist prime minister Péter Medgyessy in 2004 after it turned out that he had served communist counterintelligence services under codename D-209. One cannot overestimate the power of those unknown individuals who are in possession of such secret agent files. If the prime minister (in charge of contemporary secret services and an experienced secret agent himself) could not protect himself from such an attack, how would an ordinary judge be able not to distort his rulings in favour of a blackmailer? We do not know. What we know though is that there was no lustration in the judiciary. This was discerned by the World Bank but not by interventionist authors. Anderson, Bernstein and Gray (2005) wrote the following: “*The transition from socialism to capitalism in Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltics (CEE) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) has required a fundamental reorientation of legal and judicial institutions. During socialist times they were subordinate to the executive and the Communist Party, and their role in the commercial sphere was oriented almost entirely toward enforcing the governments’ economic plans.*” (Anderson et al., 2005, p. xi). In fact, leadership positions in the judiciary used to require political engagement from the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party. This is a non-issue for academic authors but was a reality when the Hungarian Parliament decided to lower the age of retirement of the affected generation. The lack of lustration in the judiciary resembles the situation described by Payne (2006) regarding de-nazification of post-war Germany (Gurland, 1949). It was a major dilemma for the theorists of the day as to what extent to let former Nazis participate in the judiciary or public life. The dilemma is real: is it a workable democracy that depends on those who were compromised in a prior dictatorship and actively fought against democrats?

⁷ So called “harakiri-norms” consist of legal material modifying another law but with the clause that the modifying norm automatically loses effect after the modification takes place. The Constitutional Court during its procedures cannot create new norms, its competences are limited to ‘negative legislation’. As such, cessation of a given norm that had been modified by a harakiri-norm prevents the Constitutional Court of re-installing the legal text prior to the modification. This limits the de facto range of action of the Constitutional Court that has to judge whether the norm in force – however problematic – or no norm at all would be less harmful but does not have the capability of settling the matter by upholding the regulation before the modification in question.

⁸ URL: <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/hungary-just-first-fall> (accessed 08 August 2021).

In Hungary this has never been settled and it appears that rule of law institutions developed in the 1980s and 1990s defended the incumbents. Corrections to this appear as a breach of the rule of law to many contemporary academic authors.

The issue of moral authority

Hellquist (2019) rightly captures the importance of the symbolic-moral posture of sanctioning and being sanctioned. Still, authors do not state that member states promoting sanctions against Poland and Hungary would be flawless. Regarding certain human right challenges in Western Europe, a quick list on news media reports might put the symbolic-moral battle into a different perspective. It appears that it is only a matter of research to find developments in pro-sanction countries which potentially undermine their moral high ground as a universal precondition to sanctions applied either internally or externally, however this has not caught the attention of interventionist theorists yet.

Conclusions

The main theoretical question discussed in this paper at length is whether any country could or should be democratised by various forms of transaction or, furthermore, coercion. The examples of post-WWII. Japan and Germany are generally taken as successful examples. Payne (2006), however, stated that these examples are in fact examples of the opposite: actual democratisation in these cases took place not because of but in spite of external influence. Historical examples always have to be handled with care because of the profoundly different contexts. According to Christopher Pollitt, “knowledge of what works and what does not tends to be heavily context dependent” (Pollitt, 2003, p. 122).

In order to revisit the Hungarian context of democratisation, the main conclusions of Rustow (1970), Huntington (1984) and Share (1987) have been used on transactional democratisation to draw a line of thought between the generation of cold war authors and contemporary interventionist thinkers such as Ignatieff (2005), Pech and Scheppele (2017a, b), Kelemen and Blauburger (2016), Kazai (2021), Appel (2019), Kochenov (2016), Coman (2014), etc., who tend to focus on the applicability of Art. 7 as a means to correct the development paths of Hungary and Poland even by a certain level of coercion. Art. 7 as such is a means for (re-) democratisation by transaction.

Instead of an off-the-shelf approach, I propose the following logical steps to judge democratisation by transaction:

1. I propose that the “Payne-theorem” should be used as a blueprint for deciding whether a country is democratic i.e. “*moderation of the amount of leadership political violence*”.

The Payne-theorem has definite advantages: it embraces historical evidence while it does not need lengthy explanations. The Payne-theorem is appropriate to be used as a universal principle in the following formulation:

If there is moderation of leadership political violence, the given country cannot be considered as a legitimate target of democratic intervention.

I refrain from trying to justify various sorts of coercion (potentially) including violence by a reverse Payne-theorem as it would be far beyond the scope of this article. Similarly, the Payne-theorem should not be considered as a universal norm: it refers solely to democratisation.

2. No good ends stem from using bad means: democratic transactions should not be violent. Violent transactions shall be rendered per se undemocratic and therefore ontologically contrary to democratisation.
3. Rule of law and democratisation ought to go together: transactional democratisation should be based on the rule of law. The law of the given country and/or international law.

It is to be emphasized that there is a robust organic-contextual school of democracy that is practically not considered by interventionists. This – otherwise rich and diverse – realm of thought is coined by such names as Ratzinger (2007), Habermas and Ratzinger (2007), Habermas (1996), Shiva (2015), Pollitt (2013), Morçöl (2014), Hazony (2018) and Payne (2006), no less. I propose that academic inquiry as well as actual political actors should revisit these thoughts in order to narrow the gulf between institutional ambitions and historical realities.

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Original article

REINSTATING GREEK E-GOVERNANCE: A FRAMEWORK FOR E-GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING, IMPROVEMENT AND GOVERNMENT POLICIES

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Abstract. This paper presents the implementation and evolution of e-governance in Greece as well as offering insights, policies and suggestions for the design of e-government benchmarks. The research objectives of this article are to identify the appraisal of Greece in e-government over time and in relation to other countries as well as the role of internal audit and transparency related to digital public services. The method adopted is through an extensive bibliographic review of the Greek, European and international literature of the thematic field of e-government as well as the presentation of several frameworks to structure the discussion of e-government benchmark design based on a benchmarking with key indicators of published surveys from internationally reputable organizations. The findings of this paper are that Greece proceeded at a very slow pace in its digital transformation, shows shortcomings in e-government policies, records delays in adapting the services requested by citizens, and no matter the lack of investment in technological infrastructure, the effectiveness of e-governance presupposes proactiveness. Nevertheless, another key conclusion of the research is that Greece is far from the average performance of e-government in the European Union due to its chronic economic problems, the lack of technological equipment and the lack of overall orientation in e-government. Furthermore, this paper can be a measure of comparison for other countries that have similar characteristics to Greece in order to improve e-governance.

Keywords: e-governance, public administration, benchmarking, transparency, organizational behavior, internal audit.

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1. Introduction

Nowadays, the spread of technology is practically huge. Some typical examples of the use of technology are the fact that there are 4.39 billion unique internet users and 3.48 billion social network users (Datareportal Digital, 2019). The evolution and dissemination of technology has provided a valuable tool for any government to pursue a more effective government policy.

The use of technology is particularly important for public administration. As a result, the term e-government or digital governance has been developed. The financial programs of the European Union gave an important impetus to the development of digital governance in Greece (Markellos et al., 2014).

The reasons why new technologies have not been sufficiently disseminated in Greece can be divided into three categories. Policy failures, planning and programming weaknesses, and obstacles to the application of new technologies (Tsakanikas et al., 2014). Politicians fail to promote new technologies due to lack of political will, lack of funding programs, lack of state continuity and lack of know-how.

The lack of planning and programming in the public sector is due to the complexity of public sector systems (Murphy et al., 2017), the lack of operating standards of information systems, the network problems and the technical weaknesses of the systems. Finally, obstacles to the implementation of new technologies in the public sector are the high cost of purchasing information systems and software, the complexity of information systems, the lack of monitoring of the implementation of new technologies, the lack of executives to implement the new technologies and the lack of incentives to implement of new technologies (Glyptis et al., 2020).

The article includes the definition and the importance of e-governance, the meaning of public administration with emphasis on the Greek public administration, the organizational structure and organizational behavior of the Greek public administration, the role of internal audit in e-government, the evolution of e-government governance in Greece and Greece's position in the field of e-government in Europe. Finally, the last section of the article presents the conclusions.

Exploring the degree of e-government establishment and transformation (Pedersen, 2018) in Greece as well as its benchmarking are the main concerns of this research. The knowledge of the operation of Greek public administration, the benchmarking of e-government dimensions and the required government policies are the main purposes of this research.

2. E-governance

2.1 Definitions

Internet use is increasing day by day and can play an important role in people's daily lives. The concept of e-governance is very popular and is often mentioned by many governments. It is often linked to the use of the internet (Singh, 2020). However, it is a broader concept.

“Digital governance is the practice of establishing and implementing policies, procedures, and standards for the proper development, use and management of the info sphere” (Floridi, 2018). Dawes (2008) considers that “E-government comprises information and communication technologies (ICTs) to support public services, government administration, democratic process, and relationships among citizens, civil society, the private sector and the state”. From the above definition it becomes clear that digital governance plays an important role in the citizen-state relations and in the quality of the services provided by the state. E-government has the potential to change state services to citizens, private and public sector relations and state-to-citizen relations (Markellos et al., 2014).

2.2. The importance of digital governance

E-governance is very important for the modern state. Some benefits of digital governance are, according to Erkut (Erkut, 2020), the reduction of bureaucracy, the participation of citizens in decisions through digital processes, the protection of human’s rights and the increase of transparency. The separation of the three dimensions of e-government and the six categories of e-government benefits was completed after the study of 53 content analysis articles (Twizeyimana and Andersson, 2019).

The benefits of e-government could be divided into three dimensions.

Table 1

The benefits of e-government

E-administration	E-services	E-citizens and society
Improvement of public administration	Improving state services	Creating moral values and social benefit
Informing citizens about administrative actions	Increasing the credibility of the state	Increasing the credibility of the state
Improving the ethical conduct of civil servants	Informing citizens about administrative actions	

Source: Twizeyimana and Andersson (2019).

The Table 2 below shows the benefits of e-governance in a more detailed view.

Table 2

The benefits of digital governance

Improvement	Results
Improvement of public services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More and better services; - Improving service delivery; - More and more integrated services
Improvement of management efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cost reduction; - Reduce corruption and the costs involved; - Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of operations; - Reducing administrative burdens

Improvement	Results
Opportunities for open government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increase transparency; – Increasing citizens' control over the administration; – Increasing participation among public bodies; – Increasing citizens' participation in public affairs (Alexopoulos et al, 2015)
Improving ethical behavior and professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Good use of public money; – Increase compliance with legislation; – Spreading the democratic spirit; – Understanding the value of collaboration; – Increasing accountability, honesty and moral values
Increasing the prestige and trust of the public administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Better access of citizens to state decisions; – More and better services; – Increasing the transparency of the operation of the public administration; – Better management of public bodies; – Improving public services and increasing citizens' satisfaction
Social welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increase of participation of citizens; – Increasing the quality and number of services; – E-government not only includes services provided electronically, but also offers tools for citizen-state interaction (Markellos et al., 2014)

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Some of the problems of e-governance are that the digital services (Tangi et al., 2020) sometimes have security problems that violate citizens' privacy (Erkut, 2020). Furthermore, many citizens are not familiar with the use of new technology.

3. The Greek public administration

Public administration personifies the expression of the volition of the implemented government policy (Denhardt et al., 2013) and emerges in various forms (Pownal, 2013). The public administration developed in parallel with the establishment of the state deals with the management and implementation of government policies and programs as well as with the organization and management of the human resources served (Keller, 2007).

Public administration human resources are made up of the public administrators and officers who face three fundamental challenges to governance (Carpenter, 2011). Its mission is the successful implementation of the public mission, the support of the implemented policy (Deligaouri, 2013) and the treatment of the failures. The management of human, material and intangible resources for the implementation of public policy (Moreno-Enguix et al., 2018) is the purpose of the so-called public management (Gray and Jenkins, 2006).

Public administration is oriented to serve the public interest that arises from the needs of society as a whole (Marshall, 2018). The Greek public administration is based on the rules of public law, and is distinguished from the other two state functions, the legislative and the judicial, called the executive function (Greek legislation, 2019). In addition, the Greek public administration, in parallel with the elected government, is able to issue regulatory acts based on the relevant powers of the current legislation, setting rules of public law. The Greek public adminis-

tration is obliged by the Greek constitution to the impartial execution of its duties arising from the implementation of the decisions of the elected government, to which it belongs hierarchically.

The Greek public administration was established with the advent of the third term of the Hellenic Republic, the establishment of the new political system of the presiding parliamentary democracy and the Constitution of 1975. It includes ministries, local governments, public legal entities and autonomous authorities. The purpose of the Greek public administration is focused on the implementation of the policy of the elected government, the management of failures from the implemented public policy as well as the organizational management of human and material resources and managing public governance failures (Gunawong and Gao, 2017).

3.1 Structure of the Greek public administration

The Greek public administration includes the general government, the Legal Entities under Public Law (L.E.P.L.) and the Public Enterprises and Organizations (P.E.O.) (Greek legislation, 2017). General government is structured in central government, social security and local government organizations, while the legal entities under public law in public hospitals, universities and a number of other public bodies within the scope of public administration and finally public enterprises and organizations include those companies that still belong to the Greek State or are controlled by a percentage.

Figure 1 outlines the structure of the Greek public administration as reflected in the current Greek legal code (Greek legislation, 2017). Public administration includes general government (G.G.), legal entities under public law (L.E.P.L.) and public enterprises and organizations (P.E.O.). The key points to pay attention to are initially the separation of general government into central government, local government and social insurance, and then the separation of central government into central administration, public organizations and autonomous authorities. The central government controls the ministries, the decentralized administrations, the autonomous organizations, and the presidency of the Republic and the Parliament.

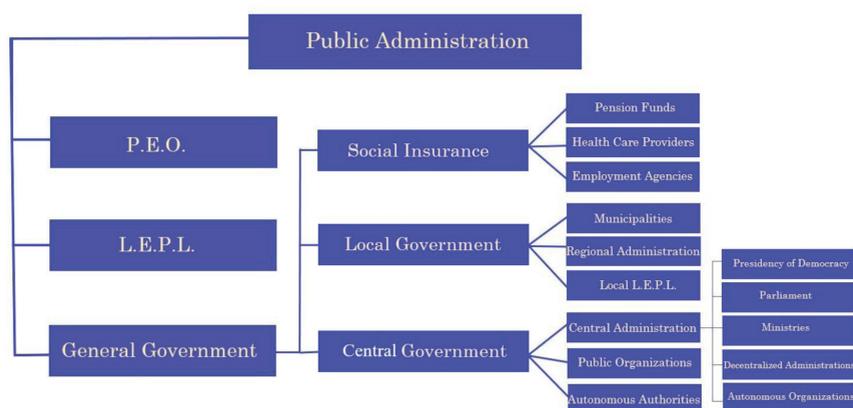


Figure1: Structure of the Greek public administration

As follows from the above diagram, the distinction of the Greek public administration aims for the central government in the traditional restrictive character of the state having the role of observing the current legislation, with the L.E.P.L. in the provision of services of social value such as health, education or social welfare as well as with P.E.O. in the provision of products and services to serve the public interest. As far as the applied management system is concerned, it is characterized as centralized for the responsibilities of public bodies to exercise regulatory decisions throughout the Greek territory, decentralized in terms of the decisions taken for their legally decentralized administrations whose executives are appointed by the central government, as well as in self-governing for the responsibilities of the region-elected municipalities and peripheries. From a legal point of view, based on the Greek constitution, the Greek territory is organized based on the decentralized system of public administration (McCue and Pitzer, 2000).

The Greek public administration is distinguished for its bureaucratic style based on Napoleonic administrative tradition (Featherstone, 2015) as well as the slowness that can lead in some cases to inefficiency and e-insufficiency (Choi and Park, 2018). The need to transform the traditional model of governance of the Greek public administration as well as the driving forces that have put pressure on the bureaucracy (Philippidou, 2005), such as the gradual liberalization of markets, globalization and information technology in the last two decades, has provoked several announcements and attempts aimed at Greek reform.

Despite the announcements and the countless laws that were passed for the modernization of the public administration in the context of the treatment of the Greek public government debt (Ghourchian and Yilmazkuday, 2020) that correspond to the memoranda of cooperation with the European creditors, the operation of the Greek public administration has not led to the offer of significant differentiations. However, in terms of structure, it should be noted that in recent decades a new model of public administration has emerged for the Greek operating standards, namely autonomous authorities or organizations that either have a separate legal form from the central administration or operate as so-called autonomous organizations (Jeannot et al., 2018).

The obsession with the autonomous authorities in recent years raises questions as to whether it managed to escape from the traditional culture of Greek public administration, namely the classic state-owned government model of the traditional Greek political partisanship line up (Allan and Scruggs, 2004). However, it certainly communicatively provided the Greek citizens with the feeling that the public administration can perform without the emancipated guidance from the politically elected government.

3.2 Organizational behavior of the Greek public administration

The operation of the public sector is defined by laws, presidential decrees and ministerial decisions and are analyzed in circular instructions of the public administration. Each public service operates on the basis of a legislative decree that defines the operating framework of each service and that constitutes the Organization of the service. The framework of each organization includes the organic positions of the public service containing the responsibilities and the job descrip-

tion, the structure of the organizational function, the objectives of the service, the available e-services as well as the existing hierarchy of administration and the way it is staffed, and the digital-ready legislation (Plesner and Justesen, 2021). The basic legislative decree of the operation of the public administration is the so-called Civil Service Code (Greek legislation, 2007) which contains the framework of recruitment, operation and behavior as well as the disciplinary and criminal responsibility of the human resources of the Greek state.

From an organizational point of view, the model of administration of the Greek state is quite bureaucratic, with emphasis on the hierarchy and the penalties for violating the legal requirements, while there is no essential reference to the motivation of human resources (Varotsis, 2019). In addition, the organizational behavior of employees is covered only by some individual codes of ethics and the behavior of human resources, which insist more on the presentation of penalties for its violation than in self-improvement and training. It is possible that the implementation, performance and adoption of e-government implementation will be significantly affected by organizational and political actors (Coursey and Norris, 2008).

The organizational behavior of the public administration is a key factor of an effective public management that aims to improve the services provided (Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2016) and to modernize the operation through the implementation of e-government (Introna et al., 2010). The organizational behavior of public administration is something broader than human relationships of public servants' at work and the key to success in implementing an innovation in an organization. In public administration, the effective management of the organizational behavior of public organizations has a positive correlation with the improvement of productivity and a high degree of job satisfaction as well as the development of an organizational culture that leads to the interest and service of the citizen (Wirtz and Kurtz, 2016).

The implementation of e-government changes the behavior of human resources of public administration and can be a means of motivating not only to the improvement of the functionality of the project but also to the citizens' participation (Dimitrova et al., 2006). Certainly the reestablishment of e-government is the application of a collaborative innovation in public administration (Torfing, 2019) and furthermore a challenge to address an organizational change that aims to improve both human relations of human resources and the improvement of services provided.

3.3. The role of internal auditing in the improvement of e-governance

According to the Institute of Internal Auditors (I.I.A., 2020) an internal audit is "an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organization's operations. It helps an organization accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes". The above definition shows that the main goal of internal control is to improve the governance of an organization or a company (Tumwebaze et al., 2018).

Internal control is crucial to improving corporate processes and management (Kontogeorgis, 2018). The operation of internal auditing in the public sector in Greece is a reality as the operation has been strengthened from 1999 until today through the legislation provisions concerning internal audits (Kontogeorgis and Filos, 2012).

Internal auditing can measure if the principles of governance are applied and how effective and efficient is the operation of the public sector (Asare, 2009). Internal auditors need to be well acquainted with corporate processes because they evaluate them in order to make them more effective (Moeller, 2009). The internal audit can check whether the Greek public administration applies the principles of e-government or not. Monitoring the implementation of the principles of e-government is valuable in order to identify weaknesses and make necessary improvement changes.

3.4 Transparency of the Greek public administration

Transparency is a measure of the perception of acceptable information by a transmitter (Varotsis and Katerelos, 2018). Enhancing the access, understanding and accuracy of information by any means to stakeholders increases the level of transparency (Bertot et al., 2010). At the political level, management of government information omits barriers to access that affect public decision-making.

Transparency in public administration is inherent in the integrity and ethics of political leaders and government officials, as well as in the accountability of civil servants and the extent to which anti-corruption policies are implemented (Alt and Lassen, 2006). A government that publishes all managed information – excluding sensitive information that threatens national security (Hartmann and Steup, 2015) or privacy (Greek legislation, 1997) – effectively enhances transparency (Gunawong, 2015).

