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PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION ISSUES

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The PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION ISSUES journal has been published at the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE) in Moscow, Russian Federation since 2007.

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.

The following key issues are addressed:

- The theory and practices of the public administration;
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- The analyses of experts;
- The discussions;
- Case Studies;
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The journal is meant for analysts and researchers as well as workers in the public and municipal administration, for academic purposes and for a wider readership interested in current status and development of the system of public and municipal administration in the Russian Federation and abroad.

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INTRODUCTION

Modern trends in public administration development are characterized by diversification, an increase in the number and variety of country governance practices, and attempts to identify new public administration theories that better fit these practices. This applies in particular to developing countries which join or about to join such associations that are most conducive to the protection of their distinctive national interests. The attractiveness of the BRICS is both a consequence and a reason for the diversification of governance practices: a consequence because in the BRICS some countries do not impose their vision of governance on others, cherish their national management traditions and strive to work together despite their differences; a reason because it is easier for BRICS members and aspiring BRICS members to diversify their governance practices, focus on their own interests, and feel supported by other BRICS countries. This is a radical difference between the BRICS and such interstate associations, which subordinate the governance practices of their member countries and adjust their practices to uniform standards.

This issue of the Journal attempts to analyze what governance practices exist in the BRICS countries, how they differ from each other, what are the origins and current trends in governance practices, and what theoretical concepts these practices adhere to. The collection of articles in the Journal is based on the presentations at the plenary session of the BRICS Symposium on contemporary Administrative Reforms in the BRICS countries, held in October 2022 and dedicated to modern administrative reform trends in the BRICS countries. The articles are arranged in the order of the countries in the BRICS acronym, followed by an article on contemporary administrative reforms in Central and Eastern Europe as part of the EU, then on administrative reforms in countries interested in cooperating with BRICS up to the point of wanting to join BRICS, and finally, the issue concludes with an article on possible changes in the standard paradigms of public administration caused by the governance practices of developing countries. Thus, in this issue of the Journal, the sequence of articles is opposite to the usual order: the issue starts with a review and ends with a theory, rather than vice versa, when general theoretical articles are presented at the beginning and reviews follow at the end and are as if "subordinated" to the unified theories of public administration. With this reverse order of articles, we want to draw readers' attention to the phenomenon of diversity of new practices of country-level public administration in the BRICS and other countries, which requires understanding that goes beyond the common classical governance approaches, models, and paradigms.

The main trends in the BRICS countries' governance practices described in the publications of this issue of the Journal are the following:

- For each of the areas of governance reform in the BRICS countries and in other developing countries, there are significantly variated, up to oppositely directed, vectors of governance practices;
- The BRICS countries and other developing countries do not try to announce their governance practices as the best, do not insist that other countries copy these practices, and do not try to establish the hegemony of their practices. Note that the uneven perception of the EU governance standards by the countries of Central and Eastern Europe indirectly indicates that in this case, the country governance practices strive for self-preservation and national improvement. It seems that the BRICS countries and other developing countries potentially close to BRICS are looking at each other, learning from each other's diversity of practices, and believe that the strength of public administration lies in its diversity and friendly attitude to other practices;
- The BRICS and other developing countries do not strive to bring their governance practices into the "theoretic line", to subordinate these practices to standard models and paradigms of public administration. Rather, the models and paradigms are beginning to blur, to "adjust" to the BRICS countries' governance practices. Instead of a concentration of ideas inside the spectrum from Weber to Neo-Weberian, from NPM to NPG, and "vacuum" outside, one can observe clusters of promising ideas outside this spectrum, so to speak "nebulae", from which in the future "stars" of new theories and approaches will most likely be formed.

Issue Guest Editor
Alexey G. Barabashev

Review
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ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS IN THE BRICS AND CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE: IMPROVING GOVERNANCE AND GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

(REVIEW OF THE BRICS SYMPOSIUM, MOSCOW, 20–21 OCTOBER 2022)

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In 2013, in Shanghai a group of scholars from leading universities of the BRICS countries agreed on development of academic cooperation holding annual scientific events. In 2016, the expert group on public administration (PA) was launched. One of the main goals of the expert group was to hold annual symposia on the development and governance in the BRICS countries and to build a community of scholars who share a commitment to elaborate alternative models of development based on the BRICS experiences in its comparison with models proposed for and by other regions such as Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), Western Europe, North America and AUCUS.

Following the previous International Symposia held in Shanghai and São Paulo, the Fifth Symposium was hosted by the National Research University – Higher School of Economics (NRU HSE University) in Moscow, Russia. The aim of the Symposium was to explore the different approaches of BRICS and other countries to the reforms in their PA systems – which is any restructuring of the administrative part of the public sector in order to solve organizational and/or societal problems associated with its structure. The objective of this Symposium was to develop a comprehensive framework for building the policy and governance capacities of governments to improve their performance.

During the two-day symposium, more than 40 researchers from the BRICS countries and also from the CEE region, from the countries of South-East Asia, discussed the problems of strategic comparative analysis of public administration reforms in the BRICS countries and in the CEE region in recent violated times (plenary session), international projects management in the BRICS region, security and risk management, digitalization and provision of public services, and the assessment of public administration results in the BRICS countries. A special session of the Symposium was devoted to reviewing changes in public policies and governance in BRICS and other countries due to the pandemic spread of COVID-19. Possibilities for further cooperation between universities of the BRICS countries that can contribute to the development of public administration were also discussed.

The process of public administration reforms in the BRICS countries and in the CEE region has a lot in common, because almost all countries passed through the period of colossal social and political transformation, including the transition from socialism in Central and Eastern Europe, the crash of apartheid policy in South Africa and its reassurance as the democratic state, the collapse of the Soviet Union and establishing of Russia as the powerful actor of International order, the fast and miracle breakout of China and India into the group of economic and political World leaders. For these reasons the re-shaping of public administration (PA) towards service public oriented paradigms of PA became the necessity. The social and economic specifics of the development of BRICS countries are granting that the application of existed theories should differ from "standard" Western approaches of implementation of those theories. It is proved by the history of already executed public administration reforms in the BRICS countries.

The symposium started with a plenary session, which was devoted to the comparative strategic analysis of public administration reforms in the BRICS countries and in the CEE region. Some speakers of the plenary session kindly agreed to provide their presentations with the articles, so we will describe their talks briefly, while other plenary presentations will be given in more detail.

The strategic vision of waves of public administration development in CEE countries which became members of the European Union after 1990, was delivered by **J. Nemec** (Slovakia), the Chief Editor of the NISPAcee Journal of Public Administration and Policy. The main ideas of J. Nemec' presentation, briefly, can be described: The public administration reforms in the CEE region have passed two waves. The first wave was focused on reestablishment of democratic institutions and included the development of new types of parliaments and local self-governments. The second wave happened when the EU renewed its standards for the development of public administration. As some countries of the EU region appeared to be not complying with basic conditions of the EU membership, the EU provided financial support to conduct needed reforms.

Using the indicators of the quality of public administration, research shows, that only four new EU member states are above the EU average according to the World Bank government effectiveness indicator (WBGI). The detailed content of research is presented in the article in this Special Issue, written by Professor J. Nemec based on his presentation during the Symposia.

Professor **J. de Oliviera** (Brazil, Fundação Getulio Vargas) conducted research about public administration development in Brazil. His article is also included in the Special Issue, in the review we marked the key points of his research. The speaker described the history of PA reforms in Brazil and highlighted the most important stages: For the most part of the 20th century, the process was influenced by ideas of Weber, which meant the widespread adoption of bureaucratic administration in the government bodies of the country. From 1945 to 1964, new political philosophy was developed. It was called "National developmentalism". It emerged during the period when the State pushed for rapid industrialization of the country. From 1985 to 1992, the Brazilian government proposed reforms to abandon the philosophy of "National developmentalism" in public administration, as the implementation of this theory in practice led to economic stagnation and high inflation. To improve the situation, the government adopted the ideas of New Public Management along with the liberalization of the economy and gave more responsibilities to the states and municipalities, leading a growth of public administration in these entities. From 1992 to 2002, the Brazilian government entered the new era of management, which also meant that the approach of bureaucratization was no longer applied in public administration. Also, during this period of time there was a gradual reduction in the number of public employees. The process of economic liberalization was ended and the number of public employees sharply increased. The speaker emphasized that the philosophy of "National developmentalism" was back in use. However, this trend ended in 2016–2017 because of the economic crisis, which led to renewed economic liberalization. De Oliviera mentioned that the decentralization process occurred fast, with great fervor, resulting in coordination and decision-making gaps in intergovernmental relations. In addition, there was a push to develop E-Government. Nowadays, Brazil is one of the leaders in the implementation of electronic public administration.

A. Barabashev and **A. Klimenko** (Russia), Professors of the National Research University "Higher School of Economics", conducted research about changes in directions of administrative and social reforms that occurred in Russia during the year 2022 as the turning point between COVID epoch and Ukrainian conflict. The direction of performance management was influenced at that time by the greater emphasis on resilience and security. There was a trend of changing the priority of tasks taking into account geopolitics and import substitution. Henceforth, the need to develop new approaches toward public administration in conditions of uncertainty has emerged. The authors mention the trend toward digitalization of planning. It included the creation of a platform for determining management decisions, monitoring and control as well as risk management based on a single network of distributed data. The authors emphasize the further optimization of mandatory requirements and strengthen evidence-based and risk-based approaches that are needed in public administration. The presenters mentioned that there are significant changes in the direction of public servants' motivation: the patriotic mode of motivation became the prevailed last year instead of prosocial and professional motivation. The authors found out that in Russia there was a simplification of KPI. In addition, the balance of budgeting for civil, military and law enforcement servants shifted in favor to military and law enforcement servants.

Professor **A. Basu** (Governing Council, Centre for Environmental Management and Participatory Development, India) presented research about reform initiatives that were held in India and their consequent impact.

The proposed reforms were intended to change the role of the bureaucracy focusing on good governance, adopting the introduction of e-governance and empowering citizens. In 2014, "e-Samiksha" was introduced, and it was also revamped in 2020. This is an Indian government Internet website bolstered Information and Communication Technology (ICT) culture within the Government, speeds up monitoring and compliance with a large number of action points, reduces the time taken to deliver services and helps reduce pending issues through a single window interface. Another project is "e-Office". Its goal is to improve government process and service delivery by introducing an electronic file system. This is one of the reasons why India is classified as a 'High' EGDI country according to UN E-Governance Survey-2020. The speaker studied one of the Indian programs which is called 'Karmayogi'. It aims to educate civil service officers to be more creative, constructive, innovative and technology enabled. Indian digital transformation contributed significantly to the construction of e-government and e-administration, which has facilitated the transformation of the administration from a "rules-based to a role-based" model.

Professor **Y. Jing** (China), Editor-in-Chief of the Journal "Global Public Policy and Governance", and the Director of the Center for Collaborative Governance Research at Fudan University, presented a talk about public administration reforms in China. The speaker mentions that the development of these reforms was influenced by the Confucian philosophy, a three-decade practice of planned economy and a shift to marketization and globalization after 1978. Jing emphasizes that the reforms that were conducted in China after 1978 enlarged both the similarities and the differences between Chinese and Western public administration.

Historically, the pendulum between politicization and professionalization swung back and forth. Since 2013 the modernization of the state governance system was conducted. The boundaries between administrative and party organizations got further blurred. The reforms demonstrate that there is a trend in China to strengthen the party-state regime and political leadership. He also mentions policy, which is aimed to delegate powers to local governments. Deregulation and regulation were simultaneously promoted in China. Other policies in the field of public administration were implemented to improve the accountability of government agencies for various errors, low performance and managerial operation. To achieve these goals responsibilities of each government body on all levels were clarified. Also, it was proposed to increase cooperation with external economic and social organizations. The last decade witnessed the rise of radical politicization to introduce systematic reforms. The speaker emphasizes that this may cause the loss of professional competence of the bureaucracy and finally harm its technical rationality and quick response. The speaker mentions the decline of high-powered incentives as a key challenge to Chinese public administration because it could systematically constrain the vitality of the system and subsequently its competence and coordination of the system of public administration. It would be a difficult task to equalize the quality of government across China. Also, it is important to further encourage the participation of citizens in public administration because this will encourage the development of a civic society capable of self-governing and co-governing public affairs. Moreover, it will be important for government bodies in China to develop in accordance with the Fourth Industrial Revolution and to implement independent and risky institutional and organizational innovations.

The last, but not the least, Professor **C. Tapscott** (University of the Western Cape, South Africa) gave a presentation in the plenary session, and described the development of public administration in South Africa and the changes which occurred in this area after the cancellation of apartheid in 1994. Before 1994, South Africa was a unitary state based on the Westminster model, but with three levels of government: national, provincial and local. At the national level, there were separate administrative systems for Whites, Coloureds, and Indians. Local authorities limited powers and in many parts of the country there was no municipality. Key features of this type of government were its focus on the needs of the white minority and the unequal provision of services to the different races. It was also a weak state in terms of service provision. It was undemocratic, illegitimate, economically, and politically unsustainable.

After the end of apartheid in South Africa, a new Constitution was developed, which divided local public administration into three parts: local, provincial, and national. Each part was provided with a set of powers and responsibilities. A new approach to the development of municipalities was introduced – a wall-to-wall local government system. A municipality was given the right to govern, on its own initiative, the local government affairs of its community. This means that while national and provincial governments may supervise the functioning of local government, this must be done without encroaching on the institutional integrity of local government. Professor Tapscott emphasize that it was a challenge to implement reforms of public administration in South Africa because policy makers did not have enough experience. Furthermore, the new Constitution was vague about how different levels of government would be integrated and coordinated, resulting in role confusion and unfunded mandates. The speaker mentions that the adoption of neo-liberal policies in the 1990s was accompanied by the adoption of New Public Management (NPM) as a mode of administration in the public sector. This included a focus on the privatization of many government services, outsourcing, and cost-recovery for the provision of public services.

Tapscott C. notes that the NPM negatively influenced the development of public administration in South Africa. It has weakened the capacity of the state when it should have been strengthened. The tendering of a wide range of public services has opened up opportunities for corruption in supply chains at all levels of government. There was also no understanding of accountability for failures in service delivery to citizens. In conclusion, Tapscott C. emphasizes that the task of creating a democratic, non-racial and equitable society was more difficult than expected. He notes that there is an urgent need to restore efficiency and effectiveness to the public sector in South Africa.

The first thematic session "Managing public administration in the post-COVID-19 world" contained six papers that were thematically divided into two parts. In the first part, the studies were focused on the problems of administrative structures during the COVID-19 pandemic considering the characteristics of the political systems of the BRICS countries. The second part of the session presented the results of studies on administrative issues in specific areas of social policy most affected by the pandemic. Studies presented covered employment, education, immigration, social support for residents, and other areas.

The first paper "China's model of mass mobilization under COVID-19 pandemic: A case study on publicity propaganda" is devoted to the study of the publicity propaganda model that has developed in China during COVID-19 pandemic. **Y. Lu** and **X. Xiao** (China Foreign Affairs University) study the Chinese experience of publicity propaganda as an approach aimed at achieving social mobilization during the pandemic. The research objective is to figure out what mechanism China established to achieve social mobilization in public health crises through discourse construction and ideological leadership since 2020.

The methodology was to analyze firstly the structural prerequisites, and then specific governance techniques in accordance with the organization theories of the New Public Administration school, based on discourse analyses of media texts. Sources of media texts included government online accounts at all levels, official media and We Media. "Social mobilization" and "publicity propaganda" are the key terms of the research, defined by the authors as follows: to illustrate the model of social mobilization in China, we analyzed the structural prerequisites of social and political organization in China, as well as specific management methods in accordance with the organizational theory of the school of new public administration. The source of information for discursive analysis was the texts of official media sources.

So, the authors presented three structural prerequisites of China's social mobilization that strongly influence the results of social mobilization. Firstly, this is the authoritarian leadership of the media, which means that the authorities are able to impose any political ideas on the audience at all levels of the state media. The second is Leadership and Supervision over the Media by the CPC (the Communist Party of China) that allows to fight effectively against rumors and provide the information selected for the public and which is supplement to the government. Third – the Identification People with Publicity-Propaganda, that is, with the increased role of public feedback in political decision-making, which is also reflected in the information materials of the official media. In practice, this may be expressed in the recognition of mistakes made or the expression of solidarity with the conditions for certain categories of citizens.

The researchers then presented three structural preconditions in China, which have a strong influence on the outcome of social mobilization. The first is authoritarian control, with government new media and government media platforms that can be used to coerce audiences at all levels. The second is the CCP's guidance and supervision of the media. This enables them to effectively fight rumors and provide information that is selected for masses and being a match to the government's vision. The third precondition concerns the increasing role of public feedback in political decision-making and is reflected in official media information materials: the "identification of the public with public relations and propaganda". In practice, it may be expressed as a recognition of mistakes or an expression of solidarity with the situation in which certain categories of citizens find themselves.

The results obtained in this study include three processes by which China mobilizes through public relations propaganda: distributive processes, meaning the construction of the social landscape; integrative processes, meaning the use of distributed media platforms; and socioemotional processes, considering the "war preparation" discourse. These processes are defined by the authors according to the organizational theory of the New School of Administration founded by H. George Frederickson.

The researchers detailed the impact of these processes on the outcome of social mobilization in China. For example, in constructing the social landscapes, they found that material symbols of the pandemic (such as Wuhan City, nucleic acid testing sites, mobile cabin hospitals, medical gowns and masks, health QR codes, etc.) and non-material symbols (for example, opinions of famous physicians and community members) helped the media strengthen social mobilization.

Analyzing the integrative process, the authors found that during the COVID-19 pandemic, publicity-propaganda in China was highly decentralized by various media: while mainstream media TV and official new media platforms remained the most reliable sources of information for Chinese users, users adhered most to WeChat (90.8%), followed by TV (78%), then Weibo (69.8%), news APPs (51.6%) and social platforms such as Tik Tok and Kuai Shou (47.3%). So, the decentralization of promotional information allowed more people to participate in the communication network, and it spread the will of the decision-makers as the common will of society, unifying interests and encouraging assimilation.

Finally, China's publicity-propaganda during the pandemic constructed a "war preparation" (Zhang and Wang, 2020) discourse that reinforced the control of the masses and their own self-consciousness by responding to collectivist cultural traditions and evoking historical memories of the struggle against aggression, and by turning COVID-19 into an enemy against the people and the government in order to strengthen the united front and sense of a community with a shared future between the government and the people.

Comparing the fight against pandemic to a war can greatly motivate people to comply with pandemic prevention measures on their own initiative. By constructing COVID -19 as a common enemy of the people and the government, China has promoted the fight against the virus as a war against an aggressive enemy, with war-related discourse appearing in almost every official media report.

In conclusion, the authors stated that the propaganda during the COVID-19 pandemic in China has created a benign and replicable mechanism of social mobilization.

The second paper was "Managing the health-economy paradox during the Covid-19 pandemic – governance challenges in India, Brazil and South Africa". **C. Tapscott**, **J. de Oliveira**, and **R. K. R. Kummitha** (Northumbria University). This article examined the issue of balancing policy priorities regarding public health maintenance and economic revitalization. The study noted that under normal circumstances these two sectors should be mutually reinforcing, but in the pandemic these priorities became contradictory. The authors called such a problem as "The Health-Economy Paradox". The authors therefore explored how the political and administrative systems of the three BRICS countries (India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) acted to reinforce the link between health and economic priorities during the pandemic.