Greek governments have periodically made significant efforts to increase transparency and public access to available government information, such as the establishment of e-governance as well as the implementation of the so called “diavgeia”, a website that obliges with a relevant legal framework of the entire public administration publishing every decision related to the operation of public administration, its regulatory decisions, announcements and declarations as well as anything related to expenses and budgets enhancing government transparency (Bonson et al., 2012).

The establishment of independent authorities as well as autonomous public bodies emphasizing the establishment of the so-called “asep” – which means supreme council for civil personnel selection – the independent body that manages the public announcements for recruitment of the permanent staff of the public sector, aimed at the strengthening of government transparency. On the other hand was the creation of a series of named independent authorities over the last two decades aimed at increasing transparency and accountability (Halachmi and Greiling, 2013), without necessarily being confirmed over time by credible reports. In recent decades, however, policies have been implemented to enhance government transparency, which strengthens public confidence in public administration (Spanou and Sotiropoulos, 2011).

4. The evolution of digital governance in Greece

For many years there was no specific legislation regarding e-government in Greece and the relevant provisions were derived from general administrative principles and laws (Iglezakis, 2008). Law 4727/2020 is considered a milestone law in digital governance in our country. The reason is that it includes innovative pro-

visions concerning digital governance and is aimed at improving it. Some of the innovative provisions of law 4727/2020 are:

- Issuance of personal number to citizens: The main goal is for this number to be the only number that citizens will have. In particular, the abolition of the V.A.T. (Value Added Tax) number and A.M.K.A. (Social Security Registration Number) number is foreseen in the next ten years.
- The online registered delivery service is introduced. This service aims to replace traditional delivery of documents with e-mail.
- The Institutionalization of rules of the Public Procedures. The main goal is for citizens to know the procedures required in order to complete a transaction from the state service. This will help reduce downtime and corruption in the public sector.
- Digital governance awards are institutionalized for high performance organic units.
- Arrangements for the installation of communication systems 5G are arranged.
- It is planned to abolish the use of fax as a means of communication from 1/1/2021 (Greek Legislation, 2020).
- Enhance the services provided by the gov.gr website.
- Public services must communicate with citizens online and have a website.

Beyond the above law, efforts have been made to implement e-government in Greece, however, without great results. The most important attempts to implement e-government in the Greek public administration are presented in the table below:

Table 3

Attempts to implement e-government in the Greek public administration

Programs /laws	Description
Taxisnet	It operated in 2000 and from year to year improved its services. It offered innovative services such as electronic submission of income tax return, VAT return, certificate of non-debt to the state
Syzefxis	Launched in 2001 as a pilot application for 15 public bodies. It is the national local network for public sector services. Discussions on its upgrade have been ongoing for many years
Ika web site	Employers have the option of filing employee contributions electronically
Citizen Service Centres – KEP	The initial submission of the website http://www.kep.gov.gr was to provide information on some of the state's key transactions with citizens and businesses. The aim was for citizens to visit a part of the state in order to settle time-consuming bureaucratic procedures (Iglezakis, 2008)
Information Society S.A.	It is a Greek public company and was founded in 2001 with the aim of accelerating the adoption of e-government applications in Greece
General Secretariat for Public Administration and E-government	It was established in 2006 with the aim of improving public administration and the provision of electronic services to citizens
E-Procurement	The main objectives of the electronic procurement system were the simplification and the speed of processing. The establishment of the electronic procurement system was done with Presidential Decrees 59/2007 and 60/2007 (Iglezakis, 2008)

Programs /laws	Description
The implementation of Diaugeia	Law 3861/2010 is known as law “Diaugeia” and provides that public bodies that issue laws, presidential decrees, and acts must post them publicly on the Internet. It contributed significantly to transparency in the public sector (Tsakanikas, Danchev, Giotopoulos, Korra, and Pavlou, 2014)
Ministry of Digital Governance	The establishment of the Ministry of Digital Governance – by the Presidential Decree 81/ 8-7-2019 – was a very important step towards strengthening digital governance. The main goals of the Ministry of Digital Government are the increase of electronic services to citizens and the digital transformation of Greece (Mission/Ministry of Digital Governance, 2020)
The operation of the website gov.gr	The operation of gov.gr helped a lot in the dissemination of electronic services (Panayiotou and Stavrou, 2019). The website was launched in March 2020. The operation of the gov.gr website is a very good initiative making citizens aware of the services offered electronically. The operation of the above website was combined with innovative services such as e-authorization and e-declaration. New services are constantly being added that reduce the bureaucratic burden and increase the service of the citizens
Law 4727/2020	It contains many provisions for digital governance

Source: Compiled by the authors.

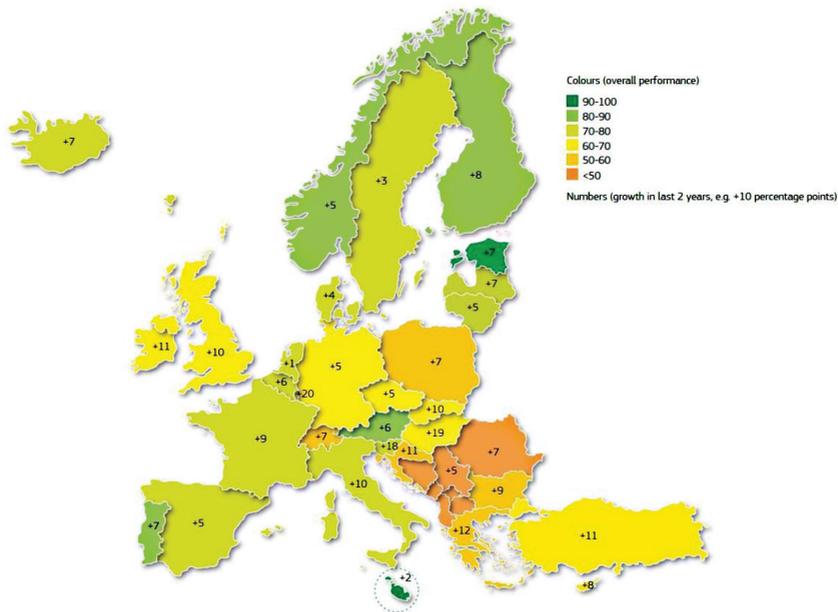
5. The ranking of Greece in the field of digital governance

For many years, the Greek public administration has been far from the average model of functioning of the European Union states, as a result of chronic pathogens. On the other hand, it is important to emphasize that this discrepancy is decreasing in relation to the first years of the Greek state’s accession to the European Economic Community and the implementation of countless restructuring programs of the Greek public sector (Hahamis et al, 2005), especially in the last decade with fiscal adjustment significantly improving the functioning of public administration.

However, even this improvement is not understood by the average citizen as the years go by, as the requirements for the level and variety of public service provision have been spectacularly increased (Gasova and Stofkova, 2017). Moreover, the comparison of the Greek economy and the operation of the state with the corresponding European states constantly leaves complaints while ignoring that the national culture of Greek society differs significantly compared to the corresponding one in most countries of the European Union (Linan et al, 2014). After all, culture as well as society are by nature dynamic and Greek society is changing and resembling a digital culture even more (Patelis, 2020) while the function of the economy, public administration and institutions respectively follows.

The deviations in the operation of e-government are not far from the total deviation of the supply of public services provided in Greece from the European average. However, before hastily drawing wrong conclusions, it is necessary to pay attention to the large divergence of technological infrastructure in Greece in relation to the most advanced European countries (Mavroudeas et al., 2010) as well as to the available technological means of the Greek public administration which, apart from being meager, seem essentially insufficient to meet modern requirements and avoid bureaucracy (Cordella and Tempini, 2015).

The European Commission (European Commission, 2020) publishes an annual guide to European governments' benchmarking, measuring through the e-government index, which incorporates per country the development of digital government (Dias, 2020), e-usability sensitivity, transparency and cross-border mobility. As can be seen from the following diagrams (2, 3 and 4), e-government in Greece is developing yet still lags behind the European average, while the Greek public administration achieves satisfactory convergence in relation to the provision of electronic cross-border services.



Despite the fruitful steps that have been taken in Greece in the last decade in implementing e-government, plus the avoidance of bureaucracy and e-certification of users, it still lags behind the European average (Androniceanu, Kinnunen and Georgescu, 2020). Greece is one of the countries that shows a relative performance below the European trend, with non-optimal results in both penetration and digitization while improving national service delivery, showing a bigger gap between national and cross-border – 84% and 42% respectively. In concrete areas the benchmarking shows that the Greek public administration is still relatively sophisticated (e.g. citizen service centers), however, still lags behind in terms of transparency as well as the diffusion of government services into the overall operation of the Greek economy.

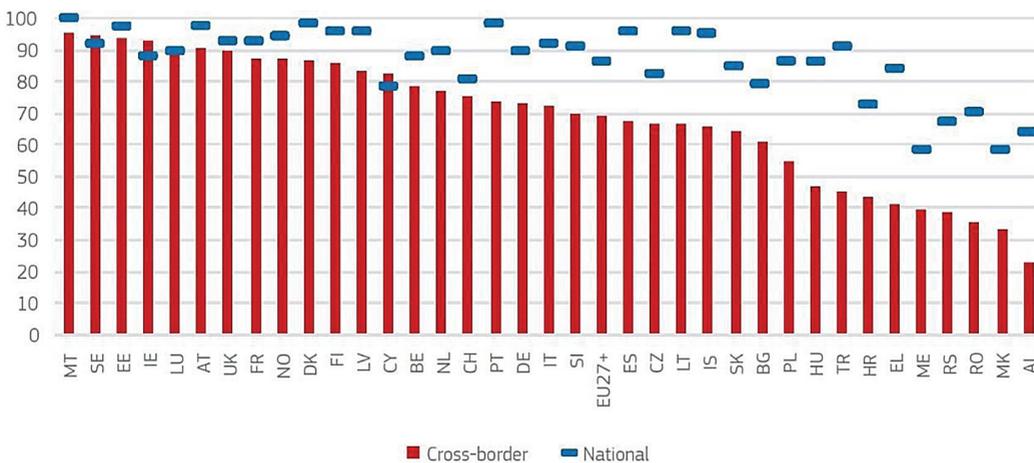


Figure 4. Digital availability for national and cross-border services

Source: European Commission (2020).

According to the benchmarking approach analysis (European Commission, 2020), through the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) integrating digital public services, integration of digital technology (Delgosha et al, 2020), use of internet services, human capital and connectivity, Greece ranks among the states with the lowest score in the European Union. It is characteristic that it occupies one of the lowest positions in the use of digital public services due to the absence of user-friendly applications. The Greek digital e-government (Bortic and Bozic, 2021) in comparison with the leading European countries in the government digitization of services such as Finland and Estonia, differs in that in these countries the public services (Inkinen, 2012) are provided exclusively digitally through mobile e-government options (Björklund, 2006).

The physical presence of Greek citizens in public services is related not only to the lack of provision of digital public software by the Greek public administration but also partly to a differentiated information seeking behavior (Wilson, 1999; Taylor, 2018). As a result, despite the steps that have been taken in recent years to digitize public services – something that was partially accelerated

by the new conditions that emerged from the epidemiological data of covid-19 – the process in which of the Greek citizen is forced to visit on public websites is related to a remnant of anachronistic human culture (Floyd, 2014).

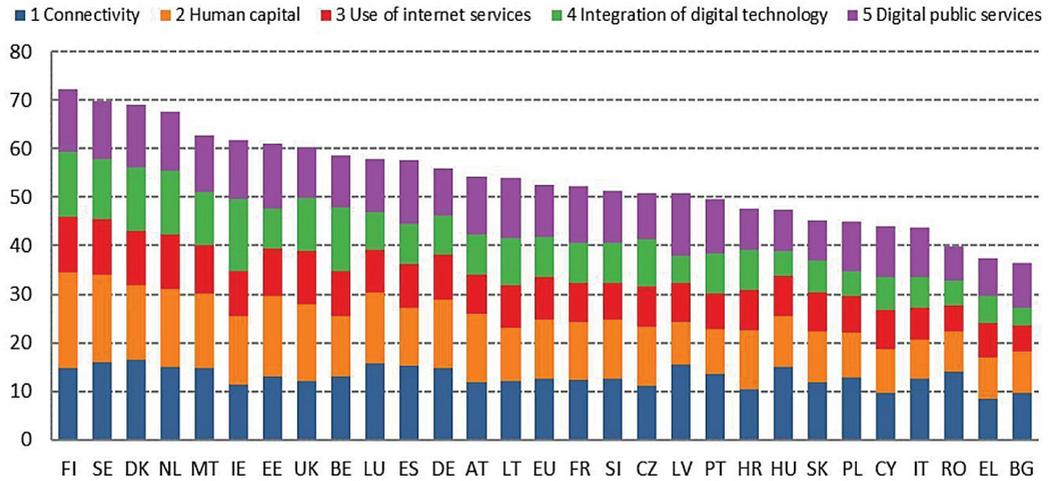


Figure 5. Digital Economy and Society Index, 2020.

Source: European Commission (2020).

The modernization of the e-government of the Greek public administration in each case is related to political decisions such as the political will to implement strategic plans for the digitization of public services, careful and gradual adoption of “New Public Administration” standards (Pyun and Gamassou, 2017), simplification of legislation (Spinellis et al., 2018) or/and a revised fiscal and tax policy (Varotsis and Katerelos, 2020). However, the efforts of the last two decades have shown that in addition to implementing and investing in new technological and digital applications, it is necessary to be accompanied by a public sector reform (Katsonis and Botros, 2015) of information behavior and human culture of the public as well as a digital development model (Cruz-Jesus et al., 2016).

6. Methodology

The aim of this research is to verify the hypothesis regarding the backwardness of the evolution of digital governance in Greece. More specifically, it is to identify the dimensions in which e-governance lags behind in Greece in relation to other advanced intergovernmental digital systems, in order to be a basis for a re-establishment of its policies. The method adopted to verify this hypothesis is benchmarking with indicators representing various aspects and dimensions of e-governance or governance involvement, based on reliable, internationally comparable data. The verification is based on the comparability between pairs of indicator measurements that represent the indicators-dimensions of e-government.

The research data come from two internationally recognized benchmark instruments: the E-Government Survey 2020 by the United Nations (UN), and the Digital Government Index 2019 by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The latest versions were used – 2020 for the UN and 2019 for the OECD – from these instruments. The data therefore covers all 193 countries of the United Nations, strengthening the comparison in the 31 countries of OECD instruments – 29 OECD member countries and 4 non-member countries.

The selection of indicators among these instruments was made taking into account the internationally recognized criteria that cover all dimensions both in terms of services and in terms of technological infrastructure, while in addition they have a defined coverage and are independent of each other. Table 4 and Table 5 below show the interpretation of each of the selected comparability indicators of e-governance.

Table 4

Interpretation of OECD benchmarking indicators-dimensions

Criteria	Description
Digital by design	This dimension examines the extent to which the government has introduced new technologies for the organizational restructuring of public services. The introduction of digital tools aims to ensure the supervision, implementation and design of the services offered.
Data Driven Public Sector	This dimension examines whether the data collected is used to better design services and policies. In addition, the degree of protection of information, confidentiality and privacy is examined.
Government as a platform	This dimension examines the extent to which government information and services are offered in a unified and interoperable manner.
Open by default	This dimension examines the level and amount of information provided by the government. The provision of public information should be in accordance with the law.
User driven	This dimension examines the extent to which governance focuses on users – citizens. In particular, it examines the extent to which users' needs are taken into account in the design of processes, services and policies.
Proactiveness	This dimension examines the extent to which the services provided by the state meet the needs of the citizens. The success of this dimension depends on the application of the above five dimensions

Source: OECD, 2019.

The selection of instruments is based on the credibility of the OECD and UN in the benchmarking surveys of e-government. The selection of benchmarking with country e-government measurements for Germany is as the largest economy due to GNP of the European Union while for Portugal, Sweden and Israel it is due to their population compatibility with Greece.

Table 5

Interpretation of UN benchmarking indicators-dimensions

Criteria	Description
The Online Services Index	Results of questionnaire estimating the spread of the internet in the UN Member States. The questionnaire consists of 148 questions. Factors such as the quality of government websites, the provision of electronic services, and the electronic participation of citizens are measured
Telecom-munications Infrastructure Index	It is a numerical index consisting of four sub criteria. 1. number of users per 100 inhabitants 2. number of mobile phone subscriptions per 100 inhabitants 3. active mobile-broadband subscription 4. number of fixed broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants
Human Capacity Index	It is a numerical index consisting of four sub criteria: 1. adult literacy rate; 2. the combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio; 3. expected years of schooling; and 4. average years of schooling

Source: UN, 2020.

7. Findings

The results of all the selected benchmarking indicators of e-governance are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Benchmarking indicators

OECD Criteria	UN Criteria	Greece	Sweden	Portugal	Germany	Israel	OECD Average	UN Average World
Dimension 1: Digital by design		0.30	0.28	0.63	0.50	0.60	0.55	
Dimension 2: Data Driven Public Sector		0.35	0.35	0.50	0.27	0.49	0.44	
Dimension 3: Government as a platform		0.39	0.33	0.85	0.37	0.77	0.54	
Dimension 4: Open by default		0.69	0.36	0.55	0.55	0.68	0.64	
Dimension 5: User driven		0.21	0.10	0.43	0.31	0.50	0.47	
Dimension 6: Proactiveness		0.13	0.11	0.52	0.41	0.58	0.42	
Composite Results		0.35	0.26	0.58	0.40	0.60	0.50	

OECD Criteria	UN Criteria	Greece	Sweden	Portugal	Germany	Israel	OECD Average	UN Average World
	The Online Services Index	0.7059	0.9	0.8353	0.7353	0.7471		0.562
	Telecommunications Infrastructure Index	0.81	0.9625	0.7948	0.8856	0.8689		0.5464
	Human Capacity Index	0.8905	0.9471	0.8463	0.9362	0.8924		0.688
	Normalized Composite Index	0.8021	0.9365	0.8255	0.8905	0.8361		0.5988

Source: OECD, 2020; UN, 2020.

The first comparison made regarding the level of e-government is the performance based on the OECD criteria. Based on the composite results of the comparative analysis, we observe that the composite performance of Greece is below the average for OECD countries. Specifically, the performance of Greece is 0.35, while the average for OECD countries is 0.50. Greece's great weaknesses seem to be in Dimension 5 and Dimension 6. Specifically, Greece's performance in the criterion User Driven is 0.13, (while the average for OECD countries is 0.47) and Greece's performance in the criterion Proactiveness is 0.13 (while the average for OECD countries is 0.42). Greece lags significantly behind in the criterion Digital by design (0.30 versus 0.55 of the OECD average). Greece performs lower than most OECD countries including Portugal, Germany and Israel. Greece has a better performance than Sweden (0.35 versus 0.26).

The second comparison made regarding the level of e-government is the performance based on the United Nations (UN) criteria. Based on the normalized composite results of the comparative analysis, we observe that the composite performance of Greece is above the average of the UN countries. Specifically, the performance of Greece is 0.8021, while the average for UN countries is 0.5988. Greece performs lower than Portugal, Germany, Sweden and Israel. A particularly important finding is that Sweden has a very high performance compared to its performance in the OECD criteria. This fact shows the complexity of the criteria and it is vital to take into account various criteria in order to examine the level of e-governance.

8. Conclusion and future directions

The main purpose of digital governance is to provide value-added services for citizens (Criado and Gil-Garcia, 2019). Some reasons for improving digital governance are (Tsakanikas et al., 2014) the reduction of the public sector's

operating costs, the increase in the competitiveness of Greece as an investment destination, the improvement of transparency as well as the improvement of employment. These can take place with the adoption of digital signatures in the public sector, the increase of open information and the adjustment to services requested by the citizen (Venkatesh et al., 2012).

The lack of a complete information system that can provide a wide range of digital services (Schneider et al., 2020), such as lack of digital applications, low network e-government accessibility, insufficient training (Heeks and Stanforth, 2007), lack of interactivity with the public, security risks, inaccessibility of e-government websites by the entire population, and internet costs (Batalli, 2011) increase the comparative disadvantage as time goes on. Weaknesses of the existing information system in matters of identification, digitalization and security of the users of the e-government services perpetuate the lack of modern e-government applications provided (Brown and Toze, 2017). A government policy aimed at ease of use, utility and privacy that are key factors in accepting the e-government portal can be the key to re-establishing e-government. (Wirtz et al., 2015).

Benchmarking of e-government performance shows the shortcomings in e-government policies in Greece. Greece is significantly behind in terms of criteria digital by design, user driven and proactiveness according to the findings of the comparative evaluation of the OECD. Greece should implement policies that enhance its performance in the specific criteria – dimensions of the OECD. The need has also arisen to introduce more sophisticated tools to ensure the design, implementation and oversight of services provided by the state. It may be necessary to record the needs of citizens for services provided in order to ensure an adjustable design of public services (Trischler et al., 2019). Finally, recording the needs of citizens should be a key tool for additional requested electronic provided services (Malodia et al., 2021). The gratification of citizens' needs is a key parameter that will improve Greece's performance in the criteria of digital by design, user driven and proactiveness.

Another key tool for comparing e-government in Greece with other countries is the UN criteria. The findings of the comparison show that Greece has a significantly better performance compared to the average of the countries of the United Nations. Nevertheless, Greece is performing worse than Sweden, Portugal, Germany and Israel. Various policies can be implemented to improve Greek e-government performance in the UN e-government criteria.

Findings based on possible research regarding the quality and quantity of electronic services can make relevant improvements and enrichment of services. In addition, incentives can be provided for the use of the internet such as generous subsidies taking advantage of European financial instruments. A readjustment of education focused on informatics can improve the public's use of digital services (Hu et al., 2020). Other policies that can be implemented in order to improve the e-government are the modernization of Greek legislation with technology, provision of open access information in an easy way, ensure use of the Internet for all citizens, reduction of illiteracy, the application of new technologies, ensure the participation of the public in the design and

implementation of electronic services, ensure the ability to manage IT services, and simplification of the use of electronic services (World Bank, 2016).

Taking into account the criterion of the country's population territory (Kuhlmann and Jakel, 2013), the benchmarking of the e-governance of Greece can be compared with the e-governance of other countries with a corresponding population in Europe (e.g. Belgium, Czech Republic, Hungary) or in the rest of the world (e.g. Tunisia, United Arab Emirates). The benchmarking could be extended to other countries based on Greece's geographical location by comparing it to the e-governance of neighboring countries such as Bulgaria, Turkey, Romania, Italy and Egypt. In addition, based on the Telecommunications Infrastructure Index of the UN, the comparative evaluation of the Greek e-governance could be carried out in relation to the e-governance of Ireland, Poland and Latvia while, based on the Online Services Index, the comparative evaluation can be extended in relation to the respective e-governances of Paraguay, Azerbaijan and Belarus.

The administrative and work culture differs (Heusala and Koistinen, 2018) on public servants of state governments from state to state. In addition, the culture of the peoples of the states also differs. Population culture influences information seeking behavior (Somera et al., 2016) with the consequent need for additional adjustments in e-governance. Therefore, a further study with similar or broader objectives will include both the administrative and work culture and the informational seeking behavior of the citizens of Greece.

Moreover, the effective usage of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in e-governance (Asongu and Nwachukwu, 2018) can greatly enhance the existing efficiency of work and the quality of e-services offered as well as enhance the transparency of the overall operation of the government. The relationship between ICTs and effective e-governance can be examined through additional relevant interdisciplinary research in order to explore the technological, political, economic, organizational and social interfaces. Extending the investigation of comparative evaluation of e-governance with similar government and administrative cultures (Van der Wal, 2021) will serve to verify and achieve greater acceptance of the findings of the present research.

The presented literature review and benchmarking of e-government in Greece have several limitations. The research is based on qualitative content analysis and the conclusions are concentrated on the published research data to date, without the possibility of further knowledge of possible underlying policies of the Greek government aimed at improving e-government. In addition, the benchmarking could in the future be extended to further surveys, of the World Economic Forum or the World Bank Group, for instance.

Despite the limitations, the findings trace what future policies should look to for the effective re-establishment of e-government. Further research should focus on the establishment of a plan with strict timetables in the restoration of technological infrastructure, re-examining the needs of citizens for digital services, and carefully examining the impact of e-government (Perez-Morote et al., 2020) on the organizational process for the implementation of e-government in order to understand the implications at team and organization level.

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Original article

IMPLEMENTATION OF MONITORING OF THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC SERVICES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL AS A TOOL FOR REFORMING PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION – THE POLISH EXPERIENCE

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Abstract. The main aim of the article is to present a model of monitoring of the quality of public services which can be used to enhance the quality of self-government in European post-communist countries. The secondary aim of the article is to identify factors which hinder the implementation of the model. The theoretical basis for the presented model comes from three earlier ones: the Deming cycle, the Boyd cycle, and the model of institutional development of organizations.

The model has been tested in 10 local administration units (LAU) in Poland. It consists of six stages presented in the article: decision to implement monitoring, its objectives and resources; selection of indicators; collection of data; analysis of the collected data and preparation of reports; use/dissemination of the reports; final evaluation of monitoring and implementation of conclusions. Three critical points were identified at which decisions to stop monitoring were often taken, namely: disappointment with the first main report which failed to answer all of the problems raised by the authorities, changes of the LAU authorities as a result of elections, and “indolence” of local authorities manifested in expecting support from outside.

Keywords: model of monitoring, quality of public services, local level of public administration, reforming public administration, Poland.

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Introduction

There are many theories related to defining public services. This study uses the concept of public interest, which can also be seen as a starting point for defining public administration. The notion of public interest rather escapes unambiguous definitions – it requires constant redefinitions resulting from variability in its interpretation. Consequently, its different definitions depend on the public management model (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2007; Rosenbloom, 1993):

1. In the *Public Administration* model, public interest serves higher aims and represents citizens' interests, but the power to define it and include it in legal acts lies in democratically elected politicians.
2. In the *New Public Management* model, public interest is viewed as an aggregated interest of members of the society reflected in the interests of the winning coalition.
3. In the *good governance* model, public interest is a goal set as a result of participation of citizens and entities created by them in the process of governance.

If the concept of public interest is adopted as a starting point to define public services, then their definition is formulated in the process of social construction. This means that a certain society at a given time is an active creator of this definition. As a result, society as a whole and through its representatives decides on what public services are, what goods they include, what their availability and uncompetitive use is (Nemec, Murray Svidroňová and Kovács, 2019), and whether they should be delivered to all citizens on a similar basis or with certain preferences to special groups – e.g. the poor or the disabled.

There is a multitude of definitions of monitoring (Public Service Commission South Africa, 2008; Czochoński, 2013; Styryn and Plaksin, 2012), but most of them have the following in common: (1) regularity of data collection according to strictly specified rules and (2) use of data to find out the extent of achieving the objectives or using the allocated funds. As regards monitoring of the functioning of public institutions, there is an additional aspect of improving their functioning (Dascălu, Marcu and Hurjui, 2016; Yuzhakov, 2014). Therefore, monitoring of the quality of public services can also be treated as an element of management.

After 1989, a whole series of transformation processes took place in European post-Communist countries whose aim was to improve, at least theoretically, the quality of their citizens' lives (see Norkus, 2012; Rose, 2009). A reform of administration is one of such processes.

A whole spectrum of activities is undertaken at the operational level as part of the reform of public administration in European post-communist countries. On the one hand, they are fundamental in nature and include such processes as:

- changes in the administrative division (Vanags and Vilka, 2006; Meyer-Sahling and Yesilkagit, 2011);
- decentralization (Davey and Péteri, 2006; Maksimovska, Stojkov and Schmidt, 2015; Tikhomirov, 2013);
- division into “optimal” municipalities (Campbell and Coulson, 2006; Kuczabski, Zastavetska and Zastavetsky, 2017).

On the other hand, there are a number of actions aimed at changing the attitudes of local government officials or at implementing various innovations to their work. This study belongs to the second type of actions.

However, despite a wide range of reforms, many researchers assume that public administration in Eastern and Central-Eastern Europe is inferior to the West-European version (see: Bouckaert, 2009; Neshkova and Kostadinova, 2012).

In this context, the main aim of this study is to build a model of monitoring of the quality of public services (in accordance with principles of both New Public Management and good governance) which could be implemented by Polish local governments. The secondary aim is to trace how this model is received by the Polish local authorities.

Prior to the study, a hypothesis was formulated that although developing and then implementing such a model is possible in Poland, its application may be short-lived. This process requires involvement of local government authorities and officials and it is exposed to threats that may lead to abandoning the monitoring. This may happen even if such monitoring brings important information about changes in the quality of public services.

Research procedure and the applied methods

The first stage of the research procedure was to develop a model for monitoring the quality of public services. This was done in three phases. First, our own original version of the model was developed based on other models. In the second phase, it was tested (in 2012–2014) in local governments. During this phase, the model was subject to some changes and alterations. The third phase covered the years 2015–2019 during which the working model was tested in local governments. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic meant that its testing was discontinued in 2020. Resuming the research is planned after the end of the pandemic.

During the research, an inductive procedure was followed, namely the aim was to achieve a universal but also exemplary approach to the issue. This meant generalization and elimination of distorting factors (Fielding, 1988; Silverman, 2014). The nomothetic approach was applied. As a result, elements linking cases in individual local administration units were searched for (Gibbs, 2007; Lancaster, 2005).

Three other models were used in the construction of this model. The first two (the Deming cycle and Boyd’s cycle) are of a general nature and *de facto* are cycles

of observation, decision-making and action. Because of their similarity, they can be considered as complementary to each other.

In the Deming cycle¹, four successive groups of actions are distinguished based on the sequentiality of actions undertaken in the following pattern: Plan–Do–Study–Act (Deming, 1993):

1. Plan – identify the needs, objectives and scope of monitoring, and design the system.
2. Do – collect data and calculate indicators, and then report them.
3. Study – control the system in terms of its efficiency and effectiveness and its compliance with the proposed objectives.
4. Act – maintain the functioning of the system if it is found to operate properly or implement corrective actions, measures, etc., based on the information obtained from verification procedures.

In the case of Boyd's cycle (also called the OODA cycle), similarly to the previous model, four groups of actions are distinguished in the following pattern: Observe–Orient–Decide–Act. However, what is very important in this model is that particular groups of actions can be implemented simultaneously (Boyd, 2010).

The third model was developed in Poland (this is the so-called model of institutional development of organizations). It was developed as part of the Institution Development Program carried out in Poland in 2002–2004 by a consortium of the Canadian Urban Institute and the Małopolska School of Public Administration of the Cracow University of Economics. The main elements include assessment of the status of the organization, design of institutional changes (improvements), their implementation, and analysis and correction of the process (Bober et al., 2004).

To achieve the secondary aim, a publication by Struyk (2007) was used. Based on an analysis of the implementation of 18 demonstration projects in Russia during the transition, the author distinguished nine factors of successful implementation of a program: a degree of local leadership support and its consistency, characteristics of the implemented policy, availability of resources, the number of implementing actors, the implementing personnel's attitude, alignment of clients, the opportunity for learning among implementers, past experience, and the local environment.

The study was conducted in 10 LAUs in Poland: in city counties of Gdańsk and Słupsk, urban municipalities of Chojnice and Puck, urban-rural municipalities Czarna Woda and Siedliszcze and rural municipalities of Stegna, Morzeszczyn, Puck and Melgiew.

The basic unit of local administration (LAU) in Poland is the municipality (LAU-2). There are three types of municipalities: rural, urban and rural-urban. Several municipalities form a county (LAU-1). A city county (a city with the

¹ Deming's cycle has many names, such as the PDCA cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act) or the PDSA cycle (Plan-Do-Study-Act). It is also found in the literature under the name of the Shewhart cycle. In reality, however, the Shewhart cycle looks slightly different – it consists of three stages: specification, production and inspection (Shewhart, 1937). Only later did Deming slightly modify this cycle by adding the fourth stage.

rights of a county) is a specific type of municipality. This status is held by cities with a population of over 100,000 inhabitants and cities with important functions in the settlement structure. They simultaneously perform tasks assigned to both municipalities and counties.

Description of the model of monitoring

The previously mentioned models formed a basis for developing a model of monitoring the quality of public services at the local level. On their basis, the first conceptual model (Michalski, 2014) was developed, which underwent a number of changes resulting from the experience gained during cooperation with local government officials. The version presented in Figure 1 can be considered final. The proposed model consists of six stages, which are characterized in detail in the further sections of this study.

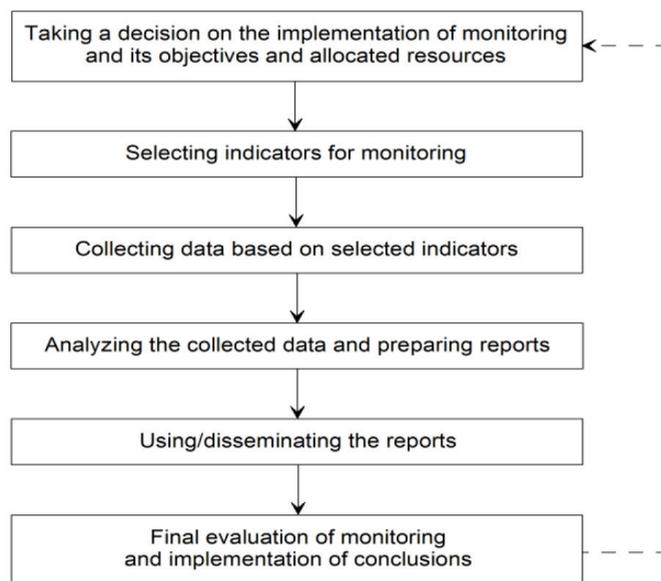


Figure 1: Model of monitoring the quality of public services.

Stage one: Taking a decision on the implementation of monitoring and its objectives and allocated resources

The first stage consists of two parts. The first one is political in nature and is associated with taking (or not) a decision to implement monitoring of the quality of public services in a given LAU. Previous experience in the implementation of monitoring shows that in the vast majority of cases this decision is taken individually by the head of the local executive authority or by two persons: by the aforementioned executive after consulting the president of the local legislative authority.

After a positive decision has been taken by the authorities, in the second part, objectives and tasks are formulated, and resources that can be used and means that can be allocated for its implementation are reviewed. As practice

shows, while authorities are eager to engage in the discussion on objectives and tasks of monitoring, the review of resources and means is entirely assigned to officials. At this stage, two threats can be diagnosed. The first one is related to the objectives and tasks of monitoring which are too ambitious for the allocated means and resources. *Ex ante* evaluation is proposed as a solution. The second risk is related to the fact that some heads of departments in municipal offices believed that monitoring would be mainly used to assess the work of their departments. The applied solution of explaining the objectives of monitoring was only partially successful. About 40% of department heads having reservations could not be persuaded.

Stage two: Selecting indicators for monitoring

At this stage, there are also two parts. The first one is to choose indicators. Previous observations related to the implementation of this model show that at this stage of work it is very important to appoint a person responsible for the efficient realization of monitoring as early as possible and to give him/her the necessary powers by the local authorities. The research shows that if such a person has too little power, the indicators are not correctly selected. They are not chosen based on the defined objective of monitoring but are a result of a “game” of department managers.

Based on several years’ experience in working with local governments, a four-level system of selecting indicators (Figure 2) later used in monitoring was developed. The previous procedures of selecting indicators very often led to: (1) “getting lost” of the appointed officials while selecting indicators, which often resulted in insufficient holism while diagnosing the condition of public services; (2) encouraging the “exclusion” of whole tasks from monitoring due to the behind-the-scenes activities of some department managers who were afraid that the effects of their work would be monitored.

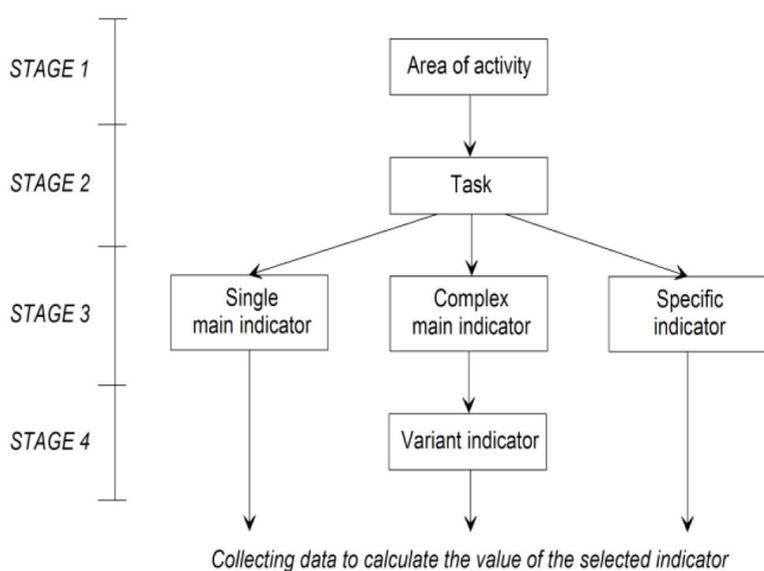


Figure 2: Stages of selecting indicators.

The first two stages are preliminary (Table 1). In their framework, five areas of activity have been distinguished (the first level of selection) to which tasks are assigned (the second level of selection). Only after completing the second level is the selection of specific indicators made – their number varies from one to seven per specific task.

Table 1

The two first stages of selecting indicators: areas of activity and tasks

Area of activity:	Task:
Administration	Office availability/accessibility for clients
	Compliance of administrative decisions with the law
	Providing services for entrepreneurs by the office
	Providing services for residents by the office
	Condition of spatial order
	Financial policy of the local administration
	Online communication with customers
Assistance and welfare	Health prophylaxis among residents
	Conducting health policy (without prophylaxis)
	Premises and places for the homeless and the poorest
	Assistance for the poorest and the disabled
	Safety and order
Public utilities	Access to the water supply network
	Access to the sewage network and wastewater treatment
	Atmospheric air condition
	Noise level
	Maintaining cleanliness in the municipality
	Condition of transport ways
	Condition of local public transport
Culture and leisure	Cultural/entertainment offer of local authorities
	Conditions for outdoor leisure
	Sports offer of local authorities
Education	Level of exam results
	Level of computerization in schools
	Safety at school
	Pre-school care
	Pupils and parents-friendly school

Source: Czerwińska et al. (2014).

In total, local authorities deal with four types of indicators. The first three types are already prepared in the form of indicator sheets. These are so-called main indicators (single and complex) and variant indicators. With this approach, a user chooses the main indicators (the third level of selection) and, if it is the so-called single main indicator, by using a ready measurement card, he/she immediately has instructions on how to gather data to calculate the value of the indicator and its recommended interpretation. When he/she selects the so-called complex main indicator, then he/she must select a particular variant indicator (the fourth level of selection) and only then get instructions on how to obtain the data to calculate the value of the indicator and its recommended interpretation.

The complex main indicators and variant indicators related to them were primarily introduced in order not to “obscure” the image of the service with an excessive number of very detailed indicators. This solution is used in a number of cases, most often:

- when data on a specific public service can be obtained in a number of ways, e.g. data on punctuality of public transport: direct observation, results of measurements carried out by carrier/carriers (if any), surveys;
- when there is more than one type of institution providing a specific type of service, e.g. there are up to three types of schools for which local authorities are responsible: elementary school, junior high school and senior high school – hence there are three separate variant indicators, e.g. to find out parents’ opinion on safety in the public school their children go to;
- when there is more than one type of provided services, e.g., data on the number of people in families benefiting from social welfare can be obtained in an aggregated form, but also one specific reason for getting this assistance can be chosen, e.g. poverty, homelessness, being an orphan, unemployment, long-term illness, domestic violence, helplessness in caring matters, etc.

The fourth type is specific indicators. Monitoring of the quality of public services is open to amendments and modifications. As a result, these indicators are developed independently by auditors monitoring the quality of public services in their LAUs. They have been introduced for three reasons: (1) to make the monitoring system as holistic as possible, (2) not to include such indicators in a basic database that could be useful only in a very small number of LAUs, and thus they would obscure the transparency of the whole tool, (3) to make the selection stage flexible, i.e. not to limit the local authorities’ creativity. Such an indicator could be exemplified by the capacity of a sewage treatment plant in a situation of increased tourism (measured in BOD5 from 1 person staying in a given LAU equal to 60g O₂/day).

Stage three: Collecting data based on selected indicators

The data collected to calculate the values of indicators selected for monitoring come from two types of sources (Figure 3). The first type is based on desk research, while obtaining data from the other type of sources is much more costly since they require conducting surveys or direct measurements.