As a theoretical justification, the work used the theory of Paradox and Foucault's concept of governability to explain how the three countries could overcome the contradiction they faced. Following the work of Bulkley et al. (2007) the authors used a mode of governing approach as encompassing the rationalities, entities, and technologies of governance that shaped the ways in which government policies were implemented.

Then the paper considered these modes to explain differences in the political and administration systems of IBSA countries. After that, the economic and health outcomes were compared to the pandemic management systems established in the countries studied.

First, the authors noted the difference in political preferences, called rationality, in response to The Health-Economy Paradox. The pandemic response policy in South Africa favored saving lives, so the country introduced strict quarantine measures. India had a similar approach, although opposition to national government policies later would arise. By contrast, in Brazil, health risks were downplayed and the government emphasized the importance of maintaining an open economy.

The researchers also found differences in terms of the organization of state structures responsible for combating the pandemic. So, in South Africa the response to the pandemic was very structured with a National Coronavirus Command Council reporting to the Presidency and implementation of policy overseen by a National Joint Operation Centre. The Indian federal government provided technical assistance, guidelines, and advisories to the state government. Brazil did not have a central authority to deal with the pandemic, but some state and municipal governments, together with civil society organizations played a significant role in combating the virus.

The authors concluded that (overcoming The Health-Economy Paradox) the political and administrative systems of Brazil, India, and South Africa in a pandemic were effective, based on the results obtained in terms of health and economic indicators.

The authors noted that the number of deaths per million in Brazil was 8 times that of India and nearly double that of South Africa. Despite South Africa's singular focus on health, it fared worse than India in its efforts to save lives.

In terms of the economy, Brazil has not fared better than the other two IBSA countries despite efforts to rescue the economy, perhaps due to pre-existing economic structural flaws, and continues to struggle with high inflation. The South African economy suffered severely in 2020 and 2021. The Indian economy suffered in 2020, but has since recovered significantly, although inflation has also increased.

So, the study showed, that none of the three countries managed to entirely resolve the health-economy paradox, although India appeared to be the most successful. In the case of South Africa and Brazil a focus on one dimension of the paradox ultimately resulted in a zero-sum outcome where neither public health, nor the economy were spared.

The third paper "COVID-19 and governance challenges for BRICS in post-COVID World. A framework for new COVID response strategy" by **H. Mishra** (New Delhi Television Ltd), presented at the first part of the session, was focused on the problem of the weak ability of public administration institutions especially Health Management Systems in BRICS countries to counter the covid-19 pandemic.

The study provides detailed comparative statistics on the impact of the pandemic on public health in the BRICS countries. The author notes important facts such as "while in India the number of people who were infected is almost 30 percent more than in Brazil but the number of people who died is I think around 30 percent more in the case of Brazil" or "there is some countries especially Brazil and South Africa where the number of people who died from COVID is alarmingly very high in comparison to other countries which had much better vaccination records".

Summing up the data on infected and dead from COVID, the author cited data in general for the BRICS countries. So, the total number of confirmed cases in BRICS countries is 113.2 million and the total confirmed deaths included 1.73 million. At the same time, the author noted that, in comparison with global values BRICS countries accounted for 18.1 percent of the total COVID cases officially recorded.

This essentially means that almost one in five people infected with COVID on earth lived in a BRICS country.

Citing this data, the author called for a collective response to the challenges of the pandemic at the level of the BRICS community of nations: "Given these very disturbing facts, the BRICS actually need a collective response strategy to combat such a pandemic in the future".

Part of the study reflected on the features of practical steps in the field of combating the consequences of the pandemic, using India as an example.

The author highlighted some shortcomings in the actions of state bodies in the fields of healthcare management, migration, social protection and education. Based on the results obtained, the author was additionally able to argue the expediency of developing collective actions at the BRICS level.

The presentation concluded with recommendations on the areas of joint action of the BRICS countries in the post-COVID future. In a general sense, the author noted that the BRICS member states need to formulate a new institutional framework for cooperation with each other and with the BRICS countries to collectively combat COVID-19 pandemic in the future.

Speaking about practical steps, the authors suggested to set up a COVID-19 response fund based on The New Development Bank. This could be used to strengthen Public Health institutions in areas affected by COVID in the BRICS countries. Himanshu Shekhar Mishra also pointed out the importance of cooperation in medical research, biotechnology, and other areas.

The fourth paper of the session devoted to the theme: "BRICS and youth unemployment in a post Covid-19 world" was presented by **L. C. van Jaarsveldt** (University of South Africa). The paper analyzes the dynamics of youth unemployment in the BRICS countries and examines the cases of India and South Africa on this issue in more detail. The current measures to support youth employment at the BRICS level and outline the need for their development, considering the specificities of the labor markets of the BRICS member countries, were presented.

The author indicated that compared to other age groups, young people had more difficulty saving or finding work during and after the pandemic. This is because this social category is more likely to work in industries where there are fewer opportunities for telecommuting, such as the food industry, the travel industry, and the service industry.

For the purposes of this study, young people were defined as persons between the ages of 15 and 24 in accordance with the views of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization and the World Bank. At the same time, the study also showed that in the BRICS countries, young people are primarily defined as people aged 15 to 29 years. However, in South Africa, this age ranges from 15 to 34 years, as some people struggled during the apartheid era and did not have the opportunity for development.

Analysis of the dynamics of the indicators shows that youth unemployment has risen in all BRICS countries. For example, in China, unemployment more than doubled between 2018 and 2021 (from 9.6% to 19.9%), and in South Africa, unemployment rose to 61.4% in the pandemic year of 2019.

This has resulted in negative social actions. For example, in 2022 protests erupted in India over the limited number of jobs available due to rising youth unemployment. The author states "There are limited posts, and millions of people are applying for 35,000 posts, so this resulted in the demonstrations and protests that took place against the Ministry of Railways." Similar episodes were also observed in South Africa.

In addition, the data presented prove that South Africa has the worst unemployment rate among the BRICS countries. In addition to the very high unemployment rate among the country's youth (61.4% among 15- to 24-year-olds), it is noted that 44.4% of them have lost hope of finding a job and have completely abandoned the job search. The author added that "One of three young people in South Africa between the age of 15 and 24 are disengaged with the labor market frustrated gave up on finding work. And according to statistics South Africa has over 10 million young people between the age of 15 and 24 and of them only 2.5 million is currently in the labor force or in the labor market".

Next, the author presented positive evaluation of existing measures aimed at supporting youth employment in South Africa (Expanded Public Works Program, National Youth Service Program, Tax incentive encouraging employers to hire young works, Annual Job summit) and at the BRICS level (for example, Russia-SA combined research projects on science, biology, space and medicine, China-SA Young Scientist Exchange Program, BRICS Youth Summit, BRICS Youth Forum, The BRICS Youth camp and others).

Therefore, the author concluded that further measures are needed to tackle the youth unemployment crisis in Europe, pledging to youth employment: "We have to think of ways to invest in our youth to make up for the past two years they have lost due to the pandemic, ways of creating programs for them to get the necessary skills and knowledge to enter the labor market with strengthened knowledge".

The fifth paper "Knocking your 'shocks' off! – inducing a regulated, positive economic shock" was presented by **V. Kumar** (speaker) and **S. Dash** (Jindal Global University). This study focused on the analysis of the macroeconomic effects of the pandemic. The authors also demonstrated the impact of some economic policy measures (for instance, reduction in bank interest rates and setting up price ceiling for essential commodities) on eliminating the negative socio-economic consequences of the pandemic.

The study is presented in the following steps: Effects of Covid-19, Steps for Positive Shock, BRICS Arrangement, Setting off Inflation, and Analysis. Firstly, the speaker noted that the pandemic contributed to an increase in the national budget deficits because of higher public spending and lower tax revenues. At the same time, GDP declined due to lower demand.

Next, two settings related to positive shock were discussed. The first is a "reduction in bank interest rates". In the author's view, this would lead to a reduction in the interest rate paid by the bank to the consumer. As a result, rational consumers will choose to invest in the economy rather than save in the bank for a higher return on investment (ROI). The second setting is a "decreasing premium amounts of insurance" that can lead to providing insurance companies with a plethora of resources for investment. This will be facilitated by an increase in demand for insurance products, primarily life and health insurance, as the authors suggest. Then the investments will provide a considerable amount of "locked" financial resources to the economy.

After that, the authors considered measures for Essential commodities that are produced and circulated in the BRICS economic space. These include Price Ceiling for Essential Commodities and Possibility of Agreement between BRICS. The authors consider the possibility that the government could enforce a maximum price for the essential commodities thus protecting the interest of the poor section of the community. However, given the risks of inefficiency from price regulation, it is also proposed to consider the option of trading essential goods within the framework of the BRICS agreements, which will ensure demand within the BRICS and at the same time prevent inflation.

The paper also addressed the impact of the proposed shock measures on changes in supply and demand and examined the mechanism for controlling inflation by stimulating savings. In conclusion, attention was given to the problem of the capitalist model of the economy and the risks to the poor. These issues are examined by the authors in the context of the proposed shock measures.

The last paper of the session was "Socio-economic impact of Covid-19 on marginalized communities of India: A study of Telangana and the Andhra Pradesh states" by **S. Junuguru** (Woxsen University) and **N. Sudhaveni** (Centre for Economic and Social Studies).

The study objectives are:

1) to analyze the impact of the COVID -19 pandemic on the vulnerable population, including the effects on livelihoods, access to essential goods and basic services, awareness of critical health and hygiene issues;
2) to assess the impact of school closures on different vulnerable social groups, with special reference to Scheduled Caste students.

The authors reveal the research problem as follows: "The marginal communities are among the poorest and the most vulnerable occupational communities of the State. The community is caught in a vicious circle characterised by low incomes, low educational and skill levels, lack of occupational diversity, financial incapacity to adopt technology, seasonal migration and gross under-representation in formal employment and legislative and governance institutions. As a result, the community has not been able to break into a higher socio-economic trajectory."

The paper empirically examines the socio-economic status of the marginal community in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh States and the challenges that they encounter. The respondent sample consists of school heads (principals / headmasters) teachers and students. Based on the findings, the study suggests the way forward for enhancing the livelihoods of the community.

In conclusion, the authors present the findings of the study, the main of which are the following:

1. Migrant workers in India were leading a life where vulnerability and exploitation were the norms. The COVID-19 crisis has made their vulnerability more visible to everyone.
2. The migrant workers have been left completely on their own to fend for themselves. This crisis has exposed a lack of communication between the central government and the states and between the states themselves. Borders among and within states have also hardened, stripping the migrants of their mobility and dignity.
3. The COVID-19 crisis and its impacts on internal migrant workers in India require collective solutions. The state has an obligation to protect rights. Business as an employer, service provider, and sometimes as an intermediary recruiting these workers has the responsibility to respect rights and comply with laws.

4. It is needed reliable estimates of both internal and international migrants. Without reliable estimates, any future policy proposals for migrant labour are not going to be effective.
5. Public health system particularly the primary and secondary care needs to be strengthened and investment should be increased.

Session 2, "Public administration and international project management" was focused on studies of international cooperation through the elaboration and implementation of projects. They focused primarily on the scope of the BRICS community and explored both the opportunities and barriers for collaboration among member states of the BRICS – among themselves and in relation to external actors. As some researchers noted, the BRICS coalition already has multiple ongoing international projects, and there are numerous possibilities for further mutually beneficial multilateral cooperation in various areas that cover all fundamental socio-economic spheres – human capital, material capital and finance – although nations outside the BRICS and CEE were observed to occasionally interfering with international collaborative projects due to difficult bilateral relations.

The possibilities of trilateral cooperation between Russia, India and China in the energy sector were analyzed in the presentation by **P. Hou** (Xinjiang University) "Hey, let's be serious: Russia-China-India energy cooperation in times of turbulence". He believes that the BRICS bloc can provide an appropriate institutional framework for geographically motivated energy cooperation. Such cooperation would be mutually beneficial, serving as a response both to the financial pressure Russia is experiencing in current circumstances and to India and China's growing energy demand. Thus, Hou intends to examine available open-source data on these countries' governance models from the angle of international relations and apply the neofunctionalism theory to explore opportunities and suggest a model for such cooperation. In turning to neofunctionalism – which emphasizes the concept of territory in international integration while taking into account non-state actors, Hou aims to use European integration processes as a reference without intending to replicate them exactly in BRICS. He notes that while early stages of energy cooperation are expected to be primarily driven by state actors, the private sector can play an important role in it in the longer term. Preliminary exploration of the topic has yielded conclusions that the establishment of regional energy cooperation requires policy coordination motivated by propositions from top political leaders, as well as appropriate financial instruments and a way to ensure regional stability, which can be aided by organizations such as the New Development Bank and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Despite anticipating certain challenges in analyzing spillover effects, Hou believes this study can not only aid the three countries' development, but also show how international interactions can affect global public policies and how the formation of new regional policies can lead to the establishment of a new governance model that may serve as an alternative to the European model.

In a similar vein despite a different subject of study, **T. Zaytseva** (Lomonosov Moscow State University) presented the report titled "Possible research areas and collaborative research within the BRICS countries" that contained an overview of existing mechanisms and possible opportunities for wide-reaching scientific collaboration between BRICS countries. Such collaboration, as she noted, can be expected to be fruitful even in spite of existing language barriers thanks to multiple similarities and synergies of the BRICS countries, including, but not limited to: comparable levels of technological and economic development, similar degrees of state intervention in economic processes, similar positions in the global political landscape and aligned political goals, complementary strengths in economy and technology, and the transcontinental nature of the coalition. T. Zaytseva proposed to explore possibilities for scientific cooperation through the prism of universities and the three distinct roles they fulfill: policy advisory, scientific, and educational role. As policy advisory institutions, universities should collaborate to support existing BRICS cooperation mechanisms, and to set up a system for sharing public administration experience and best national practices within BRICS and possibly among other countries. As research organizations, universities should contribute to the creation and realization of a long-term cooperative development strategy encompassing all aspects of the socio-economic development of the BRICS coalition. Additionally, further support for numerous existing and proposed collaborative research initiatives is warranted, many of which – such as the BRICS innovation contact points – have already proven effective. Finally, from the educational perspective usage of any opportunity for knowledge exchange is recommended, and it is pointed out that this may help all BRICS universities achieve higher positions in international ratings. Multiple formats of cooperation can be used to fulfill these tasks, including joint educational programs such as the BRICS Network University, joint publications, sharing of key information and data and comparative studies that such sharing enables, financial collaboration, and further development of academic networking events and institutions, such as the current conference or the BRICS University League.

J. Zhao (Fudan University), **X. Xu** (Princeton University) and **J. Qian** (Fudan University), carried out research with the title “The empirical evidence of U.S. voting on China-related projects in multilateral development banks” on possible obstacles rather than opportunities for international cooperation, studying the influence that the USA have on the decision-making processes of multilateral development banks such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, and the impact of this its influence on China. Citing the complex history of both Sino-American relations and multilateral development banks over the last two decades as the research background, X. Xu presented an empirical study demonstrating the impact of various unilateral and bilateral political and economic factors – as well as, uniquely, the characteristics of individual projects – on the U.S. behavior when voting on approval of China-related projects in multilateral development banks. The authors’ analysis of the impact of bilateral international relations on multilateral development banks represents a significant contribution to the topic: only few previous studies examined this impact, as opposed to focusing on the political influence of individual countries. Furthermore, even among studies taking bilateral factors into account, few papers examined the case of Sino-US relations. For this study, the authors compiled an original database on multilateral development bank projects covering the period from 2004 to 2020 and examined it using the logistic regression method. The presented study found that greater U.S. trade deficit with China and a higher US GDP growth rate are associated with a lower chance for U.S. to approve a China-related multilateral development project. An increase in the difference in American and Chinese political positions in the United Nations General Assembly is also associated with a reduced approval chance, but to a lesser degree. On the other hand, the parameters of the specific project do not play a significant role in the decision-making process. Thus, the study reveals the factors that motivate a nation to oppose international cooperation, and demonstrates that bilateral factors have a greater impact than unilateral factors. It does not, however, reveal the exact mechanisms how each factor affects multilateral development banks' decision-making processes, which appears to be a primary venue for further research.

Session 3 "Managing crisis, security and risks in public administration" was focused on the factors that affect security at national, international and local levels, and proposed both new theoretical approaches and practical reforms that may help predict, prevent and combat crises, improve security and ensure stability in the BRICS and in other countries. Notably, all of the studies presented have concerned multiple member states of the BRICS, either commenting on further possibilities of international collaboration or effectively relying on the exchange of knowledge and experience for comparative analysis of the BRICS countries in general.

M. Gellen (University of Public Service) has presented the paper "Crisis management experience in Hungary. Managing expectations and realities: a systems approach" that contains the theoretical analysis of crisis management from the point of view of systems theory, using the example of Hungary. In general agreement with Ali Farazmand's theory of "sound governance", M. Gellen proposed to view every country as a complex adaptive system: a collection of elements that is greater than a mere sum of its parts due to certain additional traits. In the context of public administration, some of the most important of such traits are: self-sustaining holism, internal regulation supported by centralization and hierarchy, and a membrane (such as a national border) separating the internal and external environments. When viewed in this light, a crisis is an abnormal condition of the system that threatens its balance, and it is something the system adapts to by modifying its internal processes through regulation, selection and prioritization – which, interestingly enough, can result in the system becoming even more organized than before. M. Gellen then described the case of Hungary, noting that concepts tested with relative ease on smaller countries can be applied to nations as large as the members of the BRICS. Drawing on his professional experience, the speaker noted that crisis management in Hungary is a dual battle, as the system has to respond not only to internal imbalances but also to constant external political pressure from the European Union. International coalitions such as the BRICS and the EU itself can be seen as systems. However, he argued that, despite exhibiting many properties of a system, the EU specifically cannot be considered a proper system in the same way a nation can be. The reason for that is the vagueness of the EU's uniting principles and goals. In trying to force its member states to fully adopt these principles and goals, the EU may be applying negative stimuli to them.

Such negative stimuli typically only cause systems to resist external pressure, which, ultimately, undermines international cooperation. M. Gellen concluded that in order to facilitate management of possible crises and ensure its stability and prosperity, the BRICS coalition should take this experience into account and develop international relations based on functional cooperation and mutual benefit rather than political homogenization and pursuit of abstract goals. In this conclusion, he supported the propositions for international collaboration made by multiple other presenters.

S. Zarochintcev (Russia) discussed the topic "National security risk assessment: Anticipatory governance and indicative approach for the BRICS states". The author proposed to analyze national stability from a different, though not outright contradictory, perspective, suggesting a new data-based approach for national security risk assessment. In the light of the challenges the modern world presents including the complex and hybrid nature of modern threats, the ever-escalating turbulent geopolitical situation, the widespread economic and energy crises, and the increasing frequency and intensity of natural and anthropogenic disasters, the ability to timely identify risks and threats to national security has become more important than ever.

However, a gap between the theoretical and practical mechanisms of risk assessment has become clear. S. Zarochintcev argued that the currently popular deliberative risk ranking methodology, based on expert opinions, is insufficient, and proposed instead an indicative approach to national security risk assessment. This approach identifies risks and threats by assessing multiple social, economic, political and other indicators and searching for significant deviations from the norm. While finding the exact indicators that present sufficient data that accurately reflects reality and allows to predict risks may be a challenge, the suggested indicator-based methodology allows for quantitative evaluation, early identification, ranking and prioritization of risks. This indicative approach combines the objective tools of data-dependent governance with the philosophy of anticipatory governance and represents a step towards implementing the fundamentally new vision of public administration represented by the data-dependent governance model.