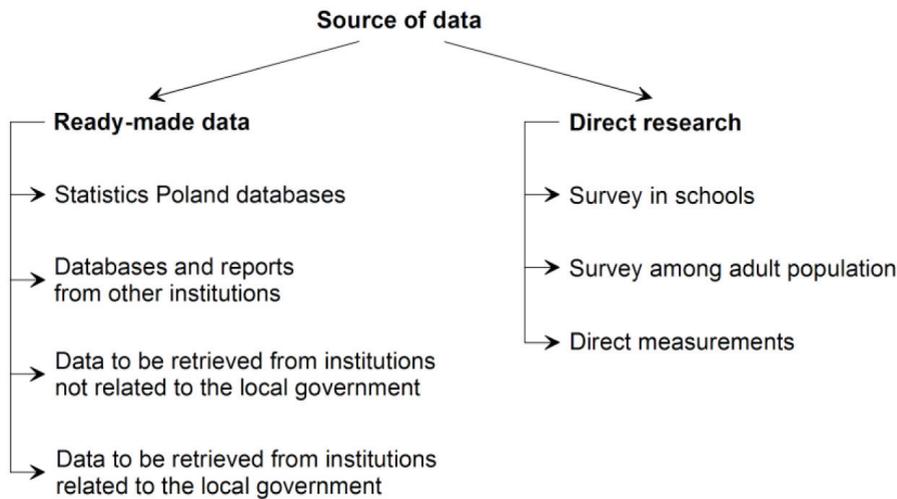


Figure 3: **Data sources for indicators.**

The data collected as part of desk research come from the Internet (the first two points) or are collected based on inquiries directly sent to different institutions (the remaining points):

1. Databases of Statistics Poland (GUS), mainly the Local Data Bank. This institution collects an increasing range of data useful for local analyses and available free of charge. However, the downside of gathering data in this way is a long delay in their publication, up to one year. Therefore, in some cases, retrieving the same data from local institutions is recommended (e.g., data on readership in municipalities).
2. Databases and reports available on the Internet and maintained by other institutions. For example, the Regional Examination Committees publish data on examinations conducted at the end of elementary school, junior high and senior high schools.
3. Data retrieved from inquiries sent to institutions not affiliated with the local administrative unit that conduct monitoring. Examples include the National Health Fund (NFZ) or regional boards of education.
4. Data retrieved from inquiries directly sent to the employees of a given LAU office or to an institution affiliated with it (e.g., a public library, a sewage treatment plant).

The next three sources of data indispensable to calculate the indicator values require direct research. In the democratic realities, the perception of the quality of public services seems to be as important as the actual level of their implementation. Therefore, survey studies are deemed necessary. Two such surveys were offered to local authorities.

The first one is intended for implementation among pupils of schools in which the local government is the founding authority. Since only a few indicators collected from these surveys are sufficient to prepare the main report on the quality of public services, and the costs of surveys are quite high, local authorities were advised to conduct more elaborate surveys (than it is necessary just

for the main report), and on their basis to prepare an additional report on the perception of the situation in schools (a similar suggestion was made in the case of the second survey).

Based on experience, it has been found that the process of conducting surveys must be strictly controlled, preferably by an external expert. Therefore, the influence of persons related to the school on the process of selecting the research group and the actual testing in the classroom has been minimized. Hence, stratified random sampling is recommended in choosing classes to be surveyed. In this method, choosing a school is the first stage, and a selection of a specific class within the chosen school is the second stage. While conducting a survey in the classroom, the teacher is asked to leave the room, so that only the interviewer and the pupils remain inside.

The second survey involves the adult population of the given local administrative unit. Initially, attempts were made to render the study results as statistically representative as possible to reflect the inhabitants' views. However, such highly representative surveys proved too expensive, so the authorities of particular LAUs did not want surveys in such a form. Therefore, the decision was made to conduct less accurate, but also much less expensive, surveys. For example, in rural municipalities, the number of surveys was proportionally divided among different villages and in urban municipalities among different districts. Naturally, the proportions regarding age and gender were ensured.

Sporadically, local authorities declared a need to develop specific indicators that required an additional survey. So far, this request was made twice – in both cases, it concerned conducting a survey among tourists.

In almost all local governments, conducting the survey in schools proved to be the biggest problem. Frequently, their principals feared that the survey results would be used to evaluate the school's performance, and hence they could be used to "attack" the school management and teachers working in a given school. Explanations that the results from a given school would only be known to the person conducting the survey and that the local government authorities would only receive aggregated results from all schools did not convince anyone. This shows a low level of social trust in Poland.

In rare cases, direct measurements were used as a source of data. However, due to enormous effort involved in acquiring this kind of data, local government representatives were very reluctant to this type of measurement. As a result, there were main reports lacking in even one indicator for which the data was obtained in this way.

Stage four: Analyzing the collected data and preparing reports

At the fourth stage, analysis is conducted based on the previously selected indicators. As mentioned above, because there is a need to conduct two surveys, it is suggested that additional questions should be added to the questionnaires, and then additional reports should be developed based on the results of these surveys.

The main report contains an analysis based on indicators. Preparation of two versions of this report is recommended. The basic version includes items 1–4 mentioned below. In order to be able to read the results quickly, its volume

should be within the range of 20 to 30 A4 pages. The expanded version includes all nine points, but items 5–9 should be available only on a CD attached to the paper version of the main report containing items 1 to 4.

1. An introduction explaining the objectives and tasks of monitoring the quality of public services and containing a concise characteristic of the data sources.
2. Analysis of the quality of the services, broken down into five areas of activity.
3. Conclusions and recommendations.
4. An appendix with a table containing the name of the indicator and its value (including the value of this indicator from previous studies is also recommended).
5. An appendix containing the sheets of all the indicators used in compiling the report.
6. An appendix containing the survey questionnaire for school pupils.
7. An appendix containing the survey questionnaire for the adult population.
8. An appendix containing a report from the survey conducted among pupils.
9. An appendix containing a report from the survey conducted among the adult population.

Both reports containing survey results should be in a typical form of this type of studies. The same regards reports from any additional surveys (as mentioned in the previous section).

Due to periods of increased workload of the officials, the months of April–May are considered the optimal time under Polish conditions to prepare the preliminary version of the report containing the data for the previous year. June–August should be dedicated to consultations, so that the final version of the report can be submitted by mid-September at the latest. This stage of work encountered the greatest problems in small LAUs. This was due to a small number of employees working in the municipal offices. As a result, not only was there a shortage of officials who could be delegated to prepare the report, but also the delegated persons did not have the appropriate qualifications to cope with this task. The authorities of these local governments expected that they would be constantly supported in monitoring by external experts, clearly declaring that in the absence of such support, they would resign from monitoring.

As regards the substantive aspect, the main difficulty in the first years of implementing the monitoring of the quality of public services lies in presenting the main report in a form useful for the local authorities (points 2 and 3 of the above list). It was considered appropriate not to compare the indicator values in the surveyed local administration unit with values for other units. Yet, in many cases, this is impossible. Although curiosity is a natural human trait – is it better or worse elsewhere? – the prepared main report should definitely not serve this purpose. Its primary aim is to provide reliable information on the quality of public services offered in the given LAU. In order to achieve this objective properly, data from at least 3–4 years are indispensable. This will enable local authorities (1) to have a reference point and (2) to be able to identify whether the quality of the services is changing.

The attitude of the authorities towards the usefulness of the results proved to be a major problem. Local authorities expect clear conclusions “here and now”

as to what the situation in terms of the quality of these services is like in their LAU. In addition, the electoral calendar has an influence (fears that since the full results of monitoring will be visible only in a few years' time, it may happen that someone else will be in power in this LAU). It is very difficult to minimize the risk associated with this expectation. Action has been taken to make the local authorities completely aware that they cannot expect immediate effects, that this is a long-term investment, etc. After these explanations, the authorities officially declared that they understood the situation. Nevertheless, according to unofficial information, they were frustrated with the lack of instant results that could be promptly used.

Moreover, in almost all the surveyed municipalities there was a desire to compare one's own results with the results obtained in other LAUs. The authorities wanted to know whether the quality of public services in the municipality they manage is better or worse than in other ones. However, the situation in their municipality for a year or two years should always be the point of reference for them. After all, the goal is to improve the quality of public services in that particular LAU, regardless of the quality of services in other municipalities.

Stage five: Using/disseminating the reports

The stage of using the results is extremely important. Based on several years' collaboration with local authorities, three likely scenarios of dissemination and implementation of the obtained results have been distinguished:

1. After preparing the report and having it read by a very narrow group of local administration officials (e.g., only the authorities of the given LAU), it is put on the proverbial "shelf". Therefore, the incurred expenses are wasted. Fortunately, during all projects so far, there was no such situation. But this seems to result from the fact that participation in monitoring was voluntary, and only those LAUs volunteered whose authorities were genuinely interested in implementation of monitoring of the quality of public services.
2. In the second scenario, there is typical dissemination; namely, the report is used on a small scale during the current policy-making in the given LAU. For example, it might be presented during the council session and discussed or used once during preparation of, for example, a new development strategy. In practice, nearly all of the local governments with which this project has been implemented follow this scenario.
3. The most desirable scenario for using the report is mainstreaming. In this scenario, the report results are incorporated into the mainstream policy of the local government, i.e., not only is it used repeatedly in different situations, but monitoring is also conducted in the following years. Unfortunately, only two LAUs followed this scenario. The past tense is used because the existing authorities had lost elections, and the new authorities were not interested in continuing the project (this is the second of the three critical points in implementation of the project – the change of authorities).

Focusing on the second and, in particular, the third of the above outlined scenarios of making use of the report, three practical ways of using it may be defined (Figure 4). They were developed based on observations in local governments.

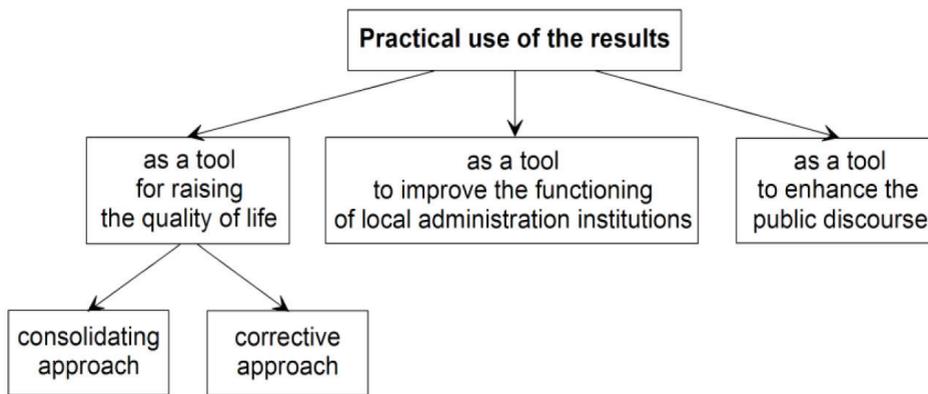


Figure 4: **Practical use of the results of monitoring the quality of public services.**

Firstly, the report is used directly to improve citizens' quality of life. Here there is a whole range of possibilities whose limits are determined by two extreme options. In the first one, we diagnose the area of a high quality of life, and then we determine which public services are related to it and decide not to change anything in the services. In the second one, we diagnose the area of a clearly low quality of life, and then we determine which public services are connected with it and decide to take necessary action. There may be enough data to determine the quality of which public services should be improved. Yet, there may also be a case that additional, highly detailed monitoring with specially designed specific indicators should be conducted.

The second option is to use monitoring to improve the quality of the functioning of local administration and the related institutions (this is strongly linked to the *ex post* evaluation which is recommended in the final stage of the model).

The third possibility regards raising the level of public discourse in local communities. Observations show that in situations where all the debate participants have access to reports, the level of demagoguery and non-substantive statements is reduced. However, in this case the ultimate result strongly depends on the level of panelists' personal culture. Unfortunately, there were attempts to use the report results to fight the current local authorities. The critics of the authorities did not focus on how the public services in the municipality could be improved by using the report results. Instead, they used them to undermine the competences of the authorities and employees of the municipal office. This strongly fueled the officials' fears diagnosed in stage one.

Stage six: Final evaluation of monitoring and implementation of conclusions

The final stage is implemented when, after completing the entire measurement cycle, local authorities express their willingness to continue it. In this case, there is time for *ex post* evaluation and then implementation of its results in the next measurement cycle. Applying the typical methods used for this kind of evaluation is recommended. At this stage, the main risk to continuing monitoring is that the LAU authorities expect constant and free assistance from external experts in implementation of monitoring of the quality of public services. Such

a declaration was expressed by all the local governments that decided to pursue the project in the following years. Later experience of cooperation with local authorities showed that, after such free support/free assistance had ceased, almost all authorities discontinued monitoring the quality of public services.

Figure 5 presents the recommended procedure to evaluate monitoring of the quality of public services. As can be seen, it is followed in three stages, concerning the very subject of monitoring, then its tools and finally its products.

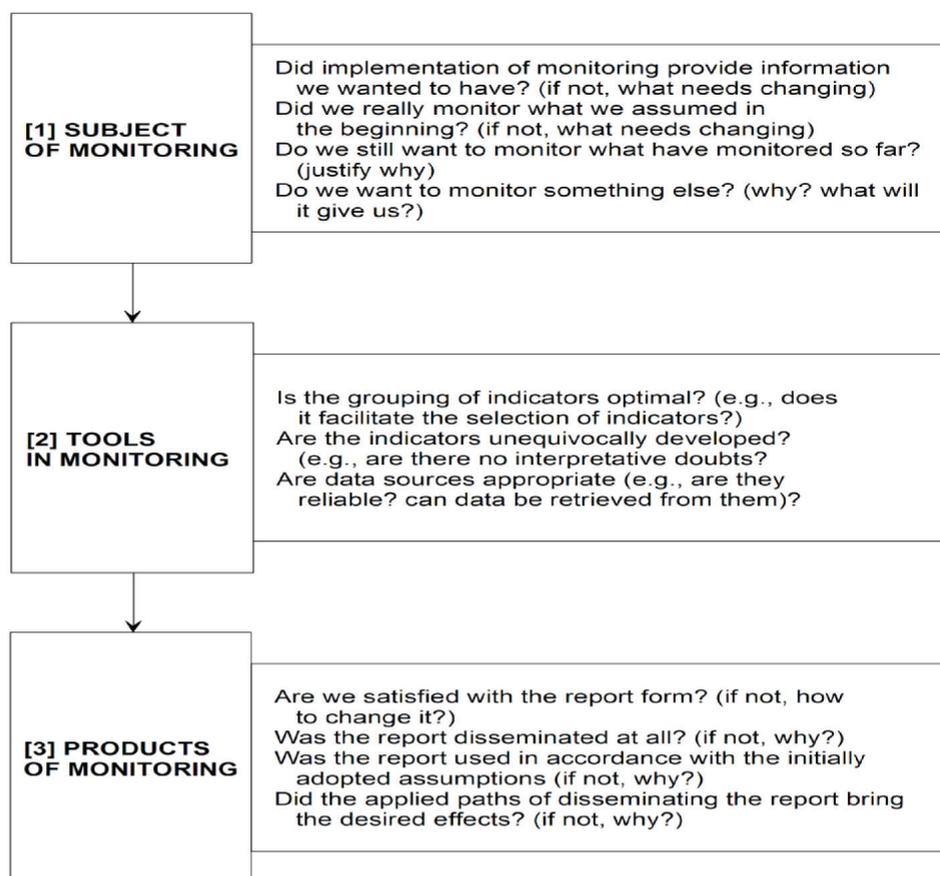


Figure 5: Suggested *ex post* evaluation procedure for the system of monitoring the quality of public services (Michalski, 2014).

The decision to continue monitoring was usually accompanied by substantial willingness to introduce changes in its implementation. This was partly due to the results of *ex post* evaluation and partly due to the natural willingness to make changes (identified as improvements). In general, this is a positive practice; however, as far as selecting indicators is concerned, the extent of changes should be limited because the system meets the requirements well by delivering valuable results – providing we have exactly the same data gathered by the same method data from at least four years (because only then can we trace the negative and positive changes in the quality of the provided services).

Conclusion

Nowadays, Polish local governments are increasingly interested in monitoring. This has resulted in a number of EU-funded or national programs as well as handbooks on all areas of local government activity (e.g., Czerwińska et al., 2014; Trutkowski (ed.), 2011). The proposed model of monitoring the quality of public services is part of this trend. Its advantage lies in first designing the theoretical concept, then testing it for three years, and then preparing the final product and implementing it in a few LAUs. This activity certainly contributes to raising the quality of functioning of self-government in Poland.

The hypothesis of the possibility of development and implementation of monitoring the quality of public services at the local level in Poland has been confirmed. Unfortunately, the fact that it can be used for a short time has also been confirmed. In particular, discontinuing external support was the moment when monitoring became limited or completely abandoned. This happened even when conducting it brought clear benefits in the form of information about changes in the quality of public services. At the general level, one may broadly state that this is due to a lower level of the culture of functioning of local administration than in the leading European Union countries. This completely supports the views of Dan and Pollitt (2015) as well as Dragoş and Neamţu (2007) that activities of a novel nature, in fact, improve the quality of functioning of local administration in Central and Eastern Europe, although this is happening with obstacles and at a slower pace than persons and institutions promoting these changes would wish.

As mentioned in the introduction, in order to identify the reasons for the frequent resignation from using this model by local governments (after discontinuing external experts' support), the method presented by Struyk (2007) was applied. On its basis, three critical points were identified at which decisions to stop monitoring were often made:

1. Disappointment with the first main report in which there were no answers to all of the questions raised by the LAU authorities. Very often they could not acknowledge that at least four years must pass (i.e., there must be reports from at least four years) to be able to fully appreciate and use the advantages of the proposed monitoring.
2. Changes of the authorities of the given LAU as a result of lost elections by the current authorities. At all levels, the new authorities' tendency to start everything from scratch is still too obvious.
3. "Indolence" of local authorities. As "indolence", we understand these authorities' expectations to be still supported in various ways with financial means from the EU. This could be direct support in the form of money transferred to a LAU for the realization of specific projects or intermediate in the form of support from experts very often remunerated from these funds. This led to situations in which, after such support was discontinued, even those LAU authorities who were satisfied with monitoring results resigned from it, explaining themselves by a lack of means and resources for its independent implementation.

Looking at the above-mentioned threats (the three main ones above and a few minor ones in the text), it can be concluded that the low level of social trust in insti-

tutions is a major threat to the implementation of monitoring of the quality of public services in Poland is (see: European Social Survey, 2018; Zaufanie w sferze..., 2006).

Seven conclusions can be drawn from the work being conducted in the ten municipalities, of which three are fundamental, and four are supplementary: (1) monitoring must not be an end in itself – it is only a tool for achieving other goals, (2) monitoring must address important issues; therefore, indicators must measure important things, (3) monitoring is discouraged by the amount of work necessary to conduct it (hence it should be limited) and the lack of instant effects, (4) monitoring must be resistant to tampering with the results, (5) no one should fear or be anxious about monitoring, (6) monitoring is not meant for comparisons between LAUs but to compare the current situation in a LAU with an earlier one – a year, two years earlier, etc., (7) the model of monitoring may be (and should be) supplemented and amended if the nature of a LAU, its problems or objectives justify such steps (Kopeć, 2020). Action resulting from these conclusions should weaken or eliminate the indicated threats to the implementation and execution monitoring of the quality of public services. However, this could be a subject for the fourth stage of research, possible after the end of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nevertheless, one may claim that in all LAUs in which monitoring of the quality of public services was implemented, including those where its implementation was eventually discontinued, it contributed to the reform of public administration. In every case, monitoring made the local authorities more open and willing to cooperate with different stakeholders – both external and internal, as well as with local residents. Thanks to this process, the participation of these stakeholders and residents in the exercise of power has increased. As a result, the level of accountability for the goals that were pursued has also increased. Finally, the participants in the monitoring process started cooperation with one another, forming a certain network. All this made public administration in a LAU which implemented monitoring of the quality of public services closer to the model of good governance.

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Original article

PALESTINIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: ISSUES OF LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS

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Abstract. In the public administration field, the legislative, executive and judicial frameworks should be consistent. The institutional framework of the Palestinian local government, however, seems largely impacted by an incoherent legal framework. Against this backdrop, this study describes the current local government institutional framework. Secondly, this study investigates the current issues relating to the legal and institutional frameworks of the Palestinian local government.

A qualitative research approach was adopted to collect data in order to achieve the objectives of the study. The present research utilizes a combination of primary and secondary data. Nine interviews were conducted to gather the primary data, while scholarly works and government documents were used for gathering secondary data.

The results show that fully governmental institutions are the most active within the institutional framework while non-governmental institutions are less active. The results also show that the primary obstacle for an efficient legal framework is due to previous laws, overlapping powers and weak legal practices. Furthermore, the institutional framework suffers from deformed structure and weak integration.

The discussion section revealed that the current local government system can be best described as a “Chaotic Hybrid System”. When comparing the empirical results with the theoretical concepts, it is indicated that the current local government structure reflects the Public Choice Theory perspective, which advocates for horizontal and vertical

fragmentation. However, the Israeli occupation and international funds seem to contribute to complicating the fragmentation of the structure. The structure hence could be described as “Altered Fragmented Structure”.