S. Zarochintcev believes that being intended to respond to the challenges of the modern everchanging world, the indicative approach to risk assessment should become of considerable interest to any modern government.

In particular, he pointed to the possibilities of international cooperation within the BRICS coalition, which it offers and which makes it possible to share not only raw data and indicators, but also the risk assessment methodology to identify varied risks for different nations using the same methods.

D. Anil (Jindal Global University), with his report "Crime and Public Administration" has researched security in BRICS on a more grassroots level, reviewing the deficiencies of suggesting reforms for BRICS police forces. A capable law enforcement force is important for economic and social development of any country, and ensuring the effectiveness of the police is doubly important for some of the BRICS countries (primarily India and China) given their ongoing or recent rapid urbanization, which is associated with a rise in crime rates. Yet all of the

BRICS countries suffer from low level of police effectiveness coupled with widespread public distrust of police, resulting in high crime rates (except in Russia) and generally low level of citizen security. Analyzing the specifics and reasons for these shortcomings in each of the BRICS countries, Anil identified the problems as multifaceted. Many of these problems are common to some or all of the BRICS countries: police are either excessively militarized (particularly in Brazil and Russia; this is also associated with police brutality) or too ineffective in dealing with crime (in India and South Africa); are often under significant pressure, being understaffed (except in Russia and China) and underfunded; are commonly highly corrupt; and in some cases are politically dependent, serving the ruling party or local politicians more so than the citizens and the law. Anil also pointed out some country-specific shortcomings, including the Brazilian police's failure to stifle gang influence, the Chinese police's lack of transparency, the Indian police's extremely inefficient feudalistic structure, and the South African police's insufficient representation of minorities, while stressing the Russian police's predatory relationship with the populace. Based on this analysis, Anil argued that significant reforms are required to improve law enforcement effectiveness, combat police brutality and reduce public distrust of the police in the BRICS countries. In conclusion, he outlined the main directions and necessary steps of the reforms for each BRICS nation. The common core principles of the proposed reforms were: demilitarization, improved training with a focus on de-escalation and human rights protection, organizational restructuring where necessary, and higher recruitment rates.

Session 4 "Assessing the results of the public administration reforms" has discussed the topic of usefulness and necessity of reforms in various areas of public administration in the member states of the BRICS and in CEE nations – a topic that was a concern of multiple other presenters as well. The papers presented here were devoted to analyzing a wide variety of aspects of potential and actual reform initiatives. One of the presented studies examined some of the factors that determine the very capacity of public administration for innovative reform design and implementation. Another study assessed the degree of success of already carried out reforms and analyzed the factors that may have affected this degree of success. Finally, the third presentation featured recommendations on directions for future developments.

G. Balasubramanian and **R. K. Kakani** (Indian Institute of Management) have conducted research titled "Exploring the individual antecedents of innovation of careerist public administrators". The authors tried to find the factors that make reforms possible on individual level, namely, to extract the individual antecedents of innovative thinking among Indian public administrators. In the current unstable conditions and in the face of massive resource disparities between and within nations, it is now more important than ever to increase the efficiency of public administration, improve prudent policy-making and optimize public service delivery to ultimately tackle various socio-economic challenges.

With India (like many other countries, including members of BRICS) recently transitioning from traditional Weberian-styled rigid bureaucracy to the efficiency- and delivery-oriented principles of New Public Management, there is now a greater opportunity for change and innovation in public administration that can significantly aid combating socio-economic disparities, as long as administrators actually successfully use this opportunity.

Thus, Balasubramanian and Kakani have analyzed factors that determine bureaucrat's ability to innovate, specifically having chosen to focus on personal, as well as environmental, antecedents. To this end, they have conducted a survey of Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers and combined its results with additional sources to create a dataset covering 216 respondents. The authors then applied the variant ordinal regression method to the dataset in order to examine the dependence of respondents' capability for innovative thinking on multiple individual and environmental factors. The individual factors considered were: age, gender, educational background, age at the time of joining IAS, tenure as a district magistrate, and whether the respondent has been recruited into IAS directly or promoted from a lower position. Additionally, geographical location of service and the regional India Innovation Index were considered as environmental factors. After confirming their results, they found that, out of the listed factors, the most significant was educational background, with education in the fields of commerce or being associated with greater capability for innovative thinking than law or arts education. The age of the respondents had a negative impact (i.e., younger candidates were more innovative), whereas most other factors are more-or-less insignificant or only had a marginal impact, including, interestingly enough, geography of service, despite India's size and complexity. The authors concluded that, in order to improve bureaucrats' capability for innovation (and thus, for reform design and implementation), it was recommended to seek out potential innovators among younger candidates, to institute training courses and strengthen mentorship programs focused on innovation, and also to incentivize innovation within performance measurement and reward mechanisms.

X. Li (Tongji University) studied the recent poverty alleviation efforts undertaken by the Chinese government and ruling party in the context of reforms made within the last several years. In the research "Impoverished households and distribution of government subsidies in rural China: Evidence from CFPS dataset" he examined the exact effect of the Chinese poverty alleviation policy implemented in the last several years. Since 2015, this policy was subjected to sweeping changes, transitioning to a targeted poverty alleviation approach, which combines an application of external intervention with process coverage into a state and party policy initiative to improve citizens' personal income through state power and cadre mobilization. In addition to this, there have been profound changes in the identification system, which became able to analyze multiple non-income criteria on household and various administrative levels and was thus able to point out numerous poor areas that have not been designated as such before; the scale of funding, which in the 2015–2020 period has been larger than in the thirty preceding years; and cadre mobilization, with responsible teams undergoing significant structural adjustments. To determine whether these efforts have achieved their initial intention and, if not, what may be the reasons for that, Li has applied multiple quantitative and qualitative methods to China Family Panel Study data over the 2010–2018 period, supplemented by a series of field investigations. He used a household-level recipient perspective and, unlike many scholars, focused on the problem of poverty exclusion rather than analyzing whether impoverished households were receiving appropriate benefits. His analysis has revealed that even though the number of Chinese households with income below the absolute poverty line has indeed declined sharply in recent years, by all other measures, such as relative and weakly relative poverty lines, a significant number of impoverished households remain; furthermore, the overall degree of income inequality has grown.

He also found that over 35% of affected households did not receive subsidies to which they were entitled. Further examination, based on various statistical methods, showed that impoverished households had less access to government subsidies, measured by almost all criteria, especially in the case of income-based poverty. Based on additional qualitative research, Li highlighted the primary factors that appear to have caused this, namely elite capture (at the local cadre level) and flexible execution (at the resident cadre level), with the main reason being policy intensity.

Finally at this session **A. Gupta** (Government of West Bengal) in the presentation titled as “Future-proofing administrative reforms governing sustainable financing and procurement in context to BRICS coupled with CEE region” presented the proposition for developing procurement framework for the BRICS and CEE countries. As the ecological environment continues to become a more serious concern, there is a need to ensure that financing and procurement practices, which Gupta describes as fundamentally interlinked, should be aligned with the principles of sustainable development, as exemplified by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and by the Paris Climate Agreement, among other regulations and initiatives. More specifically, corporate-level environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors, depletion of non-renewable resources, decoupling of usage of these resources from economic growth, and general resource usage optimization have to be considered as the parameters of financing and procurement sustainability. This sustainability can be achieved through administrative reforms, international cooperation and new legislative and regulatory measures that will ensure: a) alignment of financing towards SDGs and better coordination of public and private sector actors on national and international level to connect the supply and demand for financing sustainable development; b) decoupling of usage of non-renewable resources, gradual transition to renewable resources, and optimization of global material usage; c) practical implementation of a paradigm shift in procurement from traditional finance-driven procurement through green procurement towards sustainable procurement that accounts for both economic, environmental and social factors; d) ubiquitous compliance to relevant ISO standards (ISO 14001, 20400 and 26000); e) widespread ecolabeling of products to facilitate environment impact monitoring. For these measures to be achievable Gupta proposed to compile multiple existing initiatives and regulations into a single, unified, actionable framework that incorporates all of the necessary criteria for sustainable financing and procurement.

To accelerate sustainable development, the members of the BRICS and CEE blocs can and should take additional measures and establish a system of international cooperation. By leveraging their similar characteristics and different complementary strengths (including the developed service and automobile sectors in CEE and the great opportunities in the energy, manufacturing and agricultural sectors of the BRICS) to share technologies, resources and asymmetric trade, these countries can ensure sustainable development and build an environmentally friendly yet powerful circular economy.

The report of **A. Svetlicinii** (University of Macau) "Competition law enforcement with "Chinese characteristics"" refers to the reform of the Chinese institutions responsible for the enforcement of the competition law. In China, there are several enforcement authorities responsible for the enforcement of the competition (anti-monopoly) law. That is why there was a need to create a coordination body which would guide and harmonize the enforcement practices of these institutions. This body which coordinates other authorities is the Anti-Monopoly Commission of the State Council. Enforcement authorities are divided into specialized body, which was entrusted with anti-monopoly law enforcement according to the law (Anti-Monopoly Bureau), and bodies, which are not specialized in anti-monopoly regulation, but they have some rules about competition in different sectors (Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, China Securities Regulatory Commission).

The institutional reform of anti-monopoly institutions can be divided into three periods of time.

The first period (2008–2018) began in 2008 when the Antimonopoly Act came into force. During this period, several institutions were responsible for prosecuting price-related and non-price-related anti-competitive practices, as well as merger control. In the second period (2018–2021), a separate antimonopoly institution was created in 2018, merging the functions of all previous authorities (State Administration for Market Regulation). However, this body had some other tasks under other laws related to market regulation and trade. Therefore, in 2021 (the third period), an independent authority, the Anti-Monopoly Bureau, was spun off from the structure of the State Administration for Market Regulation, with only one task: to enforce the Anti-Monopoly Law (AML).

The evolution of the development of anti-monopoly bodies consists not only in the creation of an independent specialized body, in the unification of rules and simplification of the structure of anti-monopoly bodies, but also in the quality of the work of the newly created institution. To confirm this, the author examines statistical data on the number of years of administrative penalties, monopoly agreements, the amount of fines and confiscation, and the number of cases where the companies were prosecuted for not notifying their merger. In conclusion the author emphasizes that we can see that there is a growth in importance of the anti-monopoly law enforcement in China's economic regulation.

The presentation of **S. Sutaryo** (Universitas Sebelas Maret) and **P. G. Amidjaya** (Universiti Malaysia Sarawak) "NPM reforms and government administration performance: A comprehensive study in Indonesian local governments in 2010s decade" was devoted to New Public Management reforms started in Indonesia in 1998, and included the following areas: decentralization through the local autonomy, increasing democracy, public sector accounting reform, increasing supervision (external audit, legislative oversight, and internal audit), improving public accountability.

The 2010s decade marks the second decade of NPM reforms in Indonesia. The authors evaluated how the NPM has translated into public accountability, especially in local governments, because there are still numerous cases of public dissatisfaction over local government documented by the Ombudsman. Also, there is a limited number of studies that examine this comprehensively throughout the decade. The focal research question of the presentation was: how NPM reforms (external audit, legislative oversight, and internal audit) affect local government performance in Indonesia.

To investigate the issue, the authors turned to Agency Theory. As the principal acts public, agent is a local government, which is supervised by the external audit, legislative board, and internal audit. Using quantitative analysis (descriptive statistics, panel data regression) of secondary data from authorized government institutions, the researchers studied how independent variables (external audit, legislative supervision, internal audit) have an impact on a dependent variable (local government administration performance). Control variables in this research model are local development, local government complexity, local government wealth, local government expenditure, local population.

As a result of the study, the authors made the following main conclusions:

– local government performance in Indonesia has reached considerably good accomplishments;
– new public management reforms in Indonesia have contributed to the performance improvement in Indonesian local governments;
– the supervision activities from the internal audit, legislative supervision and external audit are crucial for maintaining local government accountability, proven by positive effect;
– there are still local governments with medium and low performance that should be given attention by the Central government;
– there should be no more regional disparity in local government performance.

Session 5 was devoted to digitalization and provision of public services. The session started from the presentation of **O. Danar** "Strengthening the administrative reform and bureaucratic control through digitalization". The author stressed that the pandemic accelerated the digitalization of services in Indonesia. The newest mechanism to control the administrative and bureaucratic performance called SAKIP (Sistem Akuntabilitas Kinerja Instansi Pemerintah) refers to the "accountability system for public sector performance". SAKIP consists of six components: strategic plan, employees' agreement, performance measurement, management of performance's database, performance report, performance review and assessment.

The implementation of E-SAKIP in Indonesia has the effort to strengthen the bureaucratic control and it can be called partly the implementation of administrative reform. Some local governments support the process of E-SAKIP, and some prefer to maintain the status quo.

The implementation of E-SAKIP faced some challenges: human resources which are not yet proficient with digitalization, double data input process, individual rejection (status quo supporters), and communication process. The Covid-19 pandemic that has occurred in Indonesia since 2020 had an impact on the stability of bureaucratic performance as the backbone of policy implementation. There are several areas that are necessary for the stable operation of the bureaucracy in pandemic age. Firstly, the implementation of digital bureaucracy which allows for public services to be more affordable. Secondly, standardization of services, which means that there is no superiority of one group of people over another in the availability of services. The last one is professionalism of the apparatus, which is necessary for the stability of work.

Both traditional SAKIP and E-SAKIP have several benefits and drawbacks. Benefits of E-SAKIP are the following, it allows to promote faster and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation tools, compatible to support agile governance (quicker decision making and policy action), quicker understanding (due to quick access), double verification (manual and digital). Also, there are several disadvantages: it depends on electronic devices, needs more adjustment with current regulations and laws, and needs special access.

The author believes that the digitalization of SAKIP is necessary to support a comprehensive evaluation of the government's accountability through digital monitoring and evaluation. However, it also possibly raises some new challenges. Digitalization the process of government administration is one of the essential parts of administrative reform. In this case , the implementation of E-SAKIP in Indonesia has demonstrated how the government tries to cope with new working conditions during the pandemic. However, in a practical field, the implementation of E-SAKIP can face several challenges, such as a lack of proficient human resources or individual rejection of digitalization.

The author concludes that the assessment process confirms that E-SKIP generates greater benefit rather than conventional SAKIP. Thus, it is important for the government to manage the challenge of aligning the E-SAKIP implementation.

The last presentation of this session "Using tax data for decision-making and policy development" was delivered by **V. Tiutiuriukov and N. Guseva** (HSE university). Taxes have many functions (fiscal, allocation, regulatory), but the authors in their study based on the information function of taxes (collection, accumulation and analysis of information on the economic activity of separate enterprises and economy as a whole). There were raised several research questions. What is the analytical potential of the tax statistics for the assessment of socioeconomic situations and trends? What are the limitations of the tax statistics and information of statistics agencies from the standpoint of such analysis?

Digitalization of tax administration in the BRICS can be considered in several examples. In Russia, there is a system, which collects and analysis of data on tax returns and transactions, keeps electronic VAT invoices, tax risk assessment, and estimation of the tax gap. Also, there are online cash registers (it using "fiscal data operators", provide real-time information on retail operations, making visible the location of the transaction, the goods or services sold, their price, and certain other indicators), *Chat-bot Taxik* (reported to answer 300,000 most popular questions on tax administration), personal account of a taxpayer, e-signature, online filing of tax returns.

The Federal Tax Service of Russia has published a variety of different statistics, such as the reports on the state registration of legal entities and individuals, the reports on the accrual and remittance of taxes, duties and other obligatory payments, reports on the tax base and on the structure of tax accrual of various taxes since 2006, the information on state control and licensing.

In India, digitalization of tax administration consists of e-returns, e-registration, e-waybills, e-invoicing, Goods and Service Tax Network (GSTN) (B2B e-invoicing, B2C QR code requirements, GST annual returns, GST assessments, GST departmental audits), e-verification: return filing, requests, responses, etc.

In turn, in China we can observe electronic VAT invoices, VAT calculation and payment, and the action plan "Internet+Taxes" which is a simplified system of online tax reporting and tax payment, currently for individuals.

In South Africa there is e-filing, including Mobi App (processing of tax returns sped up: within 48 hours from submission in 2007 South African Revenue Service handled 1.6%, in 2008 – 34%), a chatbot on the mobile South African Revenue Service app, data-driven Compliance Risk Detection (computer algorithms + human curatorship). Also, the South African Revenue Service is planning to launch a pilot electronic online portal for travelers to make voluntary customs declarations ahead of their arrival or departure to/from South Africa. In addition, the South African Revenue Service plans to employ Artificial Intelligence to detect non-compliance.

Using the tax data in Russia (personal income tax), the authors made several conclusions: the amount of average monthly remuneration under the labor agreement increased by 15.9% (half of the accumulated inflation), the amount of average accrued work-related bonus increased by 31.2%, the directors' fees amounted to 0.1% of total remuneration, but per recipient, they were from 2.9 to 4.6 times of employee's remuneration.

There are some advantages and disadvantages of using tax data. Benefits are raw data, received directly from the taxpayers, detailed breakdown by the categories of taxpayers, their income and property, and data on tax benefits (tax expenditure). On the other hand, there are no data on exempt income and property, tax classification instead of statistical one.

To conclude the review of the Conference program and presentations, we would like to point out the great theoretical and practical potential of research based on the rich data material and historical and cultural heritage of the BRICS countries, which is very different from the theories and practices based on the most studied cases of the Western world, and – it has many similarities with the countries of other world regions, such as Asia and Eastern Europe.

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EVOLUTION OF THE BRAZILIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION*

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Abstract. This manuscript analyzes the changes in Brazilian public administration over the years and the attempts to reform and improve the effectiveness of the delivery of public services. There are three main modes of operation in the Brazilian public administration: patrimonialism, bureaucratic and managerial. Even though reforms have taken some effect over the decades, all three modes subsist in different forms in the public organizations. After the democratization of the country, there has been a decentralization process and a growing influence of civil society on public affairs, but accountability is still low. Reforms were carried out by authoritarian and democratic governments from different political spectrums, but the quality of public administration and governance still suffers from ineffectiveness in the delivery of public services and patrimonialism, resulting in many cases of corruption and mismanagement. The worsening of the financial situation of the country tends to aggravate the situation in the future.

Keywords: Brazil; public administration; reforms; decentralization.

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Introduction: Emerging challenges in governance and development

There is a lot of emphases in academia and practice on capacity building and the application of the best practices of public administration (PA) and management to improve public organizations and society.[1] Some public managers, scholars and

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policymakers in Brazil, like in other parts of the developing world, are continuously pushing for cycles of reforms aiming at improvements in the performance, transparency and accountability in public administration in order to deliver quality public services. However, one area that is missing is a critical analysis of the propagation means, the implementation and "impacts" (positive and negative) of Western and Non-Western theories of public administration and management in practice (Gulrajani and Moloney, 2012; Ashworth et al., 2013). It is important to better understand the context and the political economy of how and why ideas "travel" from one place to the other, and how they are applied and changed. I could point out three dimensions that are of particular interest to research, particularly in Brazil, since they are influencing reforms in other countries.

Firstly, one concerns the general decline of trust in public institutions everywhere, which also affects the West. Brazil, in particular, has witnessed a large number of corruption scandals in the last decades. With democratization in many countries, reform movements in both the public sector and civil society have created institutions and organizations aimed at increasing transparency and accountability, but they were unable to offset the problems of trust in public administration, and their links with the political system (Puppim de Oliveira and Berman, 2021).

Secondly, there is a growing interest in the topic of the influence of Western and non-Western PA ideas on public administration in developing countries, particularly in Africa and parts of Asia (Haque and Turner, 2013) and in Latin America (Haque and Puppim de Oliveira, 2021). The last big wave of Western ideas being exported to public administration was triggered by the propagation of New Public Management (NPM) and its mutations. However, non-Western countries such as China and Singapore are now influencing and exporting their PA ideas or practices and competing with traditional donors for soft power. Brazil was the cradle of innovative ideas such as participatory budgeting and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), which have been adopted by hundreds of cities and countries around the world. At the same time, the competition from China and other non-traditional donors (e.g., private foundations, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and UAE) are influencing the way the traditional donors and intellectual sources of PA knowledge work with governments and academia as well.

Thirdly, there is a rising consensus about the increasing interconnectedness of countries, nations and societies. New influential actors, such as the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), bring new dynamics to the global institutions. However, public administration and management are still pretty much constrained to think about organizations that have limited action beyond their geographically determined administrative boundaries, and not connected or concerned about what goes on in other parts of the world (except for international relations and development management). The impact of BRICS in world affairs, such as human rights and climate change, implies that changing their public administrations to respond to those issues can make a worldwide difference. The question is then, with the increasing impacts of global problems will the domestic public administrations become more entrenched in the domestic self-interest? Or will there be more openness and trust to reform those institutions to think about the global collective interest together?

The dynamics of public administration are directly related to the conceptual ideas that come from different actors. Governments in developing countries are the main actors to influence public administration in terms of ideas and their implementation. However, international organizations have also played a key role in the dissemination of ideas for public administration and have used their influence to drive reforms in public administration (Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff, 2015). Public administration systems also reflect what is going on in society. Political, social, economic and cultural aspects of the context, as well as their changes, have a significant impact on shaping public administration. The political system is particularly important as it shapes who is in control of the State and its relations with society. For example, civil society groups can push for changes on the streets or through the dissemination of ideas.

This paper examines the evolution of the Brazilian public administration over the decades particularly in the last 35 years since the democratization of the country. This can bring learning lessons to the BRICS and other developing countries more broadly.

A short history of the Brazilian public administration

The Brazilian public administration started with the organizations developed by the Portuguese colonizers to manage the exploitation of the resources in the colony. However, radical changes and intensification in construction of public administration occurred when the Portuguese royal family, fleeing from the Napoleonic threat in Europe, moved to the then Brazilian capital of Rio de Janeiro in 1808.

The Portuguese royals brought with them a large part of their courts and public administration employees from Lisbon to Brazil (about 15,000 in total). Brazil, in particular the city of Rio de Janeiro, moved from being the capital of the colony to be the center of the kingdom. This movement of the Portuguese royals has shaped Brazilian public administration over the years. Under their influence and *modus operandi*, state and public administration bureaucracies and processes created roots in the country. The Brazilian public sector continued to develop its own characteristics after King Joao VI returned to Portugal in 1821 and Brazil gained independence from Portugal in 1822.

The history of Brazilian public administration and the Brazilian State can be summarized in several stages, which are described below (based on Lustosa da Costa and Lustosa da Costa, 2016, 2008):

- 1808–1822: The roots of public administration controlled by the Portuguese and under the absolutism of the regime.
- 1822–1840: Building the national State and identity. The independence (Brazil became a Kingdom/Empire by its own) and the return of part of the bureaucracy to Portugal caused the need to develop Brazil's own public administration under an absolute State controlled *de jure* by the emperors Pedro I and Pedro II but controlled *de facto* by advisors.
- 1840–1889: Development of a more representative State under the Emperor Pedro II, with some characteristics of parliamentary monarchy. Power over

the bureaucracy was decentralized and the administration extended beyond the capital (still Rio de Janeiro at that time).

- 1889–1930. The State in the "Old Republic". Brazil became a republic in 1889. Patrimonialism as a mode of public administration continued from the monarchy. The State became controlled by a political elite. The public administration served this elite.
- 1930–1945: Establishment of a bureaucratic public administration under the national state controlled by a dictatorship. Getulio Vargas centralized and modernized the state by introducing the main principles of Weberian administration and the professionalization of the public administration and by creating the Department of Administration of the Public Service (DASP) and Getulio Vargas Foundation (FGV) to lead this reforming process, but roots of the patrimonialism continued in many practices (Farah, 2011; 2016). 'National developmentalism' was the development mode with the creation of national public companies, such as the National Steel Company (CSN).
- 1945–1964: "National developmentalism" as the philosophy of the state continued after the end of the "New State Era" of Getulio Vargas. The State pushed for rapid industrialization and the creation of more State companies, such as Petrobras. Rapid economic development and urbanization occurred. The capital moved from Rio de Janeiro to Brasilia (1960).
- 1964–1985: Authoritarian modernization. National developmentalism remained under the military government established in 1964. Import substitution and a private sector was protected by the State. Modernization of public administration continued under authoritarian rule with a high degree of centralization.
- 1985–1992: Neoliberalism and dismantling of the national developmentalism. Economic stagnation and high inflation led to the neoliberal reforms in the public administration, especially under the Collor de Mello government in 1990. The government tried to introduce some ideas of the New Public Management reforms along with the liberalization of the economy. The Constitution of 1988 gave more responsibilities to the states and municipalities, which led to political and administrative decentralization and the growth of the public administration in these subnational entities.
- 1992–2002: The state in the era of managerialism. The opening up of the economy continued gradually. Search for greater efficiency and professionalism in the public administration with an attempt to "de-bureaucratize" the State. Gradual reduction in the number of public employees took place in the federal government (Nunberg and Pacheco, 2016). Several managerial reforms were introduced initially in the federal government and later in some states and municipalities (Bresser-Pereira, 2009; 2016).
- 2002–2016: National developmentalism returned to the agenda of the federal government. The number of employees gradually increased. Liberal trends in the economy reversed, but some of the management reforms in the federal public administration continued.
- 2016–2022: The impeachment of president Dilma Roussef and the arrest of president Lula da Silva for corruption allegations brought about the liberal

governments of Michel Temer and Jair Bolsonaro, who pushed ahead with administrative reforms and attempts to modernize the State, such as the expansion of e-government. The financial situation of the country, worsened by COVID-19, pushed for a reduction in the public sector expenses at all levels.

– 2023: The return of president Lula da Silva to power brought back the ideas of developmentalism. He has ushered in a new wave of state expansion and reversal of public administration reforms in 2016–2022.

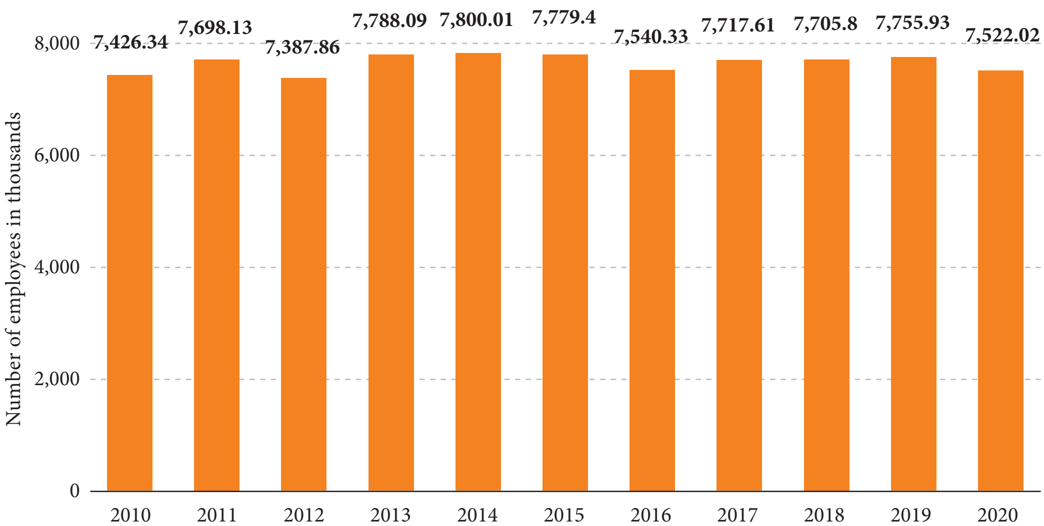

Figure 1. **Number of employees in the public administration sector in Brazil from 2010 to 2020, *in 1,000s.***

Source: (Statista, 2023)

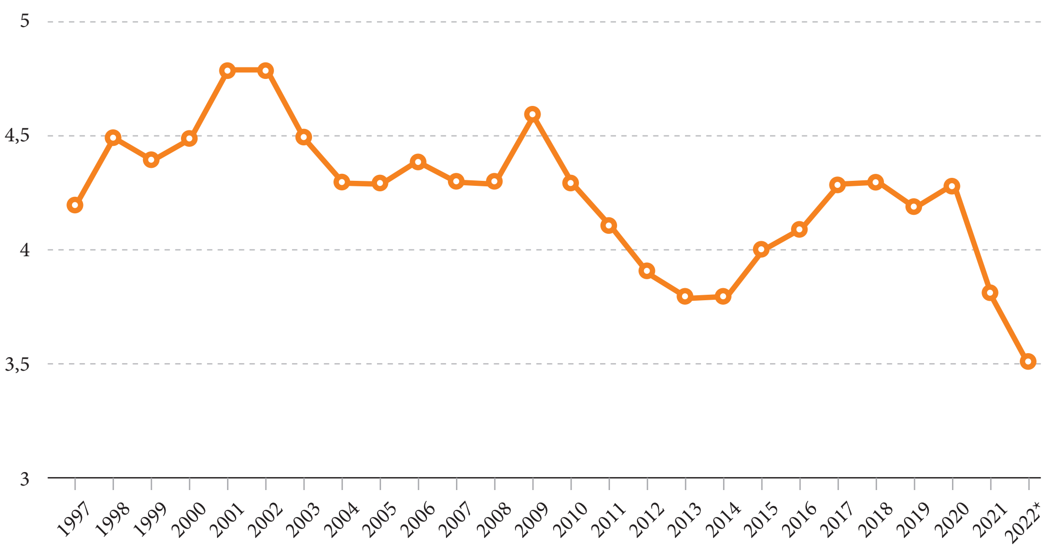

Figure 2. **Federal personnel expenditure as a percentage of GDP**

Source: (Martello, 2022, based on Brazilian national treasury data).

There are three main modes of operation in the Brazilian public administration: patrimonialism, bureaucratic and managerial (Lustosa da Costa, 2016; 2008). Despite efforts to reform, all three continue to subsist together in a certain degree. The intensity of each of them, and the intensity of reforms, depends on the political context. Until 1930, the public administration was controlled by political elites. Public and private interests were mixed. Public employees were appointed by political leaders and other influential authorities. The first Getulio Vargas government (1930–1945) made efforts to introduce the bureaucratic and more professional form of public administration, which grew under his dictatorship together with the role of the State in the economy and society. The military dictatorship (1964–1985) consolidated some of Vargas' reforms, such as a huge productive apparatus. In the 1980s, the managerial reforms began to take root and accelerated in the 1990s, but they are still timid for the size of the state. In the last 30 years we have witnessed the waves of reforms and counter-reforms, without any particular coherence in the direction of Brazilian public administration. Bureaucratic and patrimonialistic forms still dominate the Brazilian public administration (Puppim de Oliveira and Berman, 2021). The quality of public service still suffers from deficiencies in many areas, despite the growth in public spending.

Recent reforms

The transition from military to a civil government in the 1980s was fundamental in shaping today's public administration. The constitution of 1988 devolved power and responsibilities to the states and municipalities. They started to build their own public administrations to manage the new responsibilities such as primary education and health. However, the chaotic economy, plagued by hyperinflation in the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s (inflation reached almost 2,000% in 1989 and 2,500% in 1993), left little room for efforts for broader public administration reforms. The reforms pushed by international organizations in the context of the Washington Consensus in the 1980s and 1990s, such as privatization and deregulation of public services, further worsened the economic situation. Most of the efforts of the administration entities (Union, states and municipalities) focused on controlling their finances to prevent their money from being eaten up by inflation. The 1992 impeachment of the first directly elected president (Fernando Collor) after the democratization of the country in 1985 made the situation even more difficult to manage, as the political and economic situation was unstable. Nevertheless, the public administrations have never collapsed and have shown a certain degree of resilience to maintain certain public services despite the economic and political problems in the country.

Inflation was controlled in 1994 by the Real Plan and a new president, Fernando Henrique Cardoso (who had previously been finance minister), was elected, providing some political and economic stability. Under the principles of improving the role of the state in the economy and promoting a market economy, a series of economic and administrative reforms were carried out from the second half of the 1990s, mainly targeting the bureaucracy at the federal level. Several national companies were privatized. Cardoso created the Ministry of Federal Administration and State Reform (MARE) in 1995, headed by Minister Luiz Bresser-Pereira, to implement administrative reforms aimed at improving the efficiency and accountability of the federal bureaucracies. The efforts were focused on the managerial reforms based on some of the principles of New Public Management (NPM). In addition, administrations were allowed to outsource certain services to 'social organizations' (NGOs). The most important impact was the reduction of the budget for personnel at the national level. Expenditure on personnel in the federal government reduced from 55% (1995) to about 30% (2002) as a percentage of current net revenues (Nunberg and Pacheco, 2016).

During the Workers' Party governments (2002–2016), initially by Lula (two mandates) and Dilma (one full mandate and she was impeached in the middle of the second mandate), the national developmentalism returned to the agenda of the federal government with a growing influence of the State in the economy and an increasing number of social policies. The number of public employees increased gradually. Nevertheless, some of the management reforms in the federal public administration continued to professionalize the public administration.

The government (2016–2018) led by Michel Temer, who was Rouseff's Vice-President, took drastic measures to reduce the growing public deficit, and new reforms were proposed to make further changes to public employees' pension schemes, in addition to the changes to the general social security (INSS). Most of the public sector employees no longer have special pension provision systems. The number of public sector employees remained stable over the years at around 7.5 million across the three levels of government (Federal, States and Municipalities) (Fig. 1). The Bolsonaro government (2019–2022) has made some attempts to reform the State, but has had little success. One area where the country made progress was in the digitalization of the government. Brazil is ranked above the OECD average in the OECD's Digital Government Index (DGI, 2020). The federal government also halted salary increases during Bolsonaro's government, reducing the federal personnel expenditure as a percentage of GDP (see Fig. 2). Nevertheless, state and municipal tax revenues were heavily impacted by the economic crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, which also highlighted the problems of several sub-national entities. Many of them were not able to reform their public administrations in time and now face huge financial challenges.

Together with the managerial administrative reforms, a number of reforms have been carried out over the past three decades aimed at increasing the transparency and accountability of public authorities. Most government budgets are widely open to the public now, including, for example, salaries of public employees and travel expenses. Civil society and the press have become more active in denouncing mismanagement and misappropriation of public funds. Moreover, a set of public auditing organizations and prosecutors have grown in scope and size alongside the transparency. More independence of the justice and police have happened as well. Recently, federal and state polices and public attorneys have dismantled several cases of corruption, making accountability reaching all the way to the top of the administrative and political hierarchy, even indicting or arresting some key figures that were 'untouchables' before (e.g., ministers, judges, senators, governors and including the now president Lula and former president Bolsonaro), though those trends have been reversed in the Bolsonaro government and several politicians charged with corruption practices are back to politics. Therefore, despite the managerial reforms the bureaucratic and patrimonialistic modes prevail in Brazilian public administration with pockets of managerial modes, more in some organizations than others. In some places, the managerial reforms have never taken effect, and patrimonialism has never left the core of the bureaucracies, being some of the main posts in the public organizations chosen by politics. Signs of meritocracy are still hard to find in some organizations, though, on the other hand, some are completely professionalized.

There are some examples of innovation in the public sector. One interesting innovation in public administration is the establishment of public prosecutors' offices. Their job is to protect collective and public interests, such as the protection of the environment. Created under the 1988 Constitution, public prosecutors played a key role in bringing lawsuits against any person or organization, including public authorities. For example, they can sue a developer for deforestation beyond the legal limits, and the environmental protection agency for non-compliance the law. Their active involvement in many states, together with civil society, has pushed for more accountability and transparency in public administration. The interaction of public authorities with external stakeholders can also lead to innovation in the public sector (Zambrano-Gutierrez and Puppim de Oliveira, 2022).

After the nation's democratization in 1985, civil society actors, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community organizations, increasingly exerted pressure on governmental authorities, demanding greater accountability. The participation of local organizations was also important to ensure compliance with legislation and the implementation of environmental policies, for example (Puppim de Oliveira, 2005).

Global concerns such as climate change and biodiversity also permeate public administrations at the different levels. Brazil has ratified most of the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and supported the establishment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Different units of the Ministry of the Environment deal with global environmental issues. The national congress enacted the Law 12.187 in 2009 creating the National Policy on Climate Change (NPCC). States and some municipalities have also built their own institutions and organizations to manage climate change adaptation and mitigation. Some of them, such as the State of Sao Paulo, have created their own climate change policy laws and institutions to deal with climate change even before the national government (Puppim de Oliveira and Andrade, 2016). State public administrations, like the national government, also interact with each other and the international organizations to exchange information and build their capacity.

The mere identification of a problem is rarely sufficient to move the state and public administration to decisive action. There were several obstacles to expanding the capacity of governments in late democracies (Haque et al., 2021; Puppim de Oliveira and Berman, 2021). Like in other sectors, the decentralization envisioned in the 1988 constitution was undermined by the lack of resources at the subnational level. Building capacities in the public administration has been uneven across states and municipalities. Some municipal and state entities have built strong and effective apparatus, but others have lacked behind (Puppim de Oliveira, 2005). Effective public management is more an exception than a rule (Puppim de Oliveira and Berman, 2021). For example, although municipalities control land use according to the federal constitution, many municipalities have no institutional apparatus to implement land-use controls, leading to an expansion of urban informal settlements.

Managerial reforms have not had significant impacts on the public administration. Bureaucratic modes still prevail, as most activities are tightly regulated, despite the efforts to reduce red-tape in recent years. In addition, corruption scandals and patrimonialism are also common in the field of public administration. There have been many cases of unethical behavior of public officials related to, for example, illegal logging and bribes for the issuance environmental license. For example, the head of the environmental protection agency and ministry of fisheries in one state were arrested by federal police while trying to sell fishing license for fishing companies (O Globo, 2015). The head of the agency was appointed by a political party in power. During the COVID-19, there were many cases of corruption worth several million dollars, such as the case with the state of Rio de Janeiro, which led to the impeachment of its governor (Puppim de Oliveira and Berman, 2021).