Keywords: local government; administrative, legal; structure; fragmentation; public choice, Palestine.

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JEL Classification: H11; H76; L32; M38; O43.

Introduction

Palestine was ruled by the Ottoman Empire from 1516 until 1917 and by Britain from 1917 to 1948. In 1948, Israel occupied 78 percent of Palestine, declaring its stake in these conquered lands. The only unoccupied Palestinian regions were the West Bank (WB) and the Gaza Strip (GS) which represented 21 and 1.3 percent of Palestine, respectively. From 1948 to 1967, the WB was ruled by Jordan while the GS was under Egyptian control. Furthermore, Israel occupied the WB and GS in 1967 imposing a military administration on the two regions. Later in 1993, the Oslo Accords were signed between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). As a result, the PLO recognized Israel as a state and in return, Israel recognized the PLO as the Palestinian representative. Subsequently, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) was established in 1994.

There were many local government (LG) laws issued during the Ottoman, British, Jordanian, Egyptian and Israeli rule over Palestine. Significant founding laws include the Province Law 1864, the Provincial Administration Law 1871, the Municipality Law 1877, The Local Council Law 1921, the Municipality Law 1934 and the Jordanian Municipality Law 1954. In addition, hundreds of Israeli military orders have contributed to shaping the LG system (Jarbawi, 1996, pp. 35–110; Shtayyeh and Habas, 2004, p. 102; Isma’il, 2005, pp. 59–84; Hsiba, 2006, pp. 38–57; Al-Habil, 2008, pp. 77–119; Salameh, 2009). Centralization of autonomy dominates the Palestinian governmental system. However, the PNA’s issuing of Local Authority Law 1997 attempted to decentralize the LG system to a considerable extent. As indicated in the Local Authority Law 1997, the legal framework is the basic determinant of the LG institutional framework. Therefore, A consistent legal and institutional framework makes for an efficacious LG (Bodansky, 1995; Hannam and Boer, 2002; Penning *et al.*, 2002). Granting that, many studies discern a gap between the institutional framework (which results from the Local Authority Law 1997) and the one being applied (Jarbawi, 1996, p. 107; Isma’il, 2005, p. 101; Hsiba, 2006; Al-Habil, 2008, pp. 8–9; Salameh, 2009, pp. 125–128). The PNA was understood to reinforce the

centralization system. Nevertheless, the aforementioned studies have neither comprehensively provided an understanding of the bigger picture of the institutional framework, nor have they elaborately investigated the issues relevant to both the legal and institutional frameworks. Although the current institutional framework can be rhetorically indicated, it is difficult to elaborate its actual functions and structure. Indeed, the Palestinian context is unstable and dramatically changing. Against this context, this paper aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the institutional framework for the Palestinian Local Government?
2. What are the main legal and institutional issues of the Palestinian local government?

Although theoretically similar legal and institutional frameworks exist in both the WB and GS, internal division between Hamas (the Islamic Resistance Movement) and Fatah (the Palestinian National Liberation movement) in 2007 has resulted in the area being administered by two different governments. The government in the WB is controlled mainly by Fatah and the GS is controlled by Hamas. This study focuses only on the WB for several reasons. Following the control of Hamas over the GS, the GS fell under an Israeli siege, which eventually created a complicated situation and a relatively different context relative to the WB. As a consequence, data is more accessible in the WB in comparison to the GS. Furthermore, communication with GS officials may engender a security threat (i.e., Israeli occupation force violence).

Theoretical perspectives

The Public Administration field has three interrelated branches: legislative, executive, and judicial (Rosenbloom, 1986). The separation of powers is usually understood as a constitutional doctrine that separates government into autonomous institutions responsible for performing different functions. Legislative power creates laws, the executive power enforces laws, and the judicial power interprets laws (Klassen and Brown, 2018; Zaring, 2020). In democratic countries, the separation of powers is typically implemented in conjunction with a system of checks and balances which are often included within a constitution, for each branch to counter and restrain the power of the other branches (Humphreys, 2021). However, tension between the three powers occurs very often, especially in unstable states. It is observed in some fragile states that one power over-controls other powers (Salter, 2021).

Generally, public administration is “being anchored in both functions and institutional structure” (Rosenbloom, 2013, p. 386). In other words, it defines what activities should be practiced and who should do them (Penning et al., 2002). Perhaps the most well-known public administration frameworks are the top-down (centralization) and bottom-up (decentralization) systems (Birkland, 2006).

In the centralized system, the government is the sole decision maker and service provider whereby a high level of authority hierarchy exists (Andrews et al., 2007). Even with LG operation, the central government can control local units and determine intergovernmental relationships (Singaravellou, 2013; Panday, 2017), income and expenditure, administrative regulations, political ideology, the way to deliver services, and the capacities of local representatives (Goldsmith and Page, 1987,

p. 23; Goldsmith, 2002). Conversely, the decentralized system allows for the transfer of power, authority, resources and accountability from the central government to the LGs (UNDP, 1997; Panday, 2011). Decentralization contributes to key elements of good governance. The most important aspect involves the people's participation in decision-making (local elections); developing people's capabilities; and enhancing government responsiveness, accountability, and transparency (UNDP, 1997).

LG refers to the lower tier of government that has autonomy and operates within a restricted area (Marshall, 1965, p. 8). What distinguishes LG from the central government is the principle of subsidiarity. It refers to the notion that public matters should be dealt with by local authorities that are closest to the citizens. They have better access to citizens' information and more capabilities in service delivery (Cass, 1992).

LGs have two primary functions: one is to provide local aspirants a voice for decentralized governance (local democracy); while simultaneously the other involves providing an efficient mechanism of service delivery to the communities (local efficiency) (Aulich, 1999, 2005). However, a trade-off exists between local democracy and local efficiency (Burdess and O'Toole, 2004; Hearfield and Dollery, 2009). Local democracy emphasizes the notion of representativeness, responsibility and accountability, often termed with respect to political and social norms. Nevertheless, local efficiency requires reinforcing structural efficiency to maximize the benefits and minimize the costs (Aulich, 1999).

The public choice theory perspective (sometimes called polycentrists or localists) advocates for horizontal and vertical fragmented structure. The former refers to the proliferation of LGs within the same tier of LG. It allows inhabitants to be closer to their elected officials and it enables them to better participate in civic life (Tiebout, 1956; Ostrom, 1972; McDonnell, 2019). This feature seems to match with the local democratic model (Dollery, 2010). Nevertheless, vertical fragmentation separates the process of service production from service provision (tiers of the LG). It is argued that the horizontal and vertical application of public choice theory leads to increased efficiency (Yang, 2021). Figure 1 visualizes the vertical and horizontal fragmented structure.

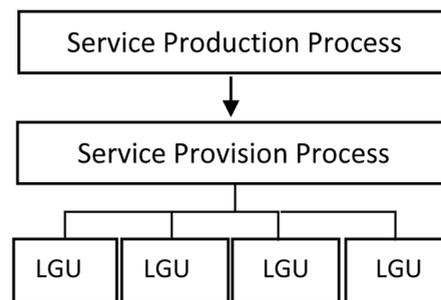


Figure 1: **Local government fragmented structure.**

Source: Compiled from McDonnell (2019); E. Ostrom (1972) and Tiebout (1956).

On the other hand, the institutional reform movement perceives horizontal and vertical fragmentation of LG as a wasteful duplication of efforts that result

in inefficiency. Therefore, institutional reformers advocate for the consolidation notion (Committee for Economic Development, 1970; Ostrom, 1972; Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 1974). A single multifunctional LG would produce and provide the same service more efficiently if fewer tiers and units of LG existed. Furthermore, fragmented structure creates a “common-pool problem” in which the same service might be the responsibility of multiple LGs (Berry, 2008, 2009, pp. 148–179). Additionally, larger LG entities “enhance LG capacity, thereby improving the range and quality of local service provisions as well as its bargaining abilities with higher tiers of government” (Dollery, 2010, p. 117). Noticeably, institutional reform reconciles with the local efficiency model. Figure 2 visualizes the vertical and horizontal consolidated structure.

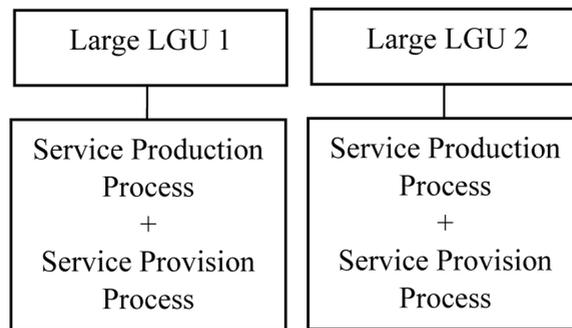


Figure 2: **Local government consolidated structure.**

Source: Compiled from Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (1974); Committee for Economic Development, (1970); E. Ostrom (1972) and Dollery (2010).

Nevertheless, other scholars assume that there is no trade-off between local democracy and local efficiency; the size of the municipal council is negatively correlated with municipal efficiency and democracy (Boyne, 1992, 1995). Therefore, smaller local authorities have better local democracy and efficiency. Other studies have found that bigger LGs are more democratic and efficient (Soul and Dollery, 2000). Obviously, fragmented versus consolidated structure is still a debatable issue.

Methodology

The present exploratory study seeks to generate a novel perspective relating to two main objectives: The first is to explore the current Palestinian LG institutional framework. The second objective is to explore issues associated with both legal and institutional frameworks at the Palestinian LG level. For the first objective, secondary data from relevant documents and studies were collected and analyzed. For the second objective, a qualitative approach was used via adopting an interview instrument used in order to access the required data. At a philosophical level, the present study belongs to the interpretivism paradigm meaning that different interviewee perspectives were articulated in order to help construct broader insights (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).

Nine interviews were conducted in order to collect the primary data. A quota sampling strategy was adopted in order to determine who would be interviewed. “The quota sample improves the representations of particular strata (groups) within the population, as well as ensuring that these strata are not over-represented” (Sharma, 2017, p. 751). Basically, the population of study was first classified into three main categories in accordance with the institutional framework shown in Figure 4. This framework is an indication of achieving the first study objective. Hence, the first study objective was achieved, then, interviewed representatives were selected based on the institutional framework components. In addition, an experts’ opinions category was also included. Notably, non-governmental institutions were not counted as a category because these institutions do not contribute significantly to the LG system. They are also difficult to identify (Krunz, 2009; Sabri, Jaber and Hanya, 2010). There is no known NGO that consistently works within a Palestinian LG. Since fully governmental and semi-governmental institutions are most active in LGs, representatives of all institutions within this category were interviewed. Additionally, two interviews were conducted to represent the “Interrelated Ministries” category. The ministries were selected based on their vital coordinating role with the fully governmental institutions. Therefore, the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) and the Ministry of Planning and Finance (MoPF) were selected. Furthermore, an interview of a LG expert qualified as the fourth category. Figure 3 shows how the represented institutions were selected, applying the four main categories and other sub-categories. It is worth mentioning that although 10 interviews were initially planned, the present author was unable to interview an APLA representative, so the figure dropped to nine.

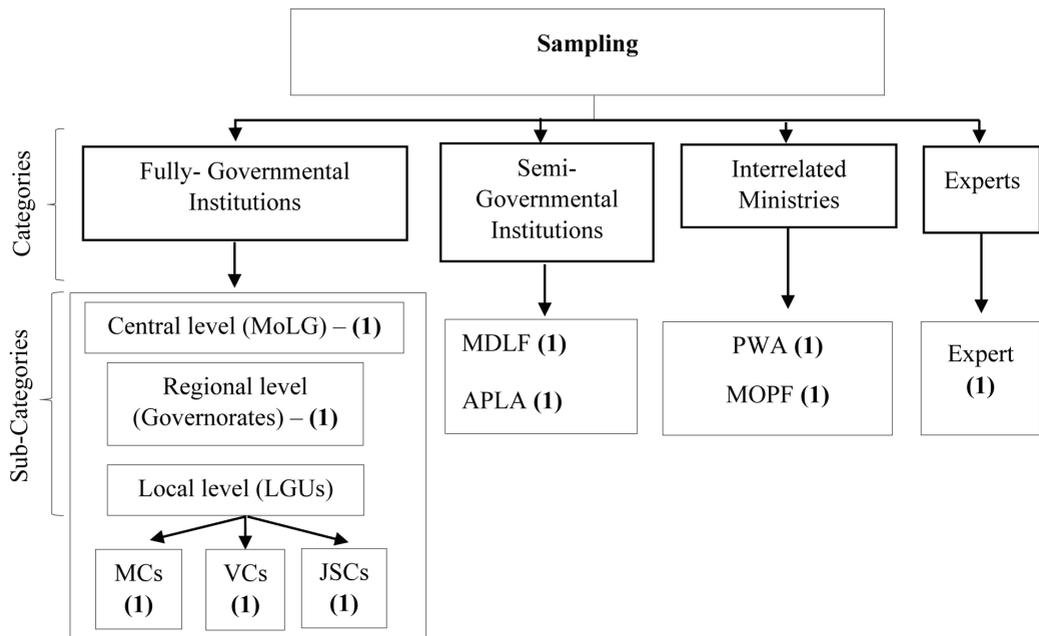


Figure 3: **Representative institutions selected by quota sampling.**

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Table 1 indicates information about interviewees, their positions and affiliated institutions. Abbreviations are given for each institution's representative to be referred to in the analysis section.

A semi-structured technique was considered for data collection in order to allow for asking some pre-determined and follow-up questions. Scholars such as Mackenzie (2020) advocate this semi-structured technique as one of the best techniques used during the interviews. As consistent with the study objectives, the main pre-determined themes were about characteristics of the Palestinian LG, related issues, impacting factors and suggestions for reform. Other sub-themes were developed throughout the interviews. All interviews were conducted in Arabic via a one-hour (approx.) phone call. Following this, all answers were transcribed in Arabic and analysed manually after identifying the main themes and codes. Various patterns of answers were observed. Practically, two main codes were identified: issues related to the legal framework, and issues relating to the institutional framework. Subsequently, sub-codes were identified as shown in the analysis of the interview data section. After the analysis was completed in Arabic, the findings were translated into English.

Table 1

Information about Interviewees

Position and affiliated institutions	Abbreviation
<i>Fully Governmental Institutions</i>	
Former Minister for Ministry of Local Government (MoLG)	FG1
Former Governor of Hebron Governorate Ex-Minister for Ministry of Local Government (MoLG)	FG2
Member of Hebron Municipal Council	FG3
Member of Yetta Municipal Council	FG4
Head of the Joint Services Council for Northwest of Nablus Villages Head of Sebastia Village Council	FG5
<i>Semi-Governmental Institutions</i>	
The Operating Manager for Municipal Development and Lending Fund (MDLF)	SG1
The Operating Manager for Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA).	SG2
<i>Interrelated Ministries</i>	
Secretary General of Planning and Administrative Development Ministry	IM1
Former Minister of Palestinian Water Authority (PWA)	IM2
<i>Experts</i>	
Senior researcher and expert of local government at the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) research centre	EX1

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Findings

This section was written based on secondary data to fulfil the first research objective that aimed to indicate the institutional framework of the Palestinian local government.

Palestinian Local Government: Institutional Framework

The Palestinian institutional framework has been organic and altering dynamically since the establishment of the PNA in 1994. Indeed, no document or study was found to demonstrate the comprehensive institutional framework. Therefore, it is essential to display the big picture according to the official documents and relevant studies. The Palestinian LG institutional framework comprises of three different types of institutions: fully governmental, semi-governmental, and non-governmental.

Fully governmental institutions have three levels; the central, the regional and the municipal (Signoles, 2010). The central institution is reflected in the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG), with representative directorates in the 11 WB governorates and one in the GS (MoLG, 2020). Article 2 of the Local Authority Law 1997 states that the role of MoLG is to formulate general policies for local councils, supervise the functions of different local councils – public projects, budgeting, finance, organizational and legal affairs – and to accomplish the technical and administrative work related to regional planning.

The regional level is made up of governorates (or *Muhafazat*). Upon the establishment of MoLG, Palestinian territories were divided into 16 Governorates, 11 in the WB and five in the GS (MoLG, 2020). Structurally, irrespective of the WB or GS, they are supervised by the Presidency Office. A governor is nominated directly by the president of the PNA and represents the central authority.

Additionally, he has power in vital areas in which he oversees security; municipal and village councils, and he coordinates other state services such as health, education, and transportation (Salameh, 2009, p. 34). There is no clear legal basis, however, in which to regulate the governor's activities (Signoles, 2010, pp. 21–22).

The local level consists of different local government units (LGUs) which are the Municipal Councils (MCs), Village Councils (VCs), and Joint Services Committees (JSCs).

The latter is a combination of various VCs (CEC, 2017). Palestinian refugee camps have their own local councils as well, but they are beyond the mandate of the MoLG (Al-Habil, 2008). The main role for all LGUs is to provide civil and infrastructure services to Palestinian inhabitants (e.g., water, wastewater, electricity and paving roads). Yet, education, health and social affairs are beyond their mandate (The World Bank, 2017b, p. 18). MCs provide services to Palestinian inhabitants who reside in the main cities of governorates. However, VCs and JSCs provide the services for those who reside in the villages. Table 2 indicates the distribution of local authorities in Palestinian Territories.

Table 2

The distribution of local authorities in Palestinian territories

Local Authority	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Municipality (Municipal Councils)	126	25	151
Village Councils	280	0	280
Camp Council	20	8	28
Total Number of LGUs			459

Source: The Central Elections Commission, (2019).

Semi-governmental institutions include the Municipal Development and Lending Funds (MDLF) and the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA). The MDLF is a semi-governmental institution established in 2005 by the Council of Ministers Decree No. 32/36/09. As stated on the MDLF website (MDLF, 2020), its main objective is to “encourage the flow of financial resources from the PNA and various donors to the LGUs and other local public entities to improve the delivery of local infrastructure and municipal services, to promote economic development, and improve municipal efficiency and accountability”. Furthermore, the APLA was founded in 1997 and it is assumed to be the highest framework in which LGUs can share experience and knowledge related to community developments. Its aims are to unite, defend and support the LGUs’ efforts to become more efficient, independent, and citizen oriented local authorities. Moreover, it provides a means of dialogue between the central government and LGUs (Abdul Ati, 2005; Salameh, 2009, p. 78).

Non-governmental institutions include the private sector and non-profit organizations (NGOs) (Salameh, 2009, p. 81). The role of the private sector in planning for the local level is modest and inefficient (Krunz, 2009; Sabri, Jaber and Hanya, 2010). There are many reasons which support this conclusion. The existing laws and regulations that do not encourage this type of partnership, are among the top reasons.

There is no clear strategy at the governmental level to deal with the private sector, which in turn has led to creating weak public awareness about the importance of private sector partnership among LGUs (New Vision Firm, 2009). The private sector, however, is more involved in the implementation process (Sabri, Jaber and Hanya, 2010). Nearly 12.6 percent of LGU-run projects are in partnership with the private sector (large municipalities) (New Vision Firm, 2009).

Unlike the private sector, NGOs have no role in planning or implementing LG projects and programs. Moreover, they have a limited role in providing financial resources to projects (Krunz, 2009; Sabri, Jaber and Hanya, 2010). According to the MDLF Report (2018b), a total of eight NGOs submitted their applications to MDLF expressing their interest to establish partnerships with

LGUs. As these applications need to be assessed by MDLF, currently the results have yet to be known. The Oslo Accords were a turning point for NGOs because foreign donors were able to channel their funds to the PNA (Salameh, 2009, p. 288). Furthermore, fully governmental institutions interfere with various ministries and authorities (The World Bank, 2017b, p. 18). The inter-related responsibilities are indicated in Table 3.

Table 3

The interrelated responsibilities between Palestinian ministries and LGUs

Ministry / Authority	Interrelated Responsibilities
The Palestinian Water Authority (PWA)	– Coordination regarding water supply, wastewater disposal and planning
The Palestinian Energy Authority (PEA)	– Coordination regarding electricity supply and planning
Ministry of Planning and Finance (MoPF)	– Sharing revenues between MoPF and LGUs – Coordinating with donors regarding projects funds
The Palestinian Environmental Quality Authority (PEQA)	– Coordinating affairs related to all environmental issues
Ministry of Public Works and Housing (MoPWH)	– Proposing plans and designs of regional roads – Coordination of land acquisition by LGUs for public projects
The Palestinian Land Authority (PLA)	– Facilitating land surveying, transactions, and registrations
Ministry of Labor (MoL)	– Licensing industrial establishments
Ministry of Health (MoH)	– Approving building permits according to environmental health conditions – Monitoring public health
Ministry of Education (MoE)	– Maintaining educational and cultural buildings
Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA)	– Coordination regarding antiquities and historical sites located within LGU boundaries

Source: Al-Habil (2008); Ezbidi (2010); Hassiba (2006); Salameh (2009) and The World Bank (2017).

Figure 4 outlines the LG institutional framework. It is important to note that interrelated ministries have different levels of coordination and cooperation with LGUs, depending on the type of service, project, or institution. The water provision service, for example, is highly interrelated with the function of LGUs. Contrarily, the electricity service has recently been privatised and there has been little coordination with LGUs.

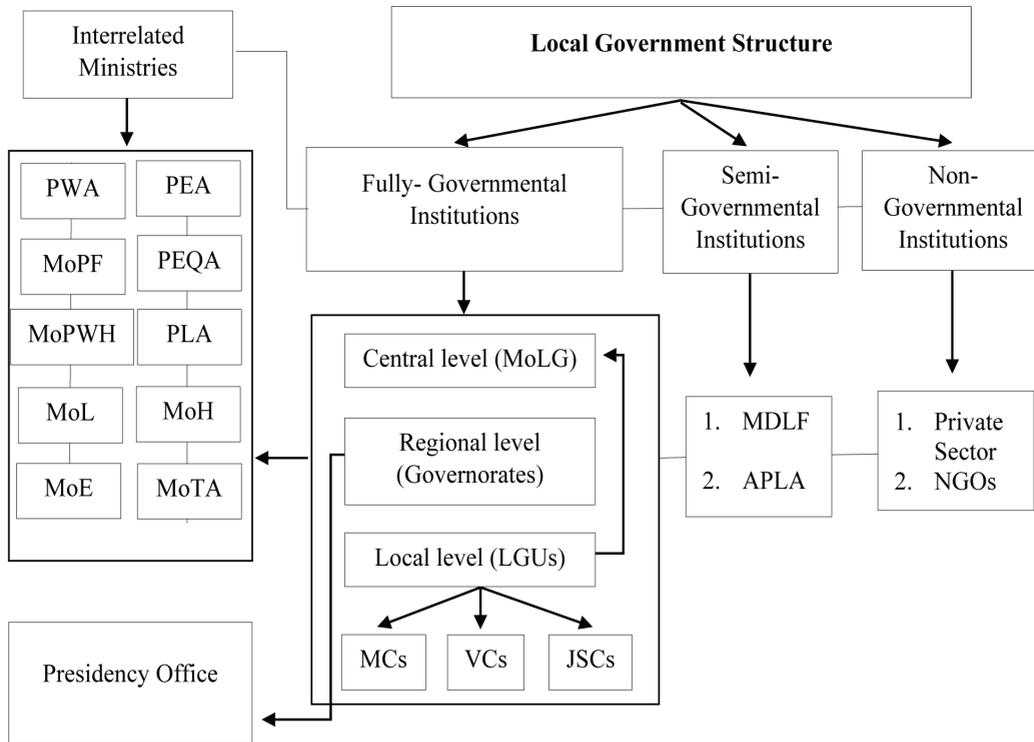


Figure 4: **Institutional framework of the Palestinian local government.**

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Issues of Legal Framework

Previous Laws

The previous laws, which formed the Palestinian LG system, have remained relatively active. Hence, this has contributed to the existing gap between the 1997 Law and the current institutional framework. The 1997 law attempted to overcome the weaknesses of previous laws. However, it seems that the decision makers default to previous laws due to sheer convenience rather than taking the trouble to draft new ones. This notion was asserted by different interviewees, mainly those representing the fully governmental institutions, whether at the macro or micro level.

“I, as a specialist in public administration, with other legal advisers have proposed a modern law that was based on the idea of financial and administrative decentralization. However, it was rejected by the Palestinian parliament. Therefore, the legal committee of the Palestinian parliament proposed a traditional local authority law that was just copied and pasted from the Jordanian and Egyptian law. These laws present a local administration framework, not LG system. Nevertheless, they were adopted”. (FG2)

“The current law is almost a carbon copy of the Jordanian Law”. (FG4)

What further complicates the legal framework is the attribution to multiple laws. The existence of multiple laws reflects the logic of the particular ruling power in a specific context. That context, however, may prove antiquated and ill-suited for the current one:

“The multiplicity of laws, including the Ottoman, British, Jordanian, Egyptian, and lastly the Palestinian have led to a gap between the legislative and administrative system, and implementation”. (EX1)

“We have laws, but we do not apply them as they are quoted from previous laws such as the Jordanian one. We need an alternative for these as we live under occupation.” (FG5)

Overlapping Powers

Other than the LG Law, the PNA issued other laws for various ministries. The momentous PNA-issued Water Law 2014 withdrew the water provision service from the LGUs. Subsequently, the 2014 law, if fully applied, would restructure the LG institutional arrangements and functions. As observed from different interviews, the 2014 Law was perceived as a means to weaken the role of LGUs. There is still an on-going conflict between the PWA and MoLG.

“The PWA administrates the water and sanitation services according to the Water Law 2014. However, the MoLG is, according to the 1997 Law, responsible for water and sanitation services.” (IM2)

“If the provision of water and sanitation services are withdrawn from us, what services we shall provide, especially that the provision of electricity service was, despite it being our responsibility, withdrawn from us and given to private electricity companies.” (FG4)

“The Water Law 2014 did not protect the property of local councils.” (FG2)

At another level, governorates engage in the work of LGUs. However, no law is found to give them the power of engagement. Although LGU structure and function can be theoretically explained, ambiguous and far-reaching governorate power makes the identification of LGU function difficult to ascertain. The following excerpt defines the powers of governorates:

“Governors directly follow the president, they have security and supervisory powers, they are also to evaluate the development needs within governorates. For example, they are the ones who prepare the development plan, not mayors. However, local councils are according to the law the ones engaged with development roles. The governor has power from the president but does not have capability on the ground while local councils have more capabilities.” (EX1)

Weak Legal Practices

It appears that most interviewees agreed on the notion that LG reform requires alterations and updates in laws, regulations, and policies. However, the deactivation of the Palestinian Legislative Council constitutes an important challenge:

“...The main obstacle is the absence of Palestinian Parliament. Therefore, you cannot formulate your own legal system. We are restricted from going for guidelines and regulations. This situation disrupts the administrative and legal development of LG”. (EX1)

Indeed, after Hamas won the election in 2006 and gained the majority in the Palestinian Parliament, Israel arrested all parliament representatives of Hamas in the WB, which led to the disruption of the Parliament. Moreover, the Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas had dissolved the Palestinian Parliament by the end of 2018. However, despite the absence of the Palestinian Parliament, the Palestinian government can issue “decrees”, which can be as effective as laws. This feature, however, is not always utilized:

“We, in the MoLG have taken many administrative decisions which were then implemented. However, these decisions have sometimes become inactive when a new successor comes in, we need to legalize our decisions to make them “decrees. We almost do not do that.... In my time we have decided to apply the economic decentralization, but this did not continue as we did not legalize it as law (decree)”. (FG2)

In addition to the issuance of decrees, the Cabinet of Ministry can also issue regulations. Nevertheless, this power seems to be ignored. For, example, even though the Water Law 2014 appeared in some of its items to withdraw service from LGUs, the implementation of the law should have been followed by newly issued regulations to arrange the coordination between different institutions, yet this did not happen:

“To avoid overlapping with other previous laws, after issuing a law, it should be followed by issuing detailed regulations which help in implementation. This did not take place with the Water Law 2014. Thus, LGUs now have two laws in regards with water; the Water Law 2014 and the Local Authority Law 1997.” (IM2).

“According to the Water Law 2014, the Water Sector Regulatory Council (WSRC) is a new independent council that seeks to monitor local councils and provide licences to initiate new water entities. However, due to not issuing relevant regulations from the Water Authority, the WSRC could not fulfil its role.” (FG4)

The other problem of legal practices seems rooted in a lack of vision that shapes their essence:

“We lack a comprehensive vision, supreme policies, and a grand strategy. These come before issuing laws. Therefore, even if we have regulations to implement the related laws, the problem exists before that.... When the bigger picture is clear, this creates a system for good policies.... There are laws but these are not updated”. (SG1)
“We don’t have clear and consistent policies; we don’t know how the amount of water was determined for us.” (FG3)

Institutional Framework

Deformed Structure

The Local Authority Law 1997 represents the basic legal framework that constitutes the LG institutional arrangements. Article 3, Item 1 of the law conceives local authority as a body that has financial and functional independence and powers according to the provision of Law. It is also stated in Article 3, Item 2 that a local authority council shall be elected by the people (PNA, 1997).

Some interviewees asserted that the 1997 Law has to a large extent presented a decentralized system. The current system, however, does not necessarily fully reflect the spirit of the 1997 Law. Indeed, three interviewees agree that actual application does not reflect a decentralized structure:

“As for the 1997 Law, it is good and gives the local authorities the necessary powers. However, on the ground, we practice centralization.” (FG1)

Nevertheless, determining what structure is being implemented appears to be a challenging task. Some believe that it has the characteristics of both centralization and decentralization:

“The LG structure is complex; it is decentralized in the sense that local councils’ representatives are being elected by people. Indeed, powers are taken away by people due to the election not because this reflects the government policies”. (SG1)

Despite the perspective that the spread of LGUs is a clear implication of decentralization, the number of LGUs is excessive in the WB, reaching 426. This fact is also perceived as a detrimental to the overall performance of local governance:

“.... the huge number of service providers weaken the management process”. (FG3)

“The huge number of local councils is (a) very serious problem.” (SG1)

In response to the fragmentation of LG structure, various interviewees, particularly ones representing the macro levels (MoLG, PWA and WSRC), advocate for LGU consolidation. It is believed that consolidation would improve service delivery. However, there are various challenges when attempting to apply this idea:

“It is very difficult to provide the water service to this big number of LGUs. The only solution is to create water entities that consolidate a considerable number of LGUs.” (IM2)

“There is always an idea raised to divide Palestine administratively into four regions, three in the WB and one in GS. However, there are many obstacles to the consolidation notion.” (FG2)

“We worked on the idea of merging local bodies, but it is not that easy. Beliefs are one thing and execution on the ground is another.” (FG1)

The consolidation notion does necessarily reflect the centralization system. It can be incorporated within the decentralized system. Notably, LGUs do not believe in a full centralization system but they call for something in between.

“I call for a structure suited between centralization and decentralization so that we preserve the privacy of each area, meanwhile, concerning the overall interest. If there are enough resources, I advocate full decentralization”. (FG3)

Obviously, decentralization requires certain institutional capabilities. If unavailable, less institutional empowerment and more inefficiency will be observed:

“When the performance of a municipal council is weak due to many reasons, we can’t give more powers to this municipality. We cannot be fully decentralized if the municipality cannot perform its functions properly. The fact that a large number of people do not pay their financial dues to LGUs has impacted their functions to deliver services”. (FG1)

Other interviewees went into greater detail in their analysis of the LG structure. According to them, the current structure can be classified as a hybrid one, having both centralized and decentralized forms:

“..... governors directly follow the president; they have security and supervisory powers. Governors’ roles should not be centralized. On the other hand, municipal councils are decentralized. They came through election. Some municipalities, particularly the big ones have broad powers (more decentralized) while small municipalities have limited powers (more centralized).” (EX1)

“Even though local elections relatively reflect democratic decentralization, local councils still need and seek centralized financial support.” (IM1)

Being a hybrid structure does not necessarily reflect a pre-determined legal framework. The centralization characteristics shown above have no legal basis. Hence, the current LG structure can best be described as follows:

“Chaotic hybrid structure, it is not an organized structure.” (EX1)

Weak Institutional Integration

An effective LG institutional framework requires the integration of different actors. Nevertheless, it seems that actors are concerned with their institutions more than the service delivery process itself. Hence, it is expected that LG functions and structure get negatively affected:

“The water laws do not take into consideration the LG laws and vice versa. Each ministry says this is theirs. Even with the Water Law 2014, it has disintegrated between the WSRC and the Water Authority.” (FG2)

Furthermore, some institutions seem to not play their roles in order to avoid certain problems. Eventually, other institutions will bear responsibility leading into further consequences as is what happened regarding electricity; it was withdrawn from the LGUs:

“One of the responsibilities of the governorate is to intervene when debt is not paid by inhabitants. However, they do not do this as they prefer not to face people and maintain a good relationship with them. One of the motives behind withdrawing the electricity service from LGUs to companies was the inability of collecting arrears.” (EX1)

Governance under Occupation

Due to the Oslo Accords of 1993, Israel maintained its security and administrative control of over 60 percent of the WB, in a locale called Area C (Saleh, 2014, p. 78). Area C was agreed to be returned to the Palestinians as a part of the PLO-Israeli negotiation, yet this has failed to materialize. Furthermore, Palestinians, according to the Oslo Accords, were to have control over the remaining 40 percent of the WB (Area A and B). Israel, however, invades these areas arbitrarily so this complex political situation results in no real Palestinian sovereignty over their resources:

“The Israeli occupation would not allow Palestinians to control any of the fundamental resources, mainly water and electricity. Simply because it does not want to give any aspect of sovereignty for Palestinians.... We have first to agree that our main problem is embodied in not having sovereignty and the control over our resources.” (FG2)

The absence of Palestinian sovereignty over their natural resources has clearly impacted the structure and function of LG as well as the service delivery process in general:

“No real local governance would exist if we do not control our resources, everything would be impacted”. (FG5)

“Israel controls 85 percent of the water resources and almost all energy resources. This imposed on us a certain form of LG structure. For example, the West Bank Water Department was created to coordinate the provision of water from Israel to local councils.” (FG4)

The following excerpt reflects the perception of how Israel contributes to obstructing the consolidation of fragmented LGUs, which consequently impedes more efficient structure:

“The proposal for merging was cancelled repeatedly, simply because of the fear that Israel will find it easier to control these regions, and also because we don’t have the sovereignty to make benefits of natural resources in these areas.” (EX1)

In elaborating on how the Israeli occupation impacts LGU functions, consider the following excerpts:

“Our role has changed from producing the natural resource and then distributing services into buying from Israel and then distributing. This impacted our functions and the form of the structure applied”. (EX1)

“Israel does not allow local councils to play their role, we are always concerned with what Israelis will do for things they don’t like.” (FG1)

“No local council has reached to that level of efficiency and capability in administering services because of the scarcity of resources and lack of control over resources.” (FG2)

Discussion

Centralized or Decentralized System?

It was emphasized in the theoretical perspectives section that LGs have two primary functions which are local democracy and local efficiency (Aulich, 1999, 2005). As for local democracy, the results showed that the population exercise democracy through selecting their representatives at the Palestinian LG level, which is a reflection of decentralization (UNDP, 1997). However, autonomy is also an essential feature of any LG (Marshall, 1965). Furthermore, various scholars concede that the more important the LGU-owned resources, the more autonomy it commands (King and Pierre, 1991, p. 88; Pratchett, 2004). However, Israel controls almost all natural resources. For example, 85 percent of water resources and nearly all energy resources are controlled by Israel. Therefore, Palestinians have restricted local autonomy. This is one of several factors that encourage the central governmental level to intervene. For example, the PWA and its related institutions coordinate with the Israeli party to purchase and centrally distribute water to LGUs. On the other hand, governors, as representatives of the president, also unsystematically intervene in the function of LGUs. Their intervention essentially contradicts the nature of LG that represents the lower tier of government, as stated previously (Marshall, 1965). Governorates represent the regional level as shown in Figure 4. It is notable that they are appointed and do not have the same capabilities of LGUs. Clearly, this goes against the principle of subsidiary asserted by Cass (1992). Although this situation reflects the attributes of centralization, functionally and structurally, it appears that there is no clear regulative policy that guides the distribution of powers among the central and local level. In this context, the impact of the legal framework can be observed. First, no law or policy exists to regulate the relationship between governorates and LGUs. Second, overlapping laws that were either issued after or before the establishment of PNA are still in effect. Thirdly, the newly issued laws, such as the Water Law 2014, are not followed by necessary regulations to arrange the relationship with LGUs.

To summarise, basic services that are assumed to be provided by LGUs according to the Local Authority Law 1997 are intervened by central level governing bodies such as the PWA for water, PEA for electricity and governorates for any possible service. Even though this reflects centralized system characteristics, LGUs still directly deal with citizens. Additionally, local democracy is still being practiced to a high degree. Hence, the attributes of centralization and decentral-

ization are observed. Theoretically, they are known as hybrid systems, and they are unorganized. It can therefore be called a “Chaotic Hybrid System” as described by one of the interviewees.

Regarding the local efficiency, it seems that citizens’ demands are not fulfilled. Official reports and studies show that there are serious problems associated with services delivered. They are generally at different degrees of challenges related to limited access to services, poor quality, low satisfaction level and other issues. Table 4 indicates some of these problems related to water, wastewater, solid waste, electricity and road construction.

Table 4

Problems Related to the Infrastructure Services Provided by LG

Type of Service	Access to Service	Quality of Service	Level of Satisfaction
Water	52 percent of localities in WB endured cuts in the water supply	More than 90 per cent of the water pumped from the aquifer have salinity exceeding the WHO standard	53 percent are satisfied with piped water
Wastewater	30 percent of the households in WB are connected to a piped sewage network	Around 70 per cent of sewage networks are old and 42 per cent are inefficient	60 percent were satisfied with the quality of the service
Solid waste	25 percent of households in the small villages of WB have access to solid waste collection services	31 percent of localities have their dump sites distance from a locality. Most of cities and villages burn solid waste in open dumping	Half of the population in WB are satisfied with the availability of street bins
Electricity	31 percent of localities has non-served areas	Nearly 43 percent of localities had weak electricity current due to the old existing networks	34 percent were satisfied with the cost of electricity
Road Construction	Most inhabitants can access roads	Irregular road cleaning is the main issue for households	45 percent are satisfied with road services

Source: Compiled from ALPHA (2013); UNDP (2014); PCBS and MoLG (2015); The World Bank (2017b, 2017a).

It is argued in this context that a trade-off exists between local democracy and local efficiency which is consistent with the belief of scholars such as Dallery, (2009). Furthermore, local democracy should not be merely measured by conducting elections. It appears that there are other elements of local democracy, such as the engagement of the private sector and civil society, missing from the Palestinian context, as stated before in the Palestinian Local Government Framework section.

Local government Institutional Structure

The LG structure can be perceived horizontally and vertically as highlighted in the literature review. In the WB, there are about 430 LGUs within the same LG tier. This is a vast number for an exceedingly small region. Hence, it is a horizontally fragmented structure according to the characteristics mentioned by Goodman (2019). He also highlighted that the fragmented vertical structure, which refers to the number of LG tiers, separates between service production and service provision. The findings of this study indicate consistency with this kind of separation. Furthermore, it seems even more complex. The complexity embodies more than these two processes. First, since Palestinians cannot completely fulfil population needs by merely relying on their limited controlled natural resources, PNA institutions and ministries have no choice but to purchase necessary resources from Israel. Hence, in addition to producing services, the same institutions purchase resources from Israel. For example, the West Bank Water Department produces water from Palestinian wells and purchases it back from Israel, for the LGUs. Noticeably, this added role does not reflect the emergence of a new tier of LG. The second complexity, however, embodies the initiation of a third tier. It is worthwhile to quote one of the interviewees who remarked that, “local councils still need and seek centralized financial support”. As elaborated upon in the institutional framework section, MDLF was established in 2004 to coordinate the flow of donor funds to LGUs which means that the LGUs dependency on funds has engendered the emergence of a new service financing process. In 2019 alone the MDLF supported LGUs with 58 million usd (MDLF, 2020). Hence, whether services are produced by Palestinians or purchased from Israel, financial support is still needed first. Subsequently, the LG is vertically fragmented with added processes, which involve purchasing resources from Israel and financing the LGUs to provide the services. The structure hence could be described as “Altered Fragmented Structure”. Figure 5 demonstrates it clearly.