Trends and challenges in the Brazilian public administration

There are a number of trends in the Brazilian public administration. I will highlight some of the most prominent ones. Firstly, over the past three decades, the Brazilian public administration has changed drastically and gradually began to interact more with civil society. The shape of public administrations and the way they implement public policies in Brazil is largely affected by the regime and the party in power, but some trends do not stop at changes in governments. For example, after the democratization of the country in 1980s, civil society groups gained political power and are gradually able to influence public policies, both the design and implementation. NGOs and social movements are influential in several areas of public policy, such as housing, environment, and agrarian reform. Innovative participatory processes have taken place in several instances of decision making from consultation to direct decision vote. The participatory budgeting, which started in Porto Alegre, is one of those innovations that have been spread now to several countries (Cabannes, 2004).

Secondly, financial and human resources are increasingly concentrated at the federal level, even though most of the responsibilities for public services are in the hands of the states and municipalities, generating an imbalance between resources and responsibilities. The constitution of 1988 aimed at political and administrative decentralization. It gave autonomy and power to states and municipalities, but they face increasing challenges in delivering quality public services. Even though the constitution and other reforms aimed at decentralization, the largest share of the public budget remains at the federal level. In 2014, the federal, state and municipal levels accounted for 68.5%, 25.3% and 6.2% of total government taxes respectively (Receita Federal, 2015), and this has not changed much since then.

States and municipalities now deliver the bulk of public services but are strangled financially. Most of the municipalities do not have their own revenues and depend heavily on transfers form the federal and state governments. Moreover, even though all municipalities have the same responsibilities, there is a huge difference in administrative and financial resources among them (the same for the states), both in terms of quality and quantity. There are very different municipalities, like São Paulo city (~12 million inhabitants) and Borá (825 inhabitants), both with the same constitutional responsibilities. Since their sizes and capacities vary significantly, this leads to an inequality of opportunities for the effective provision of public services, such as health and education (Avallaneda and Gomes, 2015). There are also some conflicts of jurisdiction over certain responsibilities.

Thirdly, the bureaucracy has several urgent problems to be addressed right away. The size of the State is relatively large compared to other countries in the same level of income but not the quality of public services. Although the number of employees at the federal level has not changed significantly since 1990s the amount of the revenues to cover personnel costs have steadily increased until mid of the decade of 2010s. Moreover, the number of personnel employed by governments has hardly changed in recent decades (Fig. 2). Along with financial mismanagement, the recent crises in public administration have highlighted the need for urgent reforms in the public administration. The state of public services has deteriorated. Many states are financially broken and cannot even pay their employees in times of crises, such as in the case of the State of Rio de Janeiro, which had not paid its employees' salaries of October in December 2016. Despite that mismanagement and corruption were problematic in many cases, the core reasons for the financial problems are the expansion of the activities of the state and municipalities without proportional growth in revenues and reforms to improve the efficiency of the public bureaucracies.

Finally, the issues of ethics in politics, government, and public administration have also continued to be a major problem in the Brazilian State. Despite all the reforms to professionalize public administration, patrimonialism still rules many public organizations and contracts. There are 350,000 jobs (out of a total 1.1 million public employees) filled with political appointments at the federal level costing more than US$ 1 billion per month (O Globo, 2016). If you include states and municipalities, then this number can easily be multiplied by several times.

Most of the top managerial posts in the public administration at all three levels are filled by political appointments without requirements for minimum qualification control. Many are appointed by political parties under their 'quota' in return for political support for the government. The distribution of posts through political appointments is key in a fragmented parliament with more than a dozen parties represented. Individual and political interests influence many of the administrative decisions. Thus, it is not surprising that cases of corruption and mismanagement in state companies and other organizations, almost always involve political appointees. This is routine in the Brazilian public administration and damages the trust of the population on public administration. Nevertheless, there is a growing institutional capacity in the State and civil society to push for transparency and accountability in the last decades, which has maintained a minimum level of checks and balances on public officials, though not enough to avoid many of the corruption scandals and the return of corrupt politicians to power, showing weak political accountability. Moreover, efforts to tackle corruption and make politicians more accountable to the law, such as the "Lava-Jato" (Car-Wash) initiative, have been dismantled in recent years, which can reduce accountability.

Conclusions

The organizational aspects of public administration are fundamental for its effectiveness in providing the services to society. They are important but not determinant to guarantee the good functioning of public administration and the quality of public services, as public administration alone does not control society or government, and vice versa. The interactions between public organizations and other actors are crucial to how society functions and how services and goods are delivered, as in the case of Brazil. These interactions take place through the formal political system or through the engagement with civil society.

Reforms to strengthen the interaction between civil society and public administrations can address some of the aspects mentioned in the introduction. Civil society interests have grown in many developing countries, such as Brazil. They have also allied themselves in the media and within governments, linking them to the formal political and administrative system. They can help improve trust, adapt external ideas to the local context and address the increasing number of global issues. Civil society groups have disseminated new values in society and brought society's interests and values into decision-making processes. They have campaigned for and against many causes that can potentially affect the dissemination of knowledge in society and in the public administration, such as the environmental sector. Also, many people who work for civil society organizations can later work for governmental organizations, contributing to the introduction of their values and ideas to these organizations.

Brazilian public administration has evolved rapidly in the last decades, particularly since the democratization of the country in the 1980s. Several reforms have been introduced by different governments at the three levels of government along throughout the history. The size of the public sector has grown significantly over the recent years, but the situation of the provision of quality public services is still limited and cases of corruption and mismanagement in the public sector surface almost daily. On the one hand, managerial and organizational reforms have room to improve public sector performance. Areas such as human resources and financial management are still problematic (Nunberg and Pacheco, 2016; Puppim de Oliveira and Berman, 2021). On the other hand, governance has improved to bring more accountability to the public sector and strengthen its capacity to carry out public policy. Finally, international networks, such as BRICS, or even OECD, can be an avenue for the exchange of experiences and capacity building, but also develop peer-to-peer accountability mechanisms to raise the bar for governance in Brazil and other countries, and to address the old and new challenges of public administration.

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ADMINISTRATIVE AND CIVIL SERVICE REFORMS IN RUSSIA: RECENT TRENDS AT THE TIME OF TURBULENCE

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Abstract The article examines the changes in governance that have taken place in Russia since 2019, with a particular focus on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (which persisted until early 2022) and the ongoing military operation in Ukraine (which began in February 2022). The article discusses the specific characteristics of the reform efforts during these two distinct phases. Among the reforms of governance in Russia in this period, two central interrelated reforms, the reform of the civil service, and administrative reform are analyzed. The agenda of changes and their main directions have been studied for each of the reforms. It is argued that the main focus of the reforms is on the change of planning, the formation of integrated services, the digitalization of public service and services, the change in the regulatory climate, the "top-down" evaluation of the effectiveness of the apparatus, the development of flexible schemes of initiative budgeting. There is a change also in the orientation of education in the field of public administration.

The transition from COVID-19 to the sanction period of the reforms is characterized primarily by changes in the motivation of the apparatus, an emphasis on the security of managerial decision-making and the protection of electronic communications, a predominant increase in wages for the military and law enforcement services, a smooth departure from the stages of the Bologna education system (Master's and Bachelor's degrees).

Keywords: Civil service reform; administrative reform; COVID-19 Russian governance changes; Russian governance re-shaping under sanctions; Russian governance recent trends.

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Administrative reform, which is understood as the improvement of the structure and functions of state bodies, as well as the reform of the administrative apparatus (civil service) of Russia, jointly attributed as Russian governance reform, has been carried out since the first stages of the existence of the Russian Federation as an independent state that arose as a result of the collapse of the USSR. Since 1991, these two closely related reforms have gone through several stages: formation of the civil service system, creation of professional education in the field of public administration and advanced training for state and municipal employees (1990s, early 2000s); streamlining of the system of state bodies, and building a client-oriented ministerial-agency structure of state bodies, elimination of redundant and duplicative functions, development and implementation of administrative regulations (2003–2001); implementation of public service reform and development programs (2003–2010); formation of anti-corruption legislation (2004–2009); development of a single window system (since 2007); development of e-government (since 2011); creation of a national competition for the best personnel practices and dissemination of the best practices in the regions of Russia (since 2013); deployment of digitalization in public administration using big data (since 2013) (The Oxford Handbook of Governance …, 2023). Last but not least, for these reasons, there has been a rapid breakthrough of Russia, its transformation into one of the economically progressive, socially oriented countries of the world with growing well-being of citizens. Of course, there were not only significant achievements on this path but also problems, in particular, if we talk about administrative mechanisms of public administration, we should mention the problems of eliminating mechanisms of excessive regulation, implementing schemes of participatory management, improving the professional level of civil servants, the prestige and image of the public service, improving anti-corruption measures with an emphasis on its prevention.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made adjustments to administrative reform and civil service reform, but the general direction of building the system according to Western theoretical and methodological models of extensive expansion of public services and professional development of the apparatus, as well as the progressive dynamics of the development of the Russian governance system, has remained. The governance system was able to successfully cope with the challenges of COVID-19 and adapt to the circumstances of the pandemic. It was necessary in an extremely short time to master new technologies of public administration related to restrictions on the movement of citizens and presence in public places, with the redistribution of resources for extraordinary medical purposes of disease prevention (including vaccination) and the transfer of a large volume of labor processes to a distant form, with a negative reaction to COVID-19 of a number of sectors of the economy (transport, tourism, sports, education, public catering, etc.). From 2019 to 2022, the social functions of the state have been significantly reformatted and even developed, at least not degraded (de Oliveira et al., 2021).

The weakening of the COVID-19 pandemic coincided for Russia with the beginning of a new testing period, surpassing in its scale, political challenges, economic stress, and social consequences the tests that were generated by the pandemic. Conflict in Ukraine, which has a deep history of degrading relations in the 2000s, moved in February 2022 into an acute phase of hostilities, a proxy-war with complex participation of NATO block, which is called by Russian officials a Special military operation (SMO). This confrontation has affected all sides of the economy, the social sphere, and governance in Russia. So, before the outbreak of hostilities, the number of sanctions imposed on Russia was 2,695, and on July 14, 2023, according to Castellum et al. (2023), there were 16,535 of them. These sanctions, which are still being introduced and improved, block imports that are significant for production and consumption, cover entire sectors of the economy and individual enterprises, transport, restrict the free movement of goods and services, and apply to Russian citizens. Russia's GDP (GDP) fell by 2.1% in 2022, with the largest drop occurring in the areas of trade, export, and import operations. At the same time, state expenditures increased by 2.8%, which is primarily due to direct and indirect military expenditures (Tradingeconomics.com, 2023). According to a survey by the Public Opinion Foundation[1], the level of anxiety among citizens has increased from 35% (on September 18, 2022, before the start of partial mobilization), and up to 70% (on October 2, 2022, immediately after the start of partial mobilization).

In the early 2000s, governance reform in Russia largely followed in the wake of the best administrative practices of Western countries, which met the goals of developing an open market economy. Now this path requires modifications. It can be said that the previous period of development of the economy, social sphere, and governance in Russia has ended, faced with the realities of sanctions pressure, the need to focus on import substitution, the restructuring of international relations, the transition to accelerated development of industries related to the provision of defense orders. This entails changing the requirements for directions and tools, for the very content of governance reforms. The previous agenda of the Russian governance reform requires rethinking and adaptation to new conditions. Not because the attitude towards "Western values" has changed, but above all for quite practical reasons caused by sanctions, restrictions, and a change of priorities. Following Western reforms in the mainstream, copying theoretical attitudes of client orientation and public participation becomes not the main thing, it is forced to obey the logic of mobilization management. At the same time, the conditions of technological progress and its decisive role in the reorientation of the economy and public life to mobilization needs make it impossible to implement the historically proven Soviet scheme of mobilization economy and strict administrative management, since flexibility, speed of reaction to changes and challenges, the turbulence of the economic and social spheres require managerial initiative. Managerial development according to the "Western canons" seems to have ended, it has exhausted itself. New approaches and solutions are required that meet the challenges of sanctions and military confrontation with the West and the search for new directions for Russia's development.

For Russia, which is currently in an unprecedented confrontation with the West, the agenda of administrative reform is even more important than in the

[1] The FOMnibus survey September 30 – October 2, 2022. 104 localities, 53 subjects of the Russian Federation, 1,500 respondents.

quiet years of the early 2000s. The quality of public administration is one of the few controllable factors in ensuring the stability, development and competitiveness of the country. The need to make economically inefficient political decisions, the loss of a large share of revenues, the restrictions on foreign trade, the reorientation of spending for military needs make it a priority to respond flexibly to the constantly emerging challenges, to increase the efficiency of the use of available resources and to improve the overall effectiveness of the regulatory system.

Definitely, not enough time has passed since 2022 for new approaches to administrative reform and civil service reform in Russia to be finally formed. Many vital goals, such as ensuring the stability of the economy, spatial reorientation of foreign economic relations, solving problems in the field of science and technology, require the formation of new approaches at all levels of governance, the creation of adaptable regulatory regimes. While in the first stage of confrontation with the West much was solved in the manual control mode, for long-term stability under the new conditions, innovative institutions and mechanisms of governance are required. In general, a new agenda has been formed, trends have emerged that allow us to talk about strengthening the flexibility of management (agile), primarily at the regional level, reorienting towards data-dependent approaches, changing governance resource support systems.

We will describe the trends and reforms of the civil service and administrative reforms since 2019 in their main parameters (agenda, trends, examples).

We will start with the transformation of the Russian civil service, because the readiness of the bureaucracy for change is a necessary condition, the most important tool for the transformation of the structure and functions of state bodies.

The description of changes in the civil service will be carried out using data and examples taken from the materials of the annual competition of the best practices of the Russian state and municipal service (Federal state bodies, state bodies of Subjects of the Russian Federation, and municipal authorities), conducted by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Russia (Ministry of Labor RF, 2023). The results of the first "post-COVID "competition in 2022–2023, which were summed up in May 2023, showed clear trend shift in the development of the Russian state apparatus, which can be explained by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the subsequent confrontation with Ukraine that followed this pandemic.

The most significant changes in the civil service of Russia that occurred in 2019–2023, include changes in the areas: 1) digitalization, 2) motivation, 3) evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of public servants' activities, remuneration of state and municipal employees, 4) education and advanced training in the field of public and municipal administration. Important shifts have been observed and recorded both in local practices and at the Federal bodies' level.

Digitalization of public service

The accelerated transition of personnel processes to an electronic form was caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the need to limit personal interaction of personnel services with employees as much as possible, replace it with a distant one and thereby preventing the spread of the disease. The demand for remote HR technologies has increased dramatically during COVID-19. In particular, the selection of candidates for public service began to be carried out remotely. This is reflected in the new practices of informatization of personnel processes developed by the subjects of the Russian Federation. In this regard, the following examples should be provided: a software and information system for selecting candidates for public service positions (Belgorod City Administration), a resource for the electronic submission of information by candidates for participation in competitions (the Government of the Voronezh Region), a program for the formation of electronic registers of independent experts for participation in competition commissions (the Administration of the Governor and the Government of the Irkutsk Region), podcasts to attract young people to public service in the format of video and audio recordings with answers to questions about the specifics of public service in the subject of Russia (Administration of the Governor and the Government of the Novosibirsk region). The best digital practice for selection for the civil service in 2022 was the practice of the Republic of Bashkortostan, where a structured information and analytical system for the comprehensive assessment of candidates for public service positions was created, with a distant assessment of the competencies of candidates for positions based on a case designer testing competencies in those areas that are necessary for a specific position. Thus, in Bashkortostan, the selection of personnel for public service has largely been transferred from personal physical appearance to the form of distant selection.

The other administrative processes, related to working with civil service personnel, were also digitized. Thus, IT services of internal interaction of civil servants with personnel offices (the Federal Tax Service of Russia) were developed, digital accounting was centralized with the creation of a unified personnel service of subjects of the Russian Federation (the Government and executive authorities of the Sakhalin Region), automatic processing of personnel data according to specified algorithms was introduced for HR analytics (the Apparatus of the Government of the Tula Region), a chatbot for the formation of corporate culture has been developed (the Government of the Samara region), information and communication technologies have begun to be actively used in the Vologda region when working with the personnel reserve for the replacement of higher positions, etc. The personnel processes and decisions at both the regional and Federal levels are now increasingly based on digital tools, and this breakthrough in the digitalization of public service in Russia was caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since mid-2022, under the influence of SMO and sanctions, the digitalization of the civil service has continued and taken a new direction. There are calls for increased attention to be paid to the security of remote communication channels through which confidential state information circulates. In this regard, since the government agencies cannot use Western software that is not protected against hacking, there is a need to develop Russian tools for video conferencing, data exchange and storage. Russian government agencies have begun to define their software and remote communication requirements. The development of import substitution in the field of computer personnel technologies has become one of the main activities of the Ministry of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media of the Russian Federation.

Motivation of civil servants

There has been a turning point in the transformation of the motivation of civil servants after 2019, which indicates a departure both from classical career motivation (Weber's motivation for the growth of professional competencies as the basis for appointment to higher positions, so-called competency-based promotion) and from the emphasis on material motivation. During the COVID-19 pandemic, attention to intangible and non-career-oriented motivation began to increase. The practice of stimulating prosocial motivation aimed at providing high-quality public services spread rapidly. For example, a competition to select the best inspectors of environmental supervision began to be conducted by the Federal Service for Supervision in the Environmental sphere. Another example could be provided, a two-stage competition for the provision of municipal services, consisting of an assessment by citizens of the quality of services, as well as internal monitoring of the compliance of services with standards and the quality of their transfer to electronic mode, is conducted by the Kaluga City Council. Professional competitions and tournaments to determine the best in the profession began to be held. For example, the Moscow Government held an accounting tournament among the centralized accounting departments of the city of Moscow, in which, in addition to online test tasks, a third stage was provided in person, at which participants were offered complex practical tasks. The state enterprise "Moscow Metro" holds contests for the best Metro employee and the best HR specialist. The competition for the cup of the Ministry of Economic Development of Russia on strategy and management (the Global Management Challenge project) using a business simulator is aimed at developing teamwork skills in the Ministry. During the pandemic, additional directions of simulating prosocial motivation began to develop. For example, encouraging parents of employees with letters of appreciation is practiced by the Federal Antimonopoly Service. The range of intangible rewards and badges, commemorative gifts, virtual honor boards (Agency of Labor and Employment, Krasnoyarsk Territory) have significantly expanded. All these practices are indicative of the changes in the motivational tools of the Russian bureaucracy during the COVID-19 period.

Even deeper changes in the transformation of the motivation of the state apparatus have been taking place since the second half of 2022, they are predetermined by the circumstances of the SMO. Prosocial motivation is being replenished (often even replaced) by the motivation of patriotism. The relationship between these two motivations is unclear, it requires additional research. When patriotism is motivated, other behaviors of officers occur that significantly correct prosocial motivation towards its transformation into patriotic service motivation. For example, there are many cases of civil servants volunteering, signing military contracts and temporarily resigning from the civil service (including from high positions of heads of regional and municipal levels). These new personnel practices are actively promoted by the media. The introduction of new signs of encouragement and regional non-material awards, other incentive measures related to assistance to injured citizens, also supports patriotic motivation, it is beginning to spread primarily in the administrations of the Southern regions of Russia (Belgorod, Kursk regions).

Efficiency, effectiveness, and remuneration

Since 2019, there have been three new trends in the tools for assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of public service, and remuneration of civil servants. Firstly, there is a transition from the evaluation of processes to the evaluation of results. The increase in turbulence and uncertainty in all areas of governance, associated with the challenges of COVID-19 and the current extraordinary situation of the sanctions restructuring of the economy and social sphere, destroys the routine of official processes. Process indicators are a priority in the case of stable activity of state bodies, however, when stability is violated and the ongoing reorientation of state bodies to new, rapidly changing circumstances, processes become less important, they change "on the go", the processes are not stable. Results are more important. In recent years, Federal bodies, as well as regional bodies, have begun to develop new systems for evaluating the performance of civil servants based on such indices and indicators that are directly related to the overall performance of state bodies, and for the Subjects of Russia – the governors of these Subjects. In the proposed perspective practices of evaluation, the central idea of the decomposition of the established indicators of bodies to the level of indicators of the effective performance of individual civil servants is carried out. A good example is the development of computer tools for evaluating the effectiveness of the performance of the executive authorities of the Sakhalin region based on the decomposition of the performance indicators that are used for calculating the rating of governors. Such an assessment is not requiring the personal presence of the evaluated employees at the commission's meetings of state bodies, it can be carried out distantly, using IT. It should be noted that not only the performance indicators of managers are evaluated, but also the performance indicators of line employees. Another example of a results-oriented assessment was the formal system of strategic and tactical indicators developed by the Ministry of Economic Development of the Tula Region (these indicators are taken from the strategies and development programs of state and municipal bodies of this region), which is further decomposed using a formal algorithm down to the performance indicators of individual employees.

Secondly, the evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of civil servants is increasingly becoming associated with the collection of data and with the development of evaluation software offered by the government agencies. These software tools consist, as a rule, of data blocks reflecting the values of established indices and indicators; mechanisms for collecting this data, often in an interactive mode, entering information by civil servants themselves, their managers, personnel and financial services; blocks of software data processing. The process of spontaneous adaptation of the best regional and federal practices of data collection and processing by other Federal bodies and regions has begun (for example, the practice developed in 2020 in the Leningrad region), which indicates the demand for this indicative assessment of the quality of public service. Remuneration systems are beginning to be built taking into account the results of work of civil servants, thereby becoming more flexible and adapting to the changing demands of governance in the current circumstances. Such changes in wages can be noted in St. Petersburg, in the Sakhalin region, and in the Tula region.

Thirdly, starting from 2022, the beginning of SMO, according to the Ministry of Finance of Russia, the percentage of state budget expenditures on defense and security is significantly increasing (in 2023, these expenditures in the approved budget amount to more than 9 trillion rubles, that is, 60% more than in 2021 (Ministry of Finance RF, 2023). The level of remuneration in the military and law enforcement spheres of public administration is growing at a faster pace. So, in June 2023, a resolution of the Russian Government was adopted in this regard (Resolution of Government of RF, 2023). Considerable funds are spent on contracts with volunteers entering military service to participate in a military operation. Spending on public administration in the new circumstances is increasing despite the budget deficit.

Education and professional development training

Modern requirements for governance differ significantly from those that existed before 2019. Flexibility in decision-making, prompt response to rapidly changing circumstances, prioritization in the context of budget deficits, require changes in public administration education and professional development training of civil servants. These changes cover all bachelor's and master's degree programs without exception, as well as post-graduate educational and research programs in public administration.

If before 2019 education in public administration did not have independence, it was included as a small compartment in the field of management first, and then economics, then after 2019 the situation changed. The changes can be described as complex and cover the ways of implementing higher education programs and training, the transformation of state educational standards, the specialties nomenclature of the Higher Attestation Commission of Russia, duration of the programs.

As for the ways of implementing educational programs, during COVID-19, distant technologies began to spread rapidly in the field of education and training. During the periods of the particularly acute course of the pandemic (winter 2021), almost all educational bachelor's and master's degree programs in public administration and public policy at universities, as well as training courses for civil servants, were transferred to a distant form. After the end of the pandemic, the return of universities to face-to-face education with physical presence in site began, but distance learning continues to be in demand. In particular, the distant training has taken root in programs for civil servants, in 2023, training centers in the regions of Russia, their technologies for working with personnel reserves, continued to reorient on distant format preferably.

New Federal State Educational Standards for Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Public Administration were adopted in 2020: Bachelor's degree in August 2020, with changes and amendments in November 2020 (Bachelor's Degree Standards, 2020); Master's degree in August 2020 (Master's Degree Standards, 2020). The distinctive features of these standards are flexibility (educational institutions can determine for themselves the disciplines in which students' professional competences are developed); the possibility of implementing programs using e-learning and distance learning technologies; requirements for internships in administrative institutions; requirements for participation in real applied governance projects; requirements for participation in research work. It should be noted that Bachelor's and Master's degree programs in public administration are now no longer classified under management or economics, but are a distinct type of higher professional education programs.

The changes also affected the postgraduate programs in the field of public administration, which became a separate level of professional education. The Ministry of Education and Science of Russia has approved a new nomenclature of scientific specialties (Order of Ministry of Education RF, 2021), according to which a Passport of a scientific specialty in state and municipal governance was adopted in July 2023. For the first time, this science is recognized in Russia as an independent field of research within economics. The way is open to the formation of dissertation councils for public administration in educational and scientific institutions.

Since the beginning of SMO in Ukraine, many ties with foreign universities have been severed, cooperation agreements have ceased to operate. Orientation to the Bologna standards for the duration of Bachelor's and Master's degree programs (4+2 years) has not become a priority: in contrast, educational programs of more flexible duration, oriented to the needs of the domestic market, have become in demand. The transition from Bachelor's degree to specialty programs (duration 4–6 years), and from Master's degree to specialized education programs (duration 1–3 years), was approved in the Decree of the President of Russia dated May 12, 2023 (Decree of the President of Russia, 2023). A list of 6 universities has been identified in which such programs will be piloted from September 2023. In the field of public administration, such programs are currently being developed, their adoption will affect the qualification requirements for public service positions, make these requirements more flexible and take functional positions into account.

If we evaluate in general the trends in the Russian civil service system from 2019 to the present, it can be observed that the primary focus has been on several key areas. These include the adoption of electronic technologies, flexibility, patriotic motivation, performance evaluation using data, transition to national standards of professional education.

There are also significant shifts in the contemporary agenda of the **Russian administrative system transformation**. If before a full-scale confrontation with the West the goals of increasing the attractiveness of the Russian economy for foreign investors, unification and integration of the regulatory environment with Western standards were important, now attention is focused on the stability of the national economy in its not so much financial as real dimension, on the diversification of production, reorientation of foreign economic relations. New priorities require different mechanisms and criteria for the effectiveness of public administration.

The main creative challenge is that no "best practice" has been developed for the new political and economic situation. It is necessary "on the go" to invent new and adapt the existing tools of public administration. The experience of the planned, mobilization economy of the USSR, which some Russian political scientists and economists refer to as a panacea, can hardly be the remedy for solving present-day problems. There is no reason for it. Direct government regulation, administrative planning methods have not shown sustainable results, while the market and entrepreneurial initiative have just provided some stability during the years of the pandemic and the increasing sanctions pressure.

Planning

In the near future the Russian Federation will have to find a combination of planning, regulation, and the market that is acceptable for the modern conditions. The new system of public administration should proceed, on the one hand, from the fact of increasing the role of the state, centralization of its functions, strengthening the role of planned, administrative mechanisms, and wider use of "manual control". At the same time, it is vital to preserve space for the market and competition, continue efforts to improve the business climate, reduce administrative barriers, create an understandable and as far as possible, predictable business environment, transparent and rational forms of interaction between the state and business and citizens. The new system, unlike the previous one, will use to a lesser extent the principles of NPM in terms of efficiency priority and incentives, as well as the approaches of Good Governance in terms of public participation, and will focus more on the model of the ideal bureaucrat, enhanced by digitalization, AI technologies, and social credit. It will be more important to achieve defined results than effectiveness, discipline in execution than seeking consensus. Significant changes are required in the system performance management, primarily in planning and strategic management. The system of strategic planning in Russia is established by Federal law, which defines the comprehensive system of sectoral and regional, long-term, medium-term, and short-term plans and outlooks at the level of Federal, regional, and local governments. When drafting the law, it was assumed, that plans, programs and projects would be coordinated according to the main parameters among themselves and linked to budgets of different levels, ensuring balance and spending funds in accordance with priorities. Despite the good wishes reflected in the law, it was not possible to implement the goals and principles set out in it in practice. The multi-level planning system has not been fully launched, many targets have not been achieved and will not be guaranteed to be achieved under the new conditions. First of all, this concerns the goals of technological and social development, budgetary policy, and foreign trade. Moreover, the goals set were not achieved during the pandemic and the introduction of numerous packages of sanctions but also before that.

It must be recognized that not only most of the strategic planning documents have lost their relevance, but their very structure and development procedure do not correspond to the current situation. The continuation of the practice of unrealistic planning for unpredictable periods not only costs the state dearly (according to our calculations and estimates of the Ministry of Economic Development of Russia, it costs billions of rubles annually and a lot of time spent by highly qualified specialists) but most importantly, creates unrealistic benchmarks. Market agents, to whom government plans and targets are also addressed, often do not believe them, and the signal function of planning is not implemented. In conditions of high uncertainty and limited resources, it is better not to have a plan at all than to plan with obviously big mistakes.

The discrepancy between plans and reality is the result, on the one hand, of the inconsistency between the format of the tools used and the dynamics of changes in planning objects and the external environment. On the other hand, there are bureaucratic, departmental interests, lack of adequate responsibility and incentives for execution. As well known, decisions made without personal risk and real responsibility cannot be reliable. The introduction of elements of personal responsibility by appointing deputy Prime Ministers of the Government of the Russian Federation and ministers in charge of the implementation of national projects is designed to partially solve the problem of responsibility. However, under conditions of constantly increasing sanctions and uncertainties, reduction of budget revenues, it is extremely difficult to determine the level of personal responsibility for failing to achieve previously set goals.

There is a “fatigue” from planning. A survey conducted among specialists in strategic planning shows that over the past 25 years, the strategic planning system in Russia has transformed from a system that has the elements of originality, creativity, ambition, self-development, publicity, to one for which such characteristics as template, detail, measurability, pragmatism, paternalism and lack of openness (Zhikharevich at al., 2022)[2].

Clearly, such a state of the planning system cannot be satisfactory, especially in conditions that require objective and up-to-date information and a quick and balanced response to the challenges of the external environment.

In recent years, the system of monitoring and control of performance indicators of National projects and State programs has been improved. The mechanisms of their adjustment have become more flexible. Reporting indicators are generated automatically by the Russian Statistical Agency and independent sources, which reduces the risk of manipulation. Passports of projects and State programs are approved together with the draft budget. However, all this can be attributed to technical improvements.

A more important innovation was the creation in early 2021 of the Coordination Center of the Government of the Russian Federation as an adaptive form of Agile management. The objectives of the Center are to coordinate the activities of Federal and regional authorities in the elaboration of strategic decisions, prompt response to emerging situations, as well as the management of priority projects of the Government. Digital technologies and various information resources, including big data, are widely used in the work of the Center. When creating the Center, the experience of similar coordination centers for the preparation of the Olympic Games in Sochi in 2014 and the World Cup in 2018, large-scale National projects, was used. Ministerial project offices with similar functions began to monitor the risks of non-fulfillment of State programs and Federal projects in their area of responsibility. To a certain extent, the creation of the Center means a positive departure from the non-viable, mechanistic strategic planning scheme provided for in the Federal Law “On Strategic Planning”.

The efficiency of Performance management and Planning in the coming years will depend on whether it is possible to find a successful combination of operational and strategic management. Without this, priority inevitably will be shifted to up-to-date issues at the expense of tasks that require a long time to solve, and

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[2] The survey was conducted by the Resource Center for Strategic Planning of the International Centre for Social and Economic Research – “Leontief Centre”.

more attention will be paid to doing things right vs doing the right things. According to experts, ambitious indicators in the strategic planning system are now less than 50%, and departmental, routine indicators are about 70%.

It is also necessary to find an appropriate mechanism of responsibility for the quality of planning and the achievement of goals and results, which will require the development of effective feedback, motivation, and objective control of the results achieved. The low level of responsibility leads to the fact that optimistic scenarios prevail at different levels of planning, which are easier to accept than to fulfill. The plans include tasks that do not have adequate resource support. Little attention is paid to ensuring resilience, i.e., strengthening their capacity to manage unforeseen challenges and potential shocks.

We will have to revise the list and formats of planning documents from the point of view of their relevance in management practice, budgeting, and control system. There is no need to develop plans for unrealistic deadlines, or to build programs in the areas where there is no obvious connection between the activities and the planned results.

In 2021, the modernization of the management of state programs, the main tool for planning and performance management in Russia, was carried out. The goals of sectoral programs were more clearly correlated with the goals of National projects. Program management is based on project principles: administrative process (routine bureaucratic functions) and project activities focused on achieving of results are separated. The institute of curators and managing boards of programs has been established – which is aimed at increasing responsibility.

In 2022, decisions were made to strengthen the relationship between programs and the budget, which, if necessary, allows for a more flexible redistribution of funds between programs.

Since 2022, it is allowed to redistribute the budget allocations of the Federal budget provided for the implementation of state programs both within the state program and between them without amending the budget law within 10% of the total amount of financial support for state programs for the corresponding year.

Digitalization of the planning and performance management system, which provides for the creation of a platform for the justification and implementation of management decisions, monitoring and control, risk management based on a single network of distributed data, can give a certain result.

Since 2019 the information support activities for strategic planning have been combined in a separate project, which is part of the Federal project "Digital Governance". Within the framework of the project it is planned to create an environment of interaction between the actors of strategic planning.

Public services

The most successful direction of modernization of the Russian governance is the civil service. The improvement of this sphere through the creation of One-Stop-Shops services and electronic services began more than ten years ago. According to the Federal project "The State for the People" for 2022–2030, it is planned to increase the level of satisfaction with services from 50% in 2022 to 90% in 2030 (Government News (a), 2023).

A One-Stop-Shops system "My Documents" has been created and is successfully functioning in the country. In 2009 the "Unified Portal of State and Municipal Services" was launched. By 2022, on average, more than 18 million services were successfully provided through the portal per month, i.e. more than 200 million public services per year. In general, 85% of all public services applicants receive online. The quality of services is subject to constant monitoring (Ministry of Digital Development, 2023).

The list of services provided online is constantly expanding. For example, in Moscow on the portal mos.ru along with traditional public services, there are services such as renting urban spaces and sports areas, making an appointment with a notary, issuing a parking permit, and transmitting information about checking or replacing water meters[3].

The next step in the development of public services is the creation of so-called super services, i.e., complex proactive services for life situations (birth of a child, admission to university, migration, online pension, receiving social allowances, etc.). Super services are designed to control which public services are needed by a particular user, independently select the data and documents necessary for the performance of the service, pay fees, and monitor the process of rendering the service.

The launch of super services will allow on average to halve the waiting time for receiving public services, dramatically reduce the number of documents requested, and ensure that the client is informed around the clock. The need to visit the department will be minimized.

Regulatory climate

One of the priorities under the sanctions is to improve the internal regulatory climate. The general direction in this area is the development of evidence-based and risk-based approaches, both in organizational and methodological aspects.

The goals of improving regulation are, firstly, to reduce the accumulated ineffective regulations and limit the flow of new regulations, requirements, instructions that do not have a clear concept and justification and are often directly related to the local interests of bureaucratic groups. Secondly, to overcome the limited and non-correct views of the developer of regulatory norms (intentional or unintentional), which manifests itself in insufficient consideration of the overall burden on market participants as a result of the introduction of the projected norms of regulation.

Thirdly, it is necessary to extend the use of evidence-based methods in assessing regulatory impact, improve and standardize methods for calculating expected costs and damage prevented. This will increase the objectivity of the

[3] Moscow topped the rating of the quality of electronic public services for the third time in a row. URL: https://www.mos.ru/news/item/108856073/ (accepted: 15.08.2023).

choice among alternative regulators and avoid the most inefficient of them. Fourth, it is important to analyze alternatives when achieving regulatory goals. Traditional tools are various kinds of prohibitions, restrictions, and admissions, while behavioral approach methods are rarely used, although in some cases they may be more effective. Fifth, algorithmic regulation tools related to digitalization and the introduction of AI in public administration should be developed.

The foundations of these initiatives are laid down by two Federal laws on State Control and Supervision and on Mandatory Requirements. These laws made it possible to implement programs of the so-called Regulatory guillotine and the reform of State control, supervision and licensing activities.

As a result of the guillotine, i.e. the dismantling of inefficient regulations, more than 8.5 thousand Soviet-era regulations and more than 3 thousand acts issued after 1991 were canceled (KND Portal (b), 2023).

This has significantly cleared the regulatory field, reduced the administrative costs of doing business.

Unfortunately, the guillotine did not extend to all areas of regulation. A significant part of the mandatory requirements and restrictions were not affected. The monopoly of the regulator has been preserved, which often proceeds from the principle of “poor regulation is better than its absence”. The effectiveness of the guillotine should not be overestimated, and among the canceled acts were those that were not actually applied and did not contain mandatory requirements, i.e. did not affect the amount of administrative burden (Knutov et al., 2022).

Since 2021, a new system of control and supervisory legislation has been launched, aimed at establishing detailed rules for the organization of control and supervisory activities and creating a plain and simple system of mandatory requirements for businesses that correspond to the current level of technological development and a risk-oriented approach. This made it possible to reduce the number of inspections of enterprises in 2022 by almost 2.5 times compared to 2021 (KND Portal (a), 2023).

From March 2022 to the end of 2023, a moratorium on planned inspections has been introduced in the Russian Federation. During this period, inspections will be carried out only at objects of extremely high risk, and high-risk categories. This measure will significantly reduce the administrative costs of business: according to expert estimates, for a total amount of 160 billion to 180 billion rubles (Summary Report of Government of RF, 2023).

A notable step forward in the Russian regulatory system has also been the development of impact assessment methods based on the standard cost model. Proposals also have been developed to establish “significance thresholds” for the selection of requirements for which it is advisable to conduct a full-scale regulatory impact assessment.

A digital platform containing a register of mandatory requirements is also being developed, which allows planning and recording of all control measures, simplifying interdepartmental interactions and the work of inspectors. The platform allows for operational and objective monitoring of the control and supervision system and its results (KND Portal (b), 2023). The development of algorithmic regulation systems based on artificial intelligence is on the agenda.

Initiative budgeting/Open Government

The Institute of Open Government in Russia existed from 2012 to 2018. Nevertheless, at the Federal and regional levels of executive power in Russia, such elements of Open Government as public councils at executive authorities, portals for public consultations on various issues, including discussion of draft regulations and planning documents, Commissions for coordination of anti-corruption measures, etc. continue to operate.

In a period of sharp socio-economic changes, information wars, instability, and uncertainty, forced adoption of unpopular decisions, open government and participation mechanisms have to be treated with caution, given the possibility of their use in the interests of individual groups and manipulation. Despite the complexity of using open government mechanisms in the conditions of the difficult socio-economic situation of the country, unprecedented sanctions, and external information pressure, certain instruments of participation in public administration are adopted to current circumstances.

This can be attributed, for example, to the practice of so-called Initiative budgeting, which implies the involvement of citizens in the process of making budget decisions. According to the report of the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation on the best practices of initiative budgeting in 2021 in 75 subjects of the Russian Federation, initiative budgeting has become an element of everyday activities at the regional and municipal levels (Ministry of Finance RF Report, 2022). Such practices as the “people’s budget”, initiative projects, improvement and development of rural areas, a comfortable urban environment, support for NGOs, and socially significant projects have become the most widespread.

Digitalization of services

Over the past decade, the digitalization of public administration in Russia has been proceeding at a high pace, which has allowed almost complete switching to online provision of public services, introducing a number of platform solutions in the public sector. In 2022, Russia entered the list of top countries in the digital transformation of the public sector in the World Bank rating. The rating takes into account achievements in the development of the Core Government Systems, Public Service Delivery, Digital Citizen Engagement, and Institutional Factors (GOVTECH Maturity Index, 2022).

Russia’s high place in the world ranking is ensured by the implementation of a number of state programs and projects since 2000. Currently, the National Digital Economy Project is being implemented, which includes tasks in the field of digital public administration: further digitalization of public services and government functions, database development and interdepartmental online interaction.

The successful implementation of digital services has also been facilitated by the relatively high digital readiness of the population, which consists of digital literacy and digital trust, i.e. people’s confidence in the reliability and security of digital technologies and processes.

An important prerequisite for integrated digitalization is also the development of information systems of the Federal authorities on the unified basis of the national GOVTECH platform – the cloud platform solution for federal and regional authorities for the rapid and efficient development of the government information systems and digital services (COVTECH, 2023).

The creation of a unified national digital platform is an important step to ensure the independence of the Russian public information technology sector and strengthen Russia's technological sovereignty. The first service launched on the platform was Federal Property Online. Users can submit applications for the purchase and lease of land plots, conclude transactions, etc. in electronic form. GOVTECH will actively develop machine learning and artificial intelligence technologies (Government News (b), 2023).

Along with the informatization of government agencies, including document management and the national data management system, an important direction is the creation of a Unified biometric system for remote identification of citizens. The use of biometrics will not only expand and make the portal of public services more convenient, but also increases the security of personal data, create electronic doubles, including personal documents.

In 2023, the transition of all executive authorities to the exchange of documents in electronic form is underway. This will help to begin the full digitalization of rulemaking, the translation of norms and rules into a machine-readable format, increase the quality level and reduce the time required to develop draft acts. In the future, digitalization can also cover the process of rulemaking within such associations as the Eurasian Economic Union, BRICS, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Conclusion

It should be stated that:

1) Digitalization of administrative processes and public service governance became the leading trend in governance reforms.
2) Agile governance, multi-level flexible result-oriented planning, including more flexibility in budgeting, in regulation, and the new procedures of public servants' result-orienting evaluation is the response of the governance system to challenges. The trends to simplify governance procedures are acting as the balance factor for the stabilization of the system of governance in present turbulent conditions.
3) Resilience and National Security are most important now for the Russian Government. The orientation on crisis management, SMO, and sanctions threats became the motto of the present system of Governance in Russia.

Thus, the changes in recent years (2019–2023) in the trends of governance reforms in Russia call into question the orientation of Russian reforms to the "standard" understanding of customer orientation and NPG. The reasons for the changes were external circumstances: first, COVID-19, and then the confrontation with Ukraine and the sanctions regime of the economy. Perhaps, as a result of these changes, a new national model of governance will appear, based on the requirements of the autonomy of the national economy and its resilience to sanctions, oriented on security, e-governance, and flexible response to external challenges.

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RECENT PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORMS IN INDIA AND IMPACT

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Abstract. In recent years India has introduced a number of public administrative reforms to encourage greater efficiency, transparency, accountability, and corruption-free governance, and reduced scope for discretion. Against this background of changing times, the paper describes the initiatives taken in India to redefine the role of government and the bureaucracy with a focus on good governance. The paper also discusses the reform measures undertaken in India to strengthen and enhance public administration adopting the e-governance route and empowering citizens.

Keywords: public administration; reforms; e-government; e-administration; e-governance.

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Public administration pertains to administrative activities of the government and consists of tasks that facilitate fulfillment or enforcement of public policy. Public administration requires technical knowledge of a field, which enables the administrator to perform the tasks, and management techniques to carry out the functions effectively. With the advent of globalisation and liberalisation, public administration in India is required to dismantle the regime of regulations, controls, restrictions, licenses, and secrecy; and become responsive, transparent, open and competitive. This called for necessary administrative reforms to eliminate redundant practices, procedures, and administrative laws.

Despite the difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic, the recent public administration reforms in the country have made a positive impact, especially the online public services. National digital transformation largely contributed to the construction of e-government and e-administration, which facilitated the change in administration from "a rule-based to a role-based" model. To further enhance public administration reforms, the National Conference on e-Governance was organized by the DARPG along with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology in 2020 to exchange experiences relating to e-Governance initiatives through engagement with experts, intellectuals from industry, and academic institutions.

Undoubtedly, reforms are required to address the new challenges in managing public affairs through the enhancement of administrative capability. However, as civil servants are accountable to political executives, which may lead to the politicisation of civil services, external accountability mechanisms such as citizen charters, social audits and outcome orientation among civil servants, assume paramount importance. This would facilitate public administration to be unbiased, rational and enable it to serve the people better.

Recent reforms of significance in India include:

- *"Mission Karmayogi" (National Program for Civil Services Capacity Building)* launched in September 2020 is a capacity building apparatus at individual, institutional and process levels for efficient public service delivery, and aims at building a future-ready civil service with the right attitude, skills, and knowledge.
- To monitor and follow up the implementation of important Government programs and projects, a real-time online system, called *"e-Samiksha"* was revamped in July 2020. It is also used as a digital monitor for the bureaucracy to rein in slackers; and as a tool for intensive screening to weed out officers who are inefficient and of doubtful integrity by premature retirement.
- As part of digital governance, the *e-Office Mission Mode Project (MMP)* has been strengthened to enable ministries and departments to switch over to paperless offices and efficient decision-making.
- An online web-enabled system is developed for the *Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS),* which provides the facility to lodge a grievance online from any geographical location. It enables the citizen to track online the grievance being followed up with the Departments concerned and also enables the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) to monitor the grievance.
- *National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment is comprehensively restructured* to assess the efficiency of e-Governance service delivery of the national and provincial governments.

The advent of globalisation has led to interconnectedness among different economies, and nations have become dependent on each other. Globalisation in its train brought privatisation of public enterprises and liberalisation. In the process, the private sector attained enhanced economic and financial power. Globalisation has profoundly impacted the way public administration functions. For example, India has taken steps to dismantle the regime of regulations, controls, restrictions, licenses, and secrecy; and has taken initiatives to orient public administration to be responsive, transparent, open, and competitive.

On the other hand, the advancement of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has emerged as a significant instrument to carry out public administration tasks through simplified work processes in transparent manner and provide service delivery to the people with speed and efficiency. India, for instance, promoted the use and application of ICT in public administration and introduced e-governance to facilitate the effective delivery of services, improved decision-making, knowledge management, communication, human resources, and financial management.

E-Office

Speed, simple work process, transparency, and easy tracking are essential for good and responsive governance. This requires a change in the existing system and workflows in government offices. In recognition of the need for efficiency in government processes and service delivery mechanisms, e-Office is taken up as a core Mission Mode Project (MMP) under the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP).

The e-Office product is developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) as a single reusable system and brings together independent functions and systems under a single framework. The e-Office introduces an electronic file system replacing the age-old manual process. The e-Office facilitates simplified, responsive, and transparent working of government offices. In the process, e-Office increases accountability, transforms the government work culture and ethics, enhances productivity, quality, resource management, turnaround time, and increases transparency.

The e-Office Suite contains:

– File Management System (e-File) includes the creation of files (electronic and physical files), the automation of the processing of files, the movement of files, the tracking of files and their management;
– Knowledge Management System (KMS) is a centralized repository for various documents such as Acts, Policies and Guidelines;
– Collaboration and Messaging Services (CAMS) are used for internal collaboration and messaging;
– Leave Management System (e-Leave) automates the leave application and approval process;
– Tour Management System (e-Tour) automates staff travel programmes;
– Personnel Information Management System (PIMS) manages employee records and the output of PIMS is the e-Service Book;
– Smart Performance Appraisal Report Recording Online Window (SPARROW) application is used for electronic filing of Performance Appraisal Report (PAR).

To date, more than 400 different ministries and departments of the National and Provincial Governments use e-Office. The UN E-Governance Survey of 2020 ranked India as a country with a high' – e-government development index.

E-Samiksha

To complement e-Office and augment the benefits arising therefrom, e-Samiksha was introduced in 2014 and revamped in 2020. The e-Samiksha system is an online monitoring and compliance mechanism. It is used for tracking the progress of policy initiatives and projects and facilitates follow-up actions of various ministries by the Cabinet Secretary, who is the administrative head of the national government, and the Office of the Prime Minister on a real-time basis. This initiative is aimed to enhance efficiency, bring transparency, reduce protracted correspondence, facilitate fast tracking compliance of pending action-points of various implementing agencies, and to be used as a digital monitor to rein in slackers and to carry out intensive review for weeding out officers who are inefficient and of doubtful integrity.

The features of e-Samiksha system cover:

- Addition of action-points, issues, and targets in the e-Samiksha digital platform, and the system automatically pushes for regular interval updating the respective stakeholders, till compliance is attained;
- Generation of various exceptional and compliance status reports for the monitoring agencies;
- Facilitating the monitoring agencies to give further directions and send emails or SMS to the stakeholder(s) on a particular action-point or issue;
- Providing the monitoring agencies to give directions to the stakeholders, and the messages are prioritized and displayed in different colours to enable the stakeholders to take prompt actions;
- A two-way module facilitates stakeholders to raise their action-points, proposals or issues, pending with other stakeholders, and to seek updates on their pendency;
- Provision of various other modules for tracking and monitoring compliance; e-Patrachar, a comprehensive tool, has been incorporated into the system to track and speed up communication among stakeholders for sending various types of correspondence such as notices and agendas for meetings, minutes-of-the-meeting, circulars, letters on the e-mail of the user concerned.

The "Archived" option is also available in e-Samiksha for those categories that do not require further monitoring and can be moved from the main dashboard to the archived area.

In this system, most of the activities take place online. By using e-Samiksha, project and programme implementers have been able to avoid physical movement, which in turn resulted in saving of enormous amount of paper work, travel costs and energy. This has helped speed up the monitoring and compliance of a large number of action points, proposals, targets, etc. It has also helped reduce the time taken to deliver services and clarify the pendency of operations through a single window interface.

The initial results have been very encouraging and the e-Samiksha has been widely appreciated. It could become the forerunner for "paperless" functioning in the Government.

National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment

To boost the e-government endeavors and to embark on the journey for Digital Government excellence, the National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA) was introduced in 2018 by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DAPRG), Government of India. The framework of NeSDA is based on the Online Service Index (OSI) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) e-Government Survey, and has been customized to suit the federal structure of India and the e-Governance landscape of the States (i.e. provinces) and Union Territories (areas or regions administered by the national government).

The overall objective of NeSDA is to measure the depth and effectiveness of existing e-Governance service delivery mechanisms. NeSDA framework covers services under government-to-business and government-to-citizen categories for six sectors, namely. Finance, Labor and Employment, Education, Local Government and Utilities, Social Welfare, including Agriculture and Health, and Environment, including Fire. In the year 2021, three more sectors, namely, Public Procurement, Home (i.e. Interior) Department, and Tourism – have been included in the NeSDA ambit.

To improve the effectiveness of delivering online services to the citizens periodical assessment is conducted by DARPG. In 2021 the NeSDA framework and service portals were primarily assessed on seven key parameters, which are – accessibility, content availability, ease of use, information security and privacy, end-service delivery, integrated service delivery, and status and request tracking. The assessment survey showed significant progress in e-Governance services across the country. In addition, governance in the times of pandemic required the operationalisation of security measures such as Virtual Private Networks (VPNs), flexible working policies, including work-from-home, and the development of several new applications that brought citizens and government closer through the use of technology and, among others, providing timely services at the doorstep. The key findings of the assessment survey are:

- Increase in e-Service Delivery;
- Increasing use of Integrated/ Centralized Portals for delivery of e-Services;
- Improvement in all assessment parameters.

Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS)

Good governance strives to continuously improve and bring excellence in public service delivery and redress the grievances of citizens in a meaningful manner. In this regard, the DAR&PG has been making endeavors by effectively coordinating with different Ministries and Departments of the Government and trying to eliminate the causes of grievances. Redress of citizens' grievances is one of the most important initiatives of the department.

An online platform is set up by the department and is continuously available to the citizens to lodge their grievances to the public authorities on any subject related to service delivery. It is a single portal connected to all the Ministries and Departments of national and provincial governments. The portal is also accessible to the citizens through a stand-alone mobile application downloadable through the Google Play store and a mobile application integrated with Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance (UMANG) developed by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and National e-Governance Division (NeGD) to drive mobile governance in the country.

The DAR&PG formulated public grievance redress mechanisms for effective and timely redress / settlement of citizens' grievances. An analysis of grievance disposals reveals about 87% of ministries and departments have disposed of the grievances in less than 45 days. There are continuous efforts to streamline and strengthen CPGRAMS.

National Conference on e-Governance

To enhance public administration reforms, the National Conference on e-Governance was organized by the DARPG along with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology in 2020 and the post-pandemic period in 2022 to exchange experiences relating to e-Governance initiatives with experts, industry, and academic institutions. The conference provided momentum to the e-Governance initiatives across the country and gave opportunities to civil servants to showcase their successful interventions in e-Governance in improving end-to-end service delivery.

The key resolution adopted in the conference was that national and provincial governments will collaborate to bring citizens and government closer through digital platforms; transform citizen services through the use of technology by leveraging the artifacts of India Stack; accelerate the implementation of public digital platforms at national level in key social sectors, i.e. Health, Education, Agriculture, etc.; ensure resilient Government Infrastructure with robust technological solutions to withstand pandemic-like disruptions; integrate all State/District portals with CPGRAMS for seamless Redressal of Public Grievances; adopt e-office version 7.0 in all ministries and departments; use technology for propagating end-to-end service delivery without human interference to citizens at the grass root level.

"Mission Karmayogi"

It is important to understand that despite advanced technological support, innovative initiatives, and various reform interventions, the pivotal factor for success lies in the approach taken and the mind-set of the civil servants, who are primarily responsible for effectively and efficiently implementing the plans and programs.

In this context, the national government launched "Mission Karmayogi" in September 2020. This project aims to "comprehensively reform capacity building at the individual, institutional and process levels for efficient public service delivery". To meet this objective, "Mission Karmayogi" focuses on preparing civil service officers for the future by making them more "creative, constructive, imaginative, innovative, proactive, professional, progressive, energetic, empowering, transparent and technology- oriented". It involves creation of both functional and behavioral competencies in civil servants.

"Mission Karmayogi" signifies the importance of "on-site learning" to complement "off-site learning". It aimed to ensure an ecosystem of shared training infrastructure that includes learning materials, institutions, and personnel and also pivots to align all civil service positions to a Framework of Roles, Activities, and Competencies (FRACs) approach and to create and deliver learning content relevant to the identified FRACs in every government entity.

It ensures that all civil servants are given the opportunity to continuously build and strengthen their behavioral, functional, and domain competencies in their liberated and administered learning pathways. It also enables all central ministries and departments, including organisations, to head on and infuse their resources towards co-creation and sharing the collaborative and common ecosystem of learning through an annual financial subscription for every employee. It collaborates with the best-in-class content creators, including public training institutions, universities, start-ups, and individual experts.

Under the "Mission Karmayogi" an online platform called Integrated Government Online Training (iGOT-Karmayogi) is created**.** The platform provides the content to learn from global best practices rooted in **"**Indian ethos". Civil servants are required to take courses on this platform on the basis of which the performance of civil servants will be evaluated. It applies to all civil servants (including contractual employees) in the various ministries, departments, organisations and agencies of the national government. The willing provincial governments are also enabled to align their capacity building plans in a similar manner.

It should be underlined that this online platform has been effectively used by Department of Personnel and Training in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to impart e-learning on alternative line of defense that provides customized learning content to various COVID warriors.

There is also a system for providing tools through which departments and managers can monitor and mentor officials. The system ensures the delivery of learning tools at anytime, anywhere and on any device to train about 20 million users, which was previously not attainable through traditional measures. Further, a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), namely "Karmayogi Bharat," was introduced in 2022 as a not-for-profit 100% government-owned company, responsible for delivering and managing the design, implementation, enhancement, and management of a digital platform and infrastructure, managing and delivering competency assessment services, managing telemetry data, and ensuring the provision of monitoring and evaluation.

"Mission Karmayogi" is thus an initiative which is intended to modernize thinking of the civil servants and build and strengthen their competencies.

National digital transformation largely contributed to the construction of e-government and e-administration, which facilitated the change in administration from "a rule-based to a role-based" model. The recent public administration reforms have made a positive impact, especially the online public services which was evident during the COVID-19 pandemic time. NIC leveraged technology to support the government organisations to carry out essential tasks during the COVID-19 lockdown period and supported the administration in this crisis through ICT solutions and infrastructural competences. Technical support has also been provided for conducting desktop-based video-conferencing through different applications at the residences of government officers. The technology-enabled services and platforms were highly successful in providing a sustainable environment.

The use of Integrated Command and Control Centre, e-pass, CCTV cameras equipped with artificial intelligence and e-office enabled the district administration to properly conduct contact tracing of positive cases, quarantine of suspected infected people and preparedness study of COVID-19 hospitals. The officials of the district administration, municipal corporations and many other government bodies extensively used the video conferencing facility of the NIC. It also enabled citizens "to work from home" so that the lockdown did not prevent them from doing their jobs and earning a living. People were also able to buy daily food and consumables, medicines, cooked meals, etc. and have them delivered to their homes as electronic facilities were available to the public.

In summary, the progress made in regard to digital transformation in the development of e-government and e-administration in India has been fairly significant.

Undoubtedly, reforms are required to address the new challenges in managing public affairs through continual enhancement of administrative capability. However, as civil servants are accountable to political executives that may lead to politicization of the civil services, external accountability mechanisms such as citizen charters, social audits, and outcome orientation of civil servants, are of paramount importance. Thrust needs to be given to change in mindset that impedes acceptance of change and it is a major constraining factor. This would facilitate public administration to be unbiased, rational, and enable it to serve the people better.

Considering India's growth ambition, a massive scale-up in capacity-building is needed both at the political and bureaucratic levels. As democracies mature, elected representatives play a more proactive role in policy-making. It is, therefore, essential that the elected representatives are able to understand the nuances of policy-making, and efforts must be made to build the capability to envision the future and work towards its realisation. The goal should be to equip the entire chain of command to coordinate and steer the ship towards a national goal.

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CONTINUITY VERSUS CHANGE: EVOLVING TRAJECTORIES OF CHINESE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract. China's public administration system has been shaped by incremental reforms since China started its reform and opening up in 1978. These reforms highlighted a delicate balance between continuity and change so gradual, incessant, and autonomous adaptation to China's socioeconomic development as well as to its external environment could happen. Since China moved into the "deep-water zone" in the recent decade, does this reform strategy remain effective? This article examines the Chinese way of introducing public administration reforms, with a focus on the reforms in the past decade. Although incremental reform has in general been kept useful, changing internal and external conditions in China have made it more difficult to achieve innovations and systematic transformation through incremental reforms. An apparent approach to politicization has replaced the fragile politics-administration dichotomy and reshaped the way of value balancing in China's administrative system.

Keywords: public administration; reform; incremental reform; politicization; China.