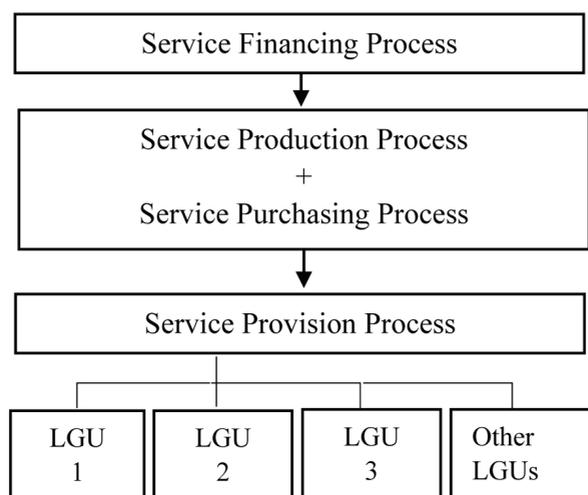


Figure 5: **The Palestinian altered fragmented structure.**

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Based on Figure 5, it is easily concluded that the adopted structure does not reflect the institutional reformist perspective, which calls for vertical and horizontal consolidation (Ostrom, 1972). Indeed, it reflects the Public Choice Theory perspective, which advocates for horizontal and vertical fragmentation. In concurrence with the general interviewee perspective, the horizontal fragmented structure, which embodies vast LGUs, although indicative of local democracy, negatively impacts efficiency. Hence, a democracy/efficiency trade-off seems to exist, as indicated in the literature review (Soul and Dollery, 2000). In the light of the fact that most resources are controlled by Israel, reform is bound by this fact. Subsequently, having a consolidated structure where each LGU produces and provides its various services independently, appears to be an impossibility. This means that the current vertical structure wherein service production and service provision are separated is the only available choice. Granting that, the large numbers of LGUs seem unjustified. Local democracy is not necessarily associated with the existence of nearly 430 LGUs. Inhabitants can still elect their representatives with a smaller number of LGUs. Perhaps, only half of them is needed. It will still be a fragmented structure but with more efficiency. If this occurs, there would be no trade-off between the local democracy and efficiency as Berry (2008, 2009) discussed, or at least it would be better than the current one (Ayeko-Kümmeth, 2015).

To implement the strategy of consolidating the LGUs into a smaller number, it requires the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) to issue a law. However, the PLC was deactivated due to the Israeli arrests of Hamas members of the PLC after it won the election in 2006. The Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has also announced the dismissal of the PLC in 2018. Despite these facts, the executive body has the power to issue decrees which compensate for the absence of the PLC (Alsarghali, 2021). However, this power was used to politically centralize the authority within the executive body and relatively ignored issuing administrative decrees to develop the performance of service delivery such as regulations needed to implement the Water Law 2014. Moreover, decrees have been issued by the president to also control the judiciary, specifically the Constitutional Court which has become an extension of the executive power. This resulted in weakening and damaging the judiciary (Shikaki, 2021). Therefore, it is concluded that powers are not distributed equally among the executive, legislative and judicial bodies. It is the executive body which seems to control all powers, particularly after 2006. This is consistent with the finding that fragile states normally experience a tension where one power overcomes other powers (Salter, 2021).

Conclusion

An essential understanding in the public administration field is that the institutional framework should reflect the legal framework (Rosenbloom, 1986; Bodansky, 1995; Hannam and Boer, 2002; Penning et al., 2002). Nevertheless, the results of this study empirically demonstrate that there is a gap between the legal and institutional frameworks of the Palestinian LG and that the former

works as an essential input for the later. Although this concurs with previous studies (Jarbawi, 1996; Salameh, 2009), this study looked at the structural and functional aspects of LGUs, which appear to be the most negatively impacted by elements in the governance process. Indeed, public administration is reflected in structures and functions (Rosenbloom, 2013). These two elements are a mirror for local efficiency (Hearfield and Dollery, 2009). Granting that, the Palestinian LG can be considered inefficient. Moreover, local democracy is the other fundamental characteristic of LG (Aulich, 1999). The results show that representatives of LGUs come via election, which indeed reflects local democracy. Therefore, to enhance the LG structure, both LGU consolidation and decrees that re-arrange the institutional relationship in an improved fashion are recommended.

Future studies should seek to build upon the themes mentioned here and to quantitatively measure the legal and institutional issues investigated herein. Furthermore, this study focused on exploring the WB. Future research should also examine the LG institutional framework in the GS. Although they look similar, the distinct context of Gaza deserves to be independently studied. Likewise, in order to understand the comprehensive context, future research should investigate the institutional framework at other institutions related to the LG, such as the PWA. Moreover, it is suggested that policy makers conduct a parliamentary election so that the separation of powers can be enhanced, and that the local government framework can be restructured. Perhaps the most important action which needs to be taken is to decrease the number of the service providers. It is also suggested that the civil society and private sector engage in delivering the infrastructure services which should also contribute to replacing some of the large number of service providers. Further, policy makers should set up clear guidelines, regulations and laws to manage the relationship between private sector and NGO with the LGUs.

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Original article

GEARING PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN THE PHILIPPINES IN RESPONSE TO 21ST CENTURY NEEDS

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Abstract. The UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education, held in Paris, France in October 1998, adopted a universal declaration on the need for a new vision and paradigm in higher education responsive to the challenges of the 21st century. This study is an effort to answer this call but only in the limited field of public sector management education curriculum at the Master's level. This study attempted an evaluation of existing curricula in terms of the responsive objectives in knowledge, skills, and values as well as the perceived gap between theory and practice. Further, it sought to identify any differences among school administrators, faculty, and students including practitioners in their perceptions regarding these objectives. The study used a three-staged survey to surface data as basics for the proposed curriculum. The first stage was a request for printed materials of the Master in Public Administration/counterpart courses from 66 educational institutions. The second stage was a questionnaire to which 69/132 (52%) school administrators, 112/198 (56.5%) faculty, 188/330 (56.9%) students, and 76/76 (100%) are practitioners, representing an overall 60.4 percent retrieval rate. The questionnaires sought answers to the specific sub-problems of the study. The third questionnaire was sent to all respondents who replied to the second questionnaire; their opinion on the proposed objectives and courses/subjects were sought.

Based on the findings, the researchers developed the proposed curriculum. This curriculum in conformity with the Commission on Higher Education standards consists of the following: 1. Core/Professional Orientation (12 units), Theory and Practice of Governance (3 units), Human Behavior in Organization (3 units), Leadership and Organization Change (3 units), Administrative Laws (3 units); 2. Research and Evaluation

(6 units), Quantitative Methods of Management and Statistics (3 units), Research Techniques (3 units); 3. Major Subjects (15 units) on any of the following: Economic Development (3 units), Development Administration (3 units), Communication and Information Management (3 units), Public Management Issues (3 units), Ethics and Accountability in the Public Service (3 units), Environmental Management (3 units); 4. Thesis Writing (6 units). This study will be useful to schools or will offer a public sector management education course at the Master's level as well as to the Commission on Higher Education for standard setting.

Keywords: Public Sector Management, Education Curriculum, 21st Century, MPA/MPSE, Philippines.

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Introduction

Various attempts had already been made on globalizing education in both public and private institutions of higher learning. Dating back to October 5–9, 1998, was a recollection of the World Declaration on Higher Education for the 21st Century: Vision and Action at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France. The Declaration underscores the universally perceived need for “A New Vision and Paradigm” of higher education and the responses that must be made to meet the challenges of change and renewal necessary to make higher education better able to induce change and progress in the society, and to transform the universities into the drivers of development (Profiroiu, Britcariu, 2021). This declaration encompasses all fields of higher education worldwide; however, it is limited to the discipline of public sector management called Public Administration.

Moreover, the study of Manoharan, Mirbel and Carrizales (2018) titled “Global comparative public administration: Are graduate programs responding to the call?” acknowledged the need to adopt a shared common public administration framework in response to globalization. In the Philippine setting, like the United States and the United Kingdom and others, public sector management has undergone various changes. Specifically tracing its roots, public sector management education in the Philippines is shaped on the United States example, where the conduct of public sector management education has attained a high degree of specialization. Through the years, the management system of the public sector in the Philippines has experienced numerous changes and challenges that include the education sector, and these were brought about for example by the rising demand for education with Master's and Doctorate degrees to comply with managerial and executive positions in the public service, expectations and quality services towards citizens, financial management and budgeting government expenditures, etc.

In response to these changes, the University of the Philippines College of Public Administration was created in the 1950s as a separate discipline that was adopted and followed by most public and private colleges and universities throughout the country. Faced with an entirely new discipline, the U.P. College of Public Administration adopted the U.S. Public Administration Curriculum, which emphasized staff functions such as budgeting, organization, personnel, planning, public finance, and others, commensurate with the requirements of economy and efficiency. In the Philippines today, many other schools have offered degree courses in public administration and allied fields. Their public administration courses range from Master in Public Administration (36 units) to Master in Business Administration or Special Management Program (MBA – SMP) with 42 units with or without thesis but with project paper or thesis. Some schools offer a Ph.D. programs in Public Administration and a Ph.D. in Public Policies and Business Management. Some consider their Master's and Doctoral Programs in Education Administration and Education Management part of their Public Administrative Programs. Some schools also offer Master's Programs in Health Administration. The statistics in 2019 showed 277 colleges and universities offering a Master's program in Public Administration in the Philippines.

This study aims to evaluate the existing MPA/PSME curricula in the Philippines to propose a generative curriculum that would gear public sector management/public administration education in the Philippines to the needs of the twenty-first century. It tries to address the following questions: (1) How responsive are the present public administration and public management curricula to the challenge of the 21st-century educational system as perceived by school administrators, public administration faculty, practitioners, and public administration students? (2) What is the extent of the gap between theory and practice of public administration and public management as perceived by school administrators, faculty, practitioners, and graduate students in public administration? (3) What are the problems encountered by schools offering the program and the program faculties in public management education? (4) How are the perceptions of the respondents influenced by their age, gender, educational attainment, position, and number of years of service? and, (5) What is the appropriate curriculum of public sector management for the 21st century?

Education in the 21st century

The increasing demands for globalization have also brought greater challenges which have led to the introduction of new imperatives towards globalizing educational practices. With the perceived lack of fairness and inequities of delivering education worldwide, sustainable educational practices continue to become a challenge in the 21st century especially among children and the youth in both access to education and the quality of education (United Nations, 2016). The study of Care, Anderson, and Kim (2016) emphasized how the national educational system can be shifted towards global setting in consonance

with the global, regional, and national changes brought by educational reforms. They have also highlighted how to overcome the challenges that include curriculum assessment, pedagogy, and curriculum alignment that will address the educational system in the 21st century. Anchored on this condition, this study was conducted in order to determine the country's preparedness to deliver a quality public administration curriculum in the 21st century.

Ercikan and Oliveri (2016) used the term "21st-century skills" which refer to a combination of skills that are essential to the modern workforce as well as modern society as a result of many interpretations. UNESCO (2012) and Care and Luo (2016) describe these skills as transferable and transversal competencies that are suitable to varied situations and in contrast with vocational-technical skills that are confined to specific occupations. Moving forward to the new system of learning in the 21st century, much emphasis was focused on aligning the educational system into the three delivery mechanisms namely the curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. In Wyse, Hayward, and Pandya's handbooks titled "Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Assessment" the main objective is providing a strong linkage between these three delivery mechanisms. Most studies have been conducted; however, only limited studies focused on establishing the link between curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment which shed light on the emphasis of this study. The curriculum, for example, has shifted from a teacher-centered approach to learner or student-centered learning wherein outcome-based curricula are preferred, which is also like the evidenced-based curriculum. The European Center for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP, 2012) emphasized the delivery of an outcome-oriented curriculum that significantly impacts the teaching and learning processes as it was found that it promotes learner-centered pedagogies where outcomes were measured by student learning.

The outcome-based curricula then link with the pedagogy which promotes the learner-centered pedagogy of learning evidenced by constructivist pedagogy. Anchored on Eccles and Wigfield (2002), the learners, in this case, acknowledge the role of motivation in learning and draw primary attention to information-processing models which led to students' active engagement in knowledge construction and learning per se. Hence, the transition from teacher-centered learning that utilized structured, content-wise, and information acquisition will be converted into processing models, explore, and discover approaches where the students are the ones who take charge of the learning processes. Likewise, traditional assessments that are primarily guided by curricular goals and traditional educational assessment practices will be transformed into an integrated approach with a mix of learner-centered curriculum and learner-centered pedagogy. However, the formal education process towards the 21st century is still a big task to be reckoned with considering the different expectations and the new system that overrides the standardized learning approach that learning institutions had been practicing for many years. Concerning the study, developing a curriculum that caters to the above-mentioned areas becomes a challenge that includes the status of engaging with teaching public administration in the Philippine setting.

Concerns of the Public Sector Management Curriculum in Meeting Millennium Needs

Primarily built on The World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century, the Vision and Action Framework for Priority Action for Change and Development in Higher Education lends credence to the idea that education at the tertiary level should integrate within its curricula and experience global concerns. This entails that the Master of Public Administration (MPA) and Public Sector Management Education (PSME) curriculum for the third millennium should include subjects designed to help develop analytical, managerial, and broad policy perspectives to address global concerns of peace and security; government shifting ideologies; economic stability; health and societal concerns as water resources, etc. In Hou et. al.'s (2011) study, findings revealed that public administration programs require integration to a globalized education curriculum where students must gain international exposure and experiences for self-development and improvement. To public administrators, appropriate and timely response necessitates the development of student's skills in areas of "mediation, negotiations, sensitivity to human rights and diversity, beyond the usual, and traditional public service activities" (Jreisat, 2005, p. 236).

Earlier studies on comparative public administration related to the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program in the United States have noted varying outcomes. For instance, the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) first established in 1973 a section called "The Section on International and Comparative Administration" (SICA), comprised academicians and practitioners whose emphasis was on the promotion of research and international public administration activities and communication of such activities (SICA, 2015). For the educational system in the Philippines, particularly in the public administration field, one of the major challenges is how to tailor the present curricula to the demand of the industry, the national demands, and in the global setting. Hence, the need to re-assess and re-evaluate the present curriculum of institutions of the country to ensure that they are ready for the 21st century and at the same time comply with the regulations set by the Commission on Higher Education (COHE).

The Urgency to Meet the Needs of the 21st Century

The changing environment in business, teaching, learning, public sector policies, and regulations have inculcated pressures that require action and responses within the appropriate and desired time. Along with these necessary changes are development and challenges that need to be linked between theory learned from education and real-life scenarios (Kearns, 2014; Majgaard et al., 2016; Pedersen and Jensen, 2007; Van der Meer and Marks, 2016; Van der Meer and Ringeling, 2010). In most cases, students, for instance, learned the nature of their jobs in their workplaces through experience and the support of colleagues helping them to learn and improve but did not realize the importance

of applying the learned theory into practice. This becomes more complicated when students are promoted in their jobs where it requires higher responsibilities, accountabilities, and decision making. The study of Reichard and Schroter (2018) postulated that efforts should be done to develop the students' ability for long-life learning, which means that continuous updates should be done on program and curriculum design, content and approaches of curriculum, and linking theory into practice in the delivery of curriculum, although they acknowledge that doing such things cannot be done overnight.

In the study by Van der Meer and Marks (2018) titled "An Agenda for Rethinking Mid-Career Master Programs in Public Administration", they pointed out that updating or changing curriculum can be brought about by three reasons: (1) societal development; (2) the general structure of academic teaching programs; and (3) outdated programs that no longer match the demand in the workplace. Societal developments encompass recent trends in public organizations related to strategic plans and programs and new governance approaches. While changes in the structural aspect of teaching may include requirements by accrediting bodies, institutional demands, changing requirements and the like, MPA has needs that require matching theory with practice in learning. Congruent to this study, the examination and evaluation of the present curriculum are endeavored to prepare the MPA/MPSE program to the demands of the 21st century.

Bridging the gap between theory and practice in Public Administration and Public Management

In the study of Elias (2020) titled "Phenomenology in Public Administration: Bridging the Theory-Practice Gap", she stressed that studying phenomenology enables administrators and executives to bridge the gap between the theory and practice in public administration because through applied phenomenology they will be able to develop an in-depth understanding that situations or phenomena depend on different knowledge and an epistemology which she believed fosters democratic public administration. The phenomenology concepts dealt with the focus on "Situations as they occur" thus, undermining the idea of pure experience and rather emphasized decisions based on what is the current situation. Stivers (2018, p. 201) reinforced the work of Mary Follett by making a case for "situational thinking in public administration" wherein she emphasized the concept of responding during the situations as they occur rather than controlling them. However, this literature is more applicable to the governance of the administrators in public organizations but is still to be proven in educational institutions where the focus is on delivering a public administration and public management curriculum to the students. Stivers (2018) also ironed out that the public administrators were generally confined with past experiences as the basis for governance, thus, she affirms the study of Elias by trying to introduce phenomenology as a concept to reckon with the public administrators.

Much of the research into public administration and social sciences has become too general, rather than focusing on the specific context, with scholars pro-

ducing research outputs from grants and awards. It has become a production machine that has resulted in research outcomes with little relevance and applicability into practice (Piccorelli and Zingale, 2018). Furthermore, the state of competition and the prestige of publications were given much attention, rather than emphasizing the significant impact of the studies on the benefits of the stakeholders (Harmon, 2006). Farmer (2010) also found that because of the low impact of studies on public administration and governance, theories and frameworks remain to be disconnected from the realm of practice which makes the scholarly publications become irrelevant in policy and decision making. In this context, the public administration is in dire need of a scientific approach that will address the question “how?” to get results by approaching the current situation and providing solutions as much as possible. When applied to this study, the central issue dealt with how to offer the best curricula that will deliver better and justifiable outcomes through offering public management programs that suit the needs of stakeholders in the 21st century in the Philippine setting.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive and status trend approach. According to Garcia et. al. (2011), this method describes the present, reveals the relationship that exists or does not exist, practices that prevail or do not prevail, beliefs or points of view, or attitudes or held or not held, or trends that are developed. The study commenced with analyzing and evaluating the existing MPA curricula in terms of concerns, purposes, objectives, subject offered, number of units required, and types of research done in the schools offering the subject. Primary data were obtained from a two-part questionnaire which was completed by the Vice President, the Dean of the Graduate School, three senior faculty members and at least five graduate students enrolled in the study school's MPA Public Sector Management Program. All schools in the country offering courses in MPA were sent copies of the questionnaire by courier or mail. Using the Delphi Method, only schools with accomplished questionnaires retrieved were subsequently given another set of questionnaires. And only those who replied to the second questionnaires were provided the third questionnaire enclosing the proposal MPA/PSME curriculum.

To determine the population and sample size, the target population were all the Graduate Schools in the country offering courses/granting degrees in public administration / public sector management at graduate level. The survey sample respondents were identified through applying the Slovin formula which then included: 1) VPAA, 2) Graduate School Dean, 3) Senior Graduate School faculty in public administration management, and 4) Graduate students in public administration for each participating educational institution, of which 44 were in Luzon, 10 in the Visayas, and 12 in Mindanao. There were 66 schools in the researchers' first mailing list. Out of the 66, only a total of 48 schools responded. The same 66 schools were sent the second questionnaire but only 46 schools responded. Of the 46 school respondents sent the third questionnaire, only 38 responded. Moreover, the questionnaires

were the instruments used to respond to the different problems on public administration education, particularly the question relative to discrepancy between theory practice, as well as the relationship between the responsiveness of the curriculum and the roles of public administration educators, practitioners, and students.

Since the study is a three-stage survey, data collection was made by sending formal letters to Deans and VPAAAs of 66 Graduate Schools Universities in the Philippines offering MPA. The Graduate School Deans and Vice-Presidents for Academics Academic Affairs of 48 schools (72% response) sent back their respective curriculum, which would show the objectives and purposes of the MPA curriculum in terms of 1) Knowledge; 2) Skills; 3) Values/Attitudes as well as the subjects/ courses in their curricula. Furthermore, in determining the purpose/ objectives of the graduate schools surveyed, a documentary analysis technique was used. The technique enabled the researcher to gather information from the bulletin of information and brochures mailed by the respondents and to analyze it. The different objectives found and contained in their brochures were further classified by the researcher accordingly and grouped along with knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes. This is to avoid repetition. Objectives drawn from the various MPA/PSME prospectuses were then sent to 4 groups of respondents.

Finally, data analysis was undertaken using SPSS version 21 to analyze the quantitative part of this study that consists of frequencies, percentages, regression, and ANOVA based on the research objectives and the hypotheses developed.

Data analysis

Based on the collected data, the analysis was done using the statistical tools as previously mentioned. The order of analysis is presented hereunder.

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents According to Group

Respondents	Population	Those who responded	%
Administrators	132	69	52
Faculty	198	112	56.5
Practitioners	76	76	100
Students	330	188	56.9
Total	736	445	60.4

Sources: Compiled by the author based on his own research.

Four groups of respondents were taken, consisting of administrators (n=69), faculty (n=112), practitioners (n=76), and students (76). Out of 736, only 445 participants responded and were considered as final respondents.