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Introduction

Public administration in China has developed dynamically since 1978 under the influence of numerous factors. These include, above all, the long-standing administrative traditions, the socialist practices since 1949 and the new learning processes and innovations to adapt to a market economy and an open society (Aufrecht and Bun, 1995). Reforms were introduced to the system, enabling it to adapt to and facilitate vast changes in the socioeconomic environment. Looking back, Chinese public administration has provided an effective administrative foundation for China's development towards the world's second largest economy and the number one trade country and has cumulated such internal and external governance capacities to support huge public programs like the poverty alleviation campaign and Belt-Road Initiative.

Incremental reform has been widely recognized as the fundamental difference between China's transition path and those of many other former socialist countries, and as one major cause of China's success (Zheng, 1999; Jing 2017, 2020). Incremental reform highlights a delicate way of introducing changes. Incremental reform is not a single reform, but a framework and philosophy of change. In China's reform context, it requests an introduction of economic reforms under an existing political regime, creating a virtuous interplay between economic and political sectors. Reforms may not have a clear long-term goal at the beginning but aim at continuous processes of problem identification and solution, with a promise to keep dynamic and piecemeal adjustments and improvements. Reforms usually start from local and easy areas as experimental and informal practices before formal and national policies are enacted. Reformers are inclined to induce changes by demonstrating performance, providing incentives, and exchanging for consensus instead of imposing fiats and orders. So in general incremental reform makes use of innovations to reveal and utilize the potential vitality within the system and to enable changes.

Incremental reform receives fundamental support from behavioral and institutional theories. Bounded rationality, complex system interdependence, and the absence of charismatic leadership often make gradual changes the only possible and viable second-best solution (Simon, 1957; Lindblom, 1959; Allison,1969). Theories like path dependence theory and population ecology theory also provide alternative mechanisms to explain inertia in human and institutional behavior (Pierson, 2000; Hannan and Freeman, 1984). Nonetheless, incremental reform may not necessarily lead to good performance, and it may strengthen the lock-in effect that fixes the system in an inefficient path (David, 1985). Radical reform, such as "big bang" or "shock therapy" reforms, are deemed indispensable to break the inefficient path and to avoid more destructive revolutions when incremental changes no longer work. Which reform strategies work often depends on multiple dynamic factors in the exact reform contexts.

China's reforms in public administration followed an incremental path as well. In this paper, public administration reforms are defined as purposeful changes to the structures, functions, values, and authorities of the public administration system. This definition adopts a broad view of public administration as part of the general institutional system, which reflects the reality that China's public administration system has always been deeply and directly influenced by external sectors such as the political system. Accordingly, the paper focuses on major reforms in areas such as politics-administration relations, civil service, intergovernmental relations, performance management, public finance, anti-corruption, technical upgrading, government-market relations, and government-society relations. In these reform areas, changes were introduced in a gradual manner, allowing the system to afford a process of learning by doing. These reforms were not always linear and often accommodated such "two-step forward and one-step back" changes and processes of punctuated equilibrium. Values, institutions, and personnel of Chinese public administration were reshaped in these reforms to respond to complex governance demands from its domestic and international environments.

Public administration in China can hardly be defined by any of the existing administrative paradigms or their hybrids. Western public administration models such as traditional Weberian public administration, New Public Management and New Public Governance have only been partially adopted in China. Meanwhile, despite many rounds of major restructuring, China's administrative system kept its many initial attributes rooted in its planned-economy history. This unique system reconciles elements from different frameworks and highlights China's pragmatic governance philosophy that maximizes adaptation performance in governing unprecedentedly new and complex societies (Jing, 2017; Tang, 2020). As a result, the Chinese public administration model, if there is one, lacks clear theoretical prescriptions, and is often covered by the general descriptions of China models such as the western-coined Beijing Consensus and the China-Style Modernization proposed by the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in October 2022.

Why was incremental reform in China viable in the past decades, and will it be viable in the future? This is the core question that this article aims to answer, and the reason to raise this question is that new governance contexts, issues, and challenges in China have made previous reform methods more difficult to be successful.

Since gradual change is more often than not a default choice across different countries and cultures, the essential question is whether China can still afford incremental reform to achieve good governance, or it has to risk initiating comprehensive reform.

To offer a preliminary answer, this paper will study the relation between change and continuity in Chinese public administration and will focus on the past decade, namely between 2012–2022. In the following, the paper will first establish a framework to understand how change and continuity were balanced in the incremental reform of Chinese public administration and why such a balance could be effective. The public administration reforms in the past decade are used to empirically examine the power of the framework. The paper will then provide further discussions before being concluded.

Change versus continuity: Value balancing in Chinese public administration

Since 1978 reform has become a buzzword in all sectors of China including public administration. Yet at the beginning, there were no accepted ideas about what to reform and how to reform. Reforms in the former Soviet Union and Central and East European socialist countries hardly provided successful and useful examples, and reform packages such as shock therapy advocated by western scholars were deemed as inappropriate and self-destructive in nature. Hence, the way of introducing changes was a major challenge and was left to the Chinese government to handle.

Reconciling change and continuity became a core concern in the reforming processes, and the essence was to balance new and existing values and interests so reforms would create incentives, trust, and support instead of incurring chaos, unaffordable costs, and resistance. Different contexts may have different ways to weigh and balance different values (Wal and Yang, 2014). There are four major generalizable principles, beside others, to reconcile change and continuity in Chinese public administration. These principles often prefer an ordered, controlled, and step-wise approach to introducing changes.

The first principle was to keep administrative reforms as means of enhancing the political regime. Maintaining, strengthening, and improving political leadership of the CPC was consistently recognized as one essential goal of administrative reforms. During China's socioeconomic transformation, changes and adjustments in the administrative system should aim at enhancing the capacities of the CPC to lead an emerging market economy and civil society. Consequently, the western tenet of the politics-administration dichotomy was never adopted despite some experiments in this vein in the 1980s. For administrative reform ideas and measures, a top feasibility criterion was its impact on party leadership. One example was China's civil service reform. China gradually brought in modern civil service institutions that fundamentally declined the idea of political neutrality. Civil service was integrated with the existing cadre personnel management system, seeking a synergy between professional competence and political loyalty (Chan, 2007). The majority of civil servants were party members, and their political loyalty and activism were treated as a basic source as well as an indicator of job performance.

The second principle was the reform sequence. China's administrative reforms followed a rule of least resistance, namely: to start from relatively easy issues and local areas, and to start with partial and informal changes. A positive-feedback learning process was emphasized to produce information, knowledge, trust, and support through success stories, and to keep incessant dynamic reforms. For example, the economic powers of local governments were gradually expanded so that they could make more and bigger decisions. Citizens' economic rights were also gradually recognized and legalized so they could run and own enterprises. A linear process of progress was expected although linear changes may result in major adjustments. For example, a fiscal contracting system was adopted in the 1980s to provide economic incentives to provinces. Such a discretion-based system encountered continuous adjustments until in 1994 was replaced by a rule-based tax-assignment system (Wang, 1997). Likewise, the tax-assignment system was continuously adjusted, such as the changes to individual income tax, business tax, and value-added tax.

The third principle was pragmatic informalism. Due to the aforementioned reform sequence, administrative reforms in China were often informal and ad hoc aiming at specific issues. Consequently, there was a lack of legal justification, policy coordination, and comprehensive design. In other words, reforms were often experiments that violated existing laws and policies. Hence, a tacit "green light" had to exist to encourage reforms with goodwill and the right direction. Since the 1980s, an active pro-innovation culture emerged in the public sector in China that awarded risk-taking officials. The central government tended to be tolerant of local innovations and would promote successful ones as national policies or laws. It also used experiments (*shi dian*) for evidence-based policy making (Heilmann, 2008). The pragmatic informalism provided credibility for incessant reforms despite the slowness in adjusting the legal system and allowed the existence of many "dual tracks" and "special zones". It also allowed for ad hoc and particular solutions to specific conditions and problems despite the hardness to manage the potentially excessive flexibility and lack of formal standards (Tang and Lo, 2009).

The fourth principle was an emphasis on the positive-sum game. Reforms could create winners and losers. Those that created pure losers and hurt veto-players may not sustain. China's administrative reforms tended to use incentives instead of coercion to solve difficult issues and took multiple strategies to avoid direct confrontation (Jing and Zhang, 2019). For example, major administrative downsizing happened in the 1990s. Downsized personnel were given choices such as early retirement (with enhanced pension), transfer to public service units and state-owned enterprises, higher-education opportunities, and retraining and reemployment in the market sector. For major projects like the Three-Gorge Dam Project, the relocation of local residents was embedded in a major poverty alleviation program.

These four principles highlight the inherent logic of incremental reforms in the balancing of values. Reform sequence, by adopting step-wise changes, emphasizes gradual changes to guarantee the protection of vested interests. Political leadership emphasizes political values and is often characterized by formalism, while pragmatism emphasizes values related to development and is often characterized by the pursuit of practical results such as efficiency, effectiveness, and economy. A delicate balance between political and pragmatic values is critical to the viability of incremental reforms. Such a balance is reflected in reform results – a positive sum game indicates that actors representing different values may continue their collaboration. Hence, incremental reforms often feature continuous changes or changes with continuity.

Since human rationality often prefers gradual instead of radical changes, why could incremental reform succeed in China but fail in many other transitional contexts? There existed some favorable factors in China. First, the administrative system was not yet mature. Rules, procedures, responsibilities, and functional boundaries were not hardened and had to change due to the vast changes in the economy and society. As the economy continued to grow, market-facilitating administrative reforms made the bureaucracy one among the residue claimants and could manipulate new resources to induce compliance and cooperation. Second, there was a strong party that was determined to maintain a virtuous balance between development, reform, and stability. The CPC could exercise fine-tuning on incremental reform processes and avoid being captured by special interests. Third was the learning from radical reform in Russia. It was generally believed that radical reforms would not be able to achieve the desired transitions in the short-run and long-run. Finally, China's cultural traditions and institutional context were supportive. As a society favoring informal rules, relations, examples, and rituals over formal rules, law-driven reforms, and radical changes would easily lead to mess, disaffection, and failures.

Recent administrative reforms (2013–2022): An evaluation

While incremental reform has been largely effective in shaping China's public administration since 1978, its viability has been under challenge in the recent decade. In 2013, the CPC Secretary General Jinping Xi announced that reforms had stepped into a 'deep-water zone' that weakened or disabled old reform strategies. In the same year, the modernization of state governance (*guojia zhili xiandaihua*) was proposed as a general blueprint of public sector reforms. In 2022 during the 20th party congress, the China-Style Modernization was proposed to summarize China's post-1978 modernization and its recent trajectories. Hence, the period between 2013 and 2022 provides a vantage point to examine the recent trends of administrative reforms.

The reason for the change in reform agendas in the last decade was not only the change in leadership but also the very different government contexts. First, the old economic development model was no longer sustainable. Trade conflicts, population ageing, environmental degradation and innovation deficits ended decades of fast economic growth and led to a new economic normal (Chen and Groenewold, 2019). Fiscal prosperity was gradually replaced by fiscal austerity. A positive-sum game became increasingly unlikely due to the scarcity of public resources and low growth expectations. Nonetheless, China's economic power gradually decreased the centrality of economic development and increased the priority of other values such as environmental sustainability. A second factor was the increasing complexity, uncertainty and risks of Chinese governance. As society became wealthier, more diverse and more rule-bound, the socioeconomic interdependence meant that incremental reforms were unlikely to produce results. Comprehensive reforms became indispensable. The government faced the dilemma of balancing the values of good governance such as transparency, efficiency, citizen participation, accountability, responsiveness and the rule of law. External governance practices were increasingly inapplicable to China, which faced new and unprecedented issues, such as digital transformation, carbon neutralization, and mega-city development. A third factor was the growing awareness of its own identity and the pursuit for institutional autonomy. The CPC strongly promoted self-confidence in the Chinese way and the Chinese system both domestically and internationally. For example, through the Belt Road Initiative, the Chinese government promised to provide global public goods by building global infrastructures and sharing best political and governance practices.

As a result, deficiencies of incremental reform unfolded in past decades. Emphasis on stability and gradualism may miss the opportunity for reform. Important reforms may be delayed, for example, the delay in adjusting administrative agencies in charge of population control policies. Reform without long-term plans and legal guidelines was of much uncertainty. Pragmatic informalism may not support the growth of the rule of law and make it irreversible. Transitional interests could be institutionalized and become barriers to future reforms. Finally, it got very hard to align the reform pace in different and interdependent sectors so partial reform got less likely to achieve anything.

Four areas of public administration are analyzed in the following to examine evolving balance between change and continuity. First, politics-administration relations. There has been a trend of further integration. Both political leadership and direct supervision of the CPC were embedded into the basic design, operation, and restructuring of the administrative system. Politicization was deemed not only important for steering political directions but also instrumental in promoting professional competence. One example was the political campaign for poverty alleviation (Liao et al., 2019). Compared to the major administrative reforms in 2013, administrative reforms in 2018 were just part of the reforms of party and state institutions (dang he guojia jigou gaige). The 2018 reform was the first time in the past four decades to have CPC institutions and government institutions in one reform package, highlighting a new trend to directly coordinate institutions under the State Council and under the Central Committee of the CPC (Jing, 2020).

Under this reform package, the National Supervisory Commission was merged with the CPC Central Disciplinary Inspection Commission; the National Civil Service Administration of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security was placed under the CPC Central Organization Department; the news and publication functions of the National Radio and Television Administration were transferred to the CPC Central Publicity Department; and the National Religious Affairs Administration and the National Ethnic Affairs Commission were placed under the CPC Central United Front Work Department. These were representative cases of integration between administrative and party agencies. Institutional integration also extended to interagency coordination areas. One notable example was that in early 2020 the CPC established a leading group in response to the COVID-19 virus outbreak. In contrast, the State Council established a leading group against SARS in 2003 (Jing, 2020). Clearly, the boundary between political and administrative affairs got vague and less important.

The operation of administrative agencies was also further politicized. There were increasing ideological learning and management of civil servants, expansion of party powers within administrative agencies, and increasing politics-based responsibilities and accountabilities. Anti-corruption, auditing, inspection, and political mobilization were used to strengthen the "political awareness" of officials. Specially, political performance became a major criterion in cadre personnel management. Given China's performance culture in the public sector (Chan and Gao, 2013; Dong and Kübler, 2021), decisive compliance with and active enforcement of political policies regardless of varying local conditions and issue natures became a first priority in a rigorous hierarchical system.

Secondly, system coordination. Administrative coordination has been strengthened in the last decade through centralization. The gradual reform has both exploited and magnified the fragmentation of the system. The means of horizontal and vertical coordination were often based on a logic of centralization. Horizontally, organizational reforms were introduced to tackle China's siloed administrative systems (Scott and Gong, 2021). The super-ministry reorganization was deepened (Dong, Christensen and Painter, 2010). In 2013, the Ministry of Railway was revoked, and its administrative functions were merged into the super Ministry of Transport. In 2018, the super National Health Commission was formed after integrating functions from the abolished National Health and Family Planning Commission and from other agencies. The Ministry of Nature Resources, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs were reconstructed under the principle of functional integration as well. As aforementioned, super-ministry reorganization spanned the boundary between administrative and political agencies. Interagency leading groups got more frequently used. The Chinese government and the CPC had a tradition to establish interagency leading groups headed by major government or party leaders and composed of administrative and party agencies with a purpose to handle complex issues (Chen, 2019). Since 2013, a major trend has been the proliferation of powerful leading groups established by the CPC Central Committee that dealt with major political, administrative, and socio-economic issues, such as the newly established the Commission for Comprehensively Deepening Reform, the Cyberspace Affairs Commission, and the Commission for Law-based Governance. In fact, the Commission for Comprehensively Deepening Reform was authorized to coordinate the recent 2023 reforms on party and state institutions.

Vertical intergovernmental relations showed a dual trend of centralization and decentralization. On the one hand, along with the emphasis on concentrated and unified leadership (jizhong tongyi lingdao) of the CPC, central powers and top-down accountabilities were strengthened, especially in issues with political sensitivity and implications. Top design (dingceng sheji) became a keyword in the post-2012 reforms, indicating the priority of central policies and directions in setting general frameworks of changes and reforms. Decentralization led to "a noted reduction in local policy experimentation" (Teets, Hasmath and Lewis, 2017). Nonetheless, the inertia of decentralization still existed and was best reflected by the *fang guan fu* reform advanced in 2015 by the State Council. *Fang* was to delegate powers to local governments and repeal government powers without clear legal grounds through the reform of the administrative examination and approval system. *Guan* was to reduce and improve regulation. *Fu* was to enhance service-oriented government and provide better services to citizens.

Third, state-market and state-society relations. Changes in this period tended to highlight a state-centered approach. Liberal management as a reform trend in both economic and social areas still received support during this period. The biggest push was the *fang guan fu* reform advanced by the central government in 2015, aiming for less regulation and better services. "Internet+" national strategy, adopted in 2015 as well, showed a complex policy making process in which private internet companies were engaged in constructive ways (Jing and Li, 2019). The plenary report of the 19th CPC Congress held in 2017 proposed to build a co-established, co-governed, and co-enjoyed social management structure. The scale of cooperation between the government, private sector, and social organizations in providing public projects and services had been expanding. Between 2014 and 2022, there were 6,651 executed public-private partnership (PPP) projects in China that involved a total investment of RMB 11 trillion[1]. In 2020, government procurement of services in China exceeded RMB 1.03 trillion[2].

Nonetheless, the ascending emphasis on centralized party leadership extended into economic and social areas. There were intensified efforts to cover all kinds of organizations with CPC's political leadership and direct supervision. Building party branches in private enterprises, social organizations, and residential communities was rigorously enforced. In economic areas, private actors faced more restrictions. Among the list of China's Top 500 Enterprises according to sales revenues, private enterprises have increased from 190 in 2012 in number to 226 and 242 in 2017 and 2022, and their sales revenues have increased from 18.1% to 28.2% and 30.8% in the same period. The trend was clear that the quick growth of private enterprises in the spire of the economic pyramid was repressed[3]. In 2020, the Politbureau of CPC proposed to prevent the "disorder of capital expansion" (*ziben wuxu kuozhang*), and imposed regulations on capital operations of private enterprises, for example, to freeze the plan of the Ant Group to be listed in the Shanghai Stock Market. During the three-year pandemic in China and under intense China-US economic and high-tech competition, the burgeoning trend of Chinese private enterprises declined much. Such a trend was copied in the social area as well. For example, Urban Residents' Committees (URCs) usually take a dual-agent role as both policy implementers of grassroots governments and self-governance representatives of local residents (Read, 1999). Intensified party construction further strengthened their implementer role, and this role was intensified during the pandemic period when URCs were overburdened with the tasks of community pandemic prevention and control. Meanwhile, the long-advocated autonomy of social organizations has not improved significantly. Their cooperation with governments via social service contracting further demonstrated a state-centered approach (Jing et al., 2021).

Fourth, technical upgrading. Active technical adoption in the public sector offered a new capacity to the administrative system to serve its empowerment and control purposes. Technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, and 5G have pushed forward the digital transformation in public administration and unfolded the potential of realizing good governance through digital co-production, value creation, and interlocal collaboration (Mu, Wang and Song, 2022;

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Wang and Fan, 2022). Local governments like Shanghai Municipality and Zhejiang Province took the lead