Table 2

**Distribution of Respondents by Age, Gender, Education,
Position, and Years of Service**

Variable	Administrators	Faculty	Practitioners	Students	Total
1. Age Range	<i>F %</i>	<i>F %</i>	<i>F %</i>	<i>F %</i>	<i>F %</i>
0≤25				30 15.96	30 6.74
26–35	7 10.14	9 8.04		115 61.17	131 29.44
36–45	5 7.25	22 19.64	62 81.58	30 15.96	119 26.74
≥46	57 82.61	81 72.32	14 18.42	13 6.91	165 37.08
<i>Total</i>	<i>69 100.00</i>	<i>112 100.00</i>	<i>76 100.00</i>	<i>188 100.00</i>	<i>445 100.00</i>
2. Gender					
Male	22 31.88	89 79.46	41 53.95	92 48.94	244 54.83
Female	47 68.12	23 20.54	35 46.05	96 51.06	201 45.17
<i>Total</i>	<i>69 100.00</i>	<i>112 100.00</i>	<i>76 100.00</i>	<i>188 100.00</i>	<i>445 100.00</i>
3. Education					
Master-Units	2 2.90	12 10.71	30 39.47	188 100.00	218 48.99
Masters	2 2.90	70 62.50	30 39.47		44 9.89
PhD-Units	65 94.20	30 26.79	16 21.06		88 19.78
PhD					95 21.34
<i>Total</i>	<i>69 100.00</i>	<i>112 100.00</i>	<i>76 100.00</i>	<i>188 100.00</i>	<i>445 100.00</i>
4. Position					
Teacher	1 1.40	3 2.70	16 21.05	6 3.20	9 2.02
Principal			31 40.79	1 .50	2 .45
Director	1 1.40				16 3.60
Supervisor		10 8.90		80 42.60	122 27.41
Instructor	34 49.30	25 22.30	29 38.16	48 25.50	73 16.40
Dean					34 7.64
Manager		56 50.00		16 8.50	101 22.70
Heads	33 47.90	12		7 3.70	19 4.27
PAA					33 7.42
Others		6 5.40		30 16.00	36 8.09
<i>Total</i>	<i>69 100.00</i>	<i>112 100.00</i>	<i>76 100.00</i>	<i>188 100.00</i>	<i>445 100.00</i>
5. Yrs-Service					
0≤5	1 1.45	8 7.14	50 65.79	50 26.60	59 13.26
6–10	4 5.80	9 8.04	20 26.32	75 39.89	138 31.01
11–15	10 14.49	14 12.50	6 7.89	34 18.09	78 17.53
16–20	10 14.49	42 37.50		17 9.04	75 16.85
≥21	44 63.77	39 34.82		12 6.38	95 21.35
<i>Total</i>	<i>69 100.00</i>	<i>112 100.00</i>	<i>76 100.00</i>	<i>188 100.00</i>	<i>445 100.00</i>

Sources: Compiled by the author based on his own research.

Based on the distribution of the respondents' profiles in the four groups in Table 2, it can be summarized that based on age, most of the administrators are over 46 years

old (82.61%) as were most faculty (72.36%), while most of the practitioners (81.58%) belong to the 36–45 age bracket and the majority of the students (61.17%) were within the 26–35 age bracket. When classified according to gender, 68% of the administrators were female but 79.46 of the faculty were male; 53.95% of practitioners were male and 51.06% of the students were female. Based on education, most administrators were PhD holders (94.20%) while most faculty possessed PhD units (62.50%); practitioners were both masters and Master’s levels; and students had Master’s units (100%). However, in terms of position, the highest respondents for administrators were deans (49.30%); 50% for managers; supervisor for practitioners with 40.79%; and, also supervisor for student respondents (42.60%). And, with regards to the years of service, most of the administrators served the company for more than 21 years (63.77%) while for faculty most have served for 16–20 years (37.50%); practitioners have 6–10 years (65.79%); and students with also 6–10 years in service (39.89%).

Table 3

Respondents’ Perception of the Present MPA/PSME Curriculum in Terms of Knowledge Objectives

Knowledge Objectives	Admini- strator		Faculty		Practitio- ners		Students		Overall		
	WM	R	WM	R	WM	R	WM	R	WM	VI	R
1. Provide administrators, supervisors, researchers and faculty with a broad theoretical / technical background in planning implementation and evaluation of both the public and private organization	4.89	2	4.82	1	4.81	3	4.70	2	4.80	SA	1
2. Sharpens students’ grasp of current trends and issues/ problems in national local government	4.90	1	4.78	3	4.80	4.5	4.68	4.5	4.79	SA	2.5
3. Intensify students’ awareness of the changing social economics, political and cultural perspective	4.83	3.5	4.81	2	4.82	2	4.70	2	4.79	SA	2.5
4. Hasten future executives’ knowledge on research and policy making	4.78	3.5	4.75	4.5	4.83	1	4.68	6	4.76	SA	5
5. Provide students with an overall view of managing a public sectors concern	4.83	3.5	4.75	4.5	4.80	4.5	4.68	4.5	4.77	SA	4
6. Introduce the students to quality and innovative management of government agencies and educational institution	4.78	5.5	4.74	6	4.71	6	4.70	2	4.73	SA	6
WEIGHTED MEAN (WM)	4.83		4.78		4.79		4.89		4.77 (SA)		

Sources: Compiled by the author based on his own research.

Table 3 displays the respondents' feedback on the questions on knowledge objectives and results depict that most of the responses in general strongly agree (SA) on the present curriculum in terms of knowledge. The highest 'strongly agree' responses from administrators dealt with the question regarding "Sharpens the students grasp of current trends and issues/problems in national local government", which would likely entail that the present MPA/MPSE addresses the issues and problems that reflect the national local government and thus, are tailored to the students' needs. On the other hand, the highest 'strong agreement' for faculty was observed in the statement "Provide administrators, supervisors, researchers, and faculty with a broad theoretical/technical background in planning implementation and evaluation of both the public and private organization".

Practitioners strongly agree that the MPA/MPSE curriculum "Hasten the future executive's knowledge on research and policymaking" and, for the students also "Provide administrators, supervisors, researchers, and faculty with a broad theoretical/technical background in planning implementation and evaluation of both the public and private organization". These findings only showed that the implementation of MPA/MPSE at the national level are competitive in terms of knowledge as well as providing the necessary ingredients to ensure that the knowledge objectives are tackled at all levels of learning for the students.

Table 4

Respondents' Perception of the present MPA/PSME Curriculum in Terms of Development of Skills

Development Skills	Admini- strator		Faculty		Practitio- ners		Students		OVERALL		
	WM	R	WM	R	WM	R	WM	R	WM	VI	R
1. Strengthen leadership skills of managers/ administrators.	4.84	3	4.81	1	4.80	7.5	4.71	3	4.79	SA	1.5
2. Raise the standard and administrative performance of leader and administrators	4.86	1	4.79	2.5	4.75	8	4.74	1	4.79	SA	1.5
3. Harness students' technical and research skills	4.85	2	4.77	2.5	4.82	2.5	4.58	5	4.76	SA	4
4. Develop the students' skills in formulating, implementing and evaluating policies, and development plans to arrive at a sound decision/judgment	4.82	5.5	4.79	2.5	4.81	4.5	4.72	2	4.78	SA	3

Development Skills	Admini- strator		Faculty		Practitio- ners		Students		OVERALL		
	WM	R	WM	R	WM	R	WM	R	WM	VI	R
5. Develop students' capabilities to acquire skills necessary to build up area of public policy, public entrepreneurship, information technology finance and international relations	4.83	4	4.77	5.5	4.82	2.5	4.52	7	4.73	SA	6.5
6. Equip the students' critical thinking and communication skills for high level decision making in business management	4.79	7.5	4.78	4	4.80	7.5	4.63	4	4.75	SA	5
7. Develop the students' critical thinking and communication skills for high level decision making in business management	4.79	7.5	4.76	7.5	4.81	4.5	4.54	6	4.72	SA	8
8. Hone their skills in human/ interpersonal relations	4.82	5.5	4.76	7.5	4.83	1	4.49	8	4.73	SA	6.5
9. Develop the academic and professional and non-teaching personal and assistant officer	4.76	9	4.69	9	4.75	9	4.47	9	4.67	SA	9
WEIGHTED MEAN (WM)	4.82		4.77		4.80		4.60		4.75 (SA)		

Sources: Compiled by the author based on his own research.

Further evaluation was done to assess the respondents' perceptions of the present MPA/MPSE curriculum in terms of developing the skills in Table 4. Key results reflect that all four groups (Administrator, Faculty, Practitioners, Students) strongly agree that the present curriculum possesses development skills for the students. Specifically, the highest 'strong agreement' by the administrators was observed on the statement that the present curriculum "Raise the standard and administrative performance of leaders and administrators" while faculty unanimously expressed the highest 'strong agreement' on the statement "Strengthen leadership skills of managers/ administrators". These responses only proved that the present MPA/MPSE curriculum in the Philippines contributes greatly to the development of the students' skills as perceived by administrators and faculties. Furthermore, practitioners' responses provide 'strong agreement' on the statement that the present curriculum "Hone their skills in human/ interpersonal relations". Lastly, students perceived the present curriculum with their highest 'strong agreement' on "Raise the standard and administrative performance of leaders and administrators".

Table 5

Respondents' Perception of the Present MPA/PSME Curriculum in Terms of Values/Attitudes

Values/Attitudes	Admini- strator		Faculty		Practitio- ners		Students		Overall		
	WM	R	WM	R	WM	R	WM	R	WM	VI	R
1. Inculcate a high degree of professionalism and scholastic traits, nurtured with moral principles. Love of God and fellow men	4.18	1	4.79	4	4.71	6	4.60	4	4.02	SA	3
2. Develop the students' ability to propel the development of rural and urban workers sectors in a determined spirit of self-reliance	4.12	4	4.75	5.5	4.59	1.5	4.71	5	4.63	SA	4
3. Help the students appreciate the necessary values in professionalizing the bureaucracy	4.12	4	4.50	3	4.76	4.5	4.48	4	4.61	SA	5
4. Develop moral character, personal discipline, and nationalism for aesthetic and cultural heritage	4.13	2	4.31	2	4.81	3	4.84	2	4.65	SA	1
5. Develop social consciousness thru participation in extension services	3.95	6	4.75	5.5	4.89	1.5	4.80	1	4.62	SA	3
6. Heightens students' ethical standards in work performance	4.12	4	4.32	1	4.76	4.5	4.61		4.59	SA	6
WEIGHTED MEAN (WM)	4.11		4.79		4.80		4.30		4.63	(SA)	

Sources: Compiled by the author based on his own research.

Table 5 depicts the respondents' perception of the present MPA/MPSE curriculum in terms of values and attitudes. Likewise, in general, the rating is strongly disagreed with by the four groups which basically indicates that the present curriculum contributes and addresses concerns regarding values and attitudes. The highest 'strong agreement' of administrators and faculty dwelt on the statement "Inculcate a high degree of professionalism and scholastic traits, nurtured with moral principles.

Love of God and fellow men" while practitioners consider the highest 'strong agreement' on "Develop social consciousness through participation in extension services". Finally, the students' highest 'strong agreement' is on "Develop moral character, personal discipline and nationalism for aesthetic and cultural heritage".

Table 6

Extent of the Gap Between Theory and Practice as Perceived by the Administrators, Faculty, Practitioners, and Students

Extent of Gap	Administrators		Faculty		Practitioners		Students		Total
	F	VE	F	VE	F	VE	F	VE	
VME (>4.51)	4	Some Extent	14	Some Extent	18	Some Extent	31	Some Extent	67
ME (3.51- 4.50)	12		22		20		60		131
SE (2.51-3.50)	0		3		10		4		17
LE (1.51-2.50)	55		81		26		80		242
VLE (0.51-1.50)	0		1		2		2		5
Total	71		121		76		177		445

Sources: Compiled by the author based on his own research.

On the objective that measures the extent of the gap between theory and practice as perceived by the four groups of respondents, Table 6 revealed that all the four groups generally responded that the gap experienced is only to some extent. This may mean that there is no major gap or differences in what has been stated in the curriculum against what is happening in the actual workplace. The curriculum is tailored to the needs and job requirements in businesses in the national setting. If there are variations, this can be considered minimal and can be appropriately addressed.

Table 7

Problems encountered by schools offering the program and the program faculties in public management education

Indicators	Admin		Faculty		Practitioners		Students	
	F	Rank	F	Rank	F	Rank	F	Rank
1. Limited Budget	63	1	110	1	27	1	162	1
2. Unavailability of professors	21	3	33	4	10	3.5	82	3
3. Inadequacy of updated materials	57	2	105	2	10	3.5	149	2
4. Poor Enrollment	18	4	35	3	11	2	59	6
5. Schedule of classes	7	8	25	6	3	8	67	4
6. Professor without professional training	14	6	21	7	1	9	60	5
7. Limited Course Offering	16	5	29	5	5	6	49	7
8. Merging courses of doctoral and masters	8	7	22	8	5	6	42	8
9. Others	0	9	3	9	5	6	6	9

Sources: Compiled by the author based on his own research.

Table 7 depicts the problems commonly encountered by the schools offering the MPA/MPSE program and the faculties in public management education. In order of priority, the four groups acknowledged that the top problem on their priority list focused on a limited budget, followed by the inadequacy of updated materials. The third challenge is focused on the unavailability of professors. The limited budget of colleges and universities which can be attributed to small colleges is likely to hamper the operation of the program and facilities that may also reflect limited resources in terms of inadequacy of updated materials. Moreover, for large colleges and universities, looking for professors specializing in the program does not pose a challenge, however, for small colleges and universities, the program requires quite a few professors, who in most cases are usually hard to find. All other challenges as mentioned entail the need for the institutions offering the program to be apprehensive about the incurrence of these problems so that time actions and plans shall be put into place for addressing these needs.

Table 8

Regression analysis on relationships between the perceptions of the respondents on the present curriculum and their profile

Demographic Variables	B	SE B	β	t	p
Constant	0.369	0.188		3.312	0.026
Educational Attainment	1.122	0.221	0.864	5.662	0.000
Age	0.423	0.195	0.403	2.996	0.023
Gender	0.130	0.141	0.124	0.436	0.282
Position	0.524	0.203	0.506	4.221	0.001
Service in Years	0.085	0.182	0.103	0.265	0.633

Sources: Compiled by the author based on his own research.

Comments: $R^2 = .628$ ($n = 445$), $F = 75.132$, $\text{Sig.} = .000$

**Significant at $p < .01$ level; *Significant at $p < .05$ level

Table 8 depicts the testing of the relationship between demographic variables of the respondents' and the present MPA/MPSE curriculum. The R^2 showed that 62.8% of the variation in the dependent variable, which is the present curriculum, can be explained by independent variables such as educational attainment, age, gender, position, and years in service. The F value is 75.132 and the p-value of the statistical model is 0.000 which indicates that the model is statistically significant.

Moreover, the outcome of the regression coefficient prevailed three variables that significantly impact the present curriculum with standardized betas values of educational attainment ($\beta=0.864$, $p=0.000$); age ($\beta=0.403$, $p=0.023$); and position ($\beta=0.524$, $p=0.001$). On the other hand, gender ($\beta=0.130$, $p=0.282$) and years in ($\beta=0.085$, $p=0.633$) have no significant impact on the present curriculum.

Table 9

Significant Difference in the Perceptions of the Gap Between Theory and Practice by the School Administrators, Faculty, Practitioners, and Students

Extent of Gap	Administrators		Faculty		Practitioners		Students		Total
	F	p-value	F	p-value	F	p-value	F	p-value	
VME (≥ 4.51)	4	0.031	14	0.045	18	0.012	31	0.613	67
ME (3.51- 4.50)	12		22		20		60		131
SE (2.51-3.50)	0		3		10		4		17
LE (1.51-2.50)	55		81		26		80		242
VLE (0.51-1.50)	0		1		2		2		5
Total	71		121		76		177		445

Sources: Compiled by the author based on his own research.

When testing the significant difference in the perceptions of the four groups on the gap between the theory and practice of public administration education, the data displayed, using the One-Way ANOVA, that administrators ($p=0.031$) faculty ($p=0.045$), and practitioners ($p=0.012$) differ in their perceptions towards theory and practice while the students ($p=0.613$) did not find a significant difference between theory and practice in education. In other words, the administrators, faculty, and practitioners recognize that the gap that exists between the theory and practice can be attributed to many factors and causes and that aside from the fact that there is a gap between the theory and practice, they express different perceptions on the causes of such differing opinions.

Findings and Conclusion

This study aimed at investigating the present curriculum of the MPA/MPSE curriculum in regard to 21st century needs. Based on the responses and the statistical analysis findings from the data generated from four groups of respondents, the findings revealed that the extent of responsibility of the school administrators, faculty, practitioners, and students is very high thereby indicating 'strongly agree' responses. The results also expressed the readiness of the colleges and universities offering MPA/MPSE throughout the Philippines to face the challenges of 21st century needs in terms of public administration education. However, in the aspect of assessing the extent of the gap between the theory and practice of public administration as perceived by school administrators, faculty, practitioners, and students, all the responses declared the extent of the gap to some extent. However, when examined using appropriate statistical tools to test the significant difference of the perceptions of the four group respondents on the gap between the theory and practice of public administration, the findings displayed significant differences in the perceptions of school administra-

tors, faculty, and practitioners, while no significant difference in perception was experienced by master students.

Although the extent of the gap is identified to some extent, that extent is represented by a significant difference in the three groups of respondents as mentioned above. The non-significant difference in the perceptions of the Master Students' who responded is attributable to the non-realization of applying the theories learned in education into actual situations in the workplace. This could pose a problem to the students considering that based on the findings, many of the students possess a supervisory role in their respective jobs and thus, are involved in making decisions from time to time. Knowledge of the theories help greatly in devising ways to solve work-related problems and in dealing with subordinates. For instance, leadership roles in managing employees under supervision.

Hence, the gap, if left unattended, will potentially develop a barrier in the successful implementation and sustainability of the MPA/MPSE program. Such differing opinions may create complexity in managing the public administration program. Furthermore, problems are identified clearly by colleges and universities offering the public administration programs and program faculties and these include the top three challenges namely: limited budget, the inadequacy of updated materials, and unavailability of professors. Other challenges, in no particular order, include poor enrollment, schedule of classes, limited course offerings, professor without professional training, and the merging of doctoral and Master's courses. To meet the needs of the 21st century, these challenges needed to be addressed, especially the limited budget which affects almost entirely the larger part of colleges and the university's operations, and as it relates to the other problems faced. This entails the concerned colleges and universities allocating sufficient budgets which correspond to the change initiatives and program plans directed towards the 21st-century teaching and learning environment. Less emphasis on these areas would generally hamper any initiatives to improve and become relative to 21st-century learning.

In testing the relationship between the respondents' demographic variables and the present MPA/MPSE curriculum, the outcome demonstrated the significant relationship of educational attainment, age, and position on the utilization of the present curriculum. These imply that the increase in educational attainment of respondents allows them to internalize the importance and relevance of MPA/MPSE towards the needs of the 21st century and, likewise. Older respondents are likely to understand the relationship of the present curriculum towards the 21st century. Natural tendencies often dictate that older individuals possess emotional maturity and are more capable of making decisions. Also, this position relates significantly with the present curriculum primarily because of the need to learn the theories and curricular offerings that best suit the needs of workplace decision making. Conversely, gender and years of service have no significant bearing on the utilization of the present curriculum.

Lastly, owing to the mandate of the Commission on Higher Education standards towards continuous updating of the curriculum that suits the demands of the 21st century and based on the findings of the study, the researchers devel-

oped the proposed curriculum. This curriculum in conformity with the Commission on Higher Education standards consists of the following: 1. Core/Professional Orientation (12 units), Theory and Practice of Governance (3 units), Human Behavior in Organization (3 units), Leadership and Organization change (3 units), Administrative Laws (3 units); 2. Research and Evaluation (6 units), Quantitative Methods of Management and Statistics (3 units), Research Techniques (3 units); 3. Major Subjects (15 units), any of the following: Economic Development (3 units), Development Administration (3 units), Communication and Information Management (3 units), Public Management Issues (3 units), Ethics and Accountability in the Public Service (3 units), Environmental Management (3 units), 4. Thesis Writing (6 units). To date, the researchers have found it difficult to find related literature that neither affirms, confirms, nor contradicts these findings. Hence, the researchers conclude that these findings are unique and can be subjected to further studies and investigations.

Given this mandate, the MPA/PSME curriculum must properly the conditions posed by the changes in the Third Millennium and effect a paradigm shift that will find articulation in a new philosophy mission/vision as well as the programs that will operationalize the mission/vision. The development of the curriculum specific to the challenges of the 21st century will provide a common ground for mutual learning and networking among schools offering public sector management education, as well as opportunities for networking between scholars, practitioners, and students in public administration.

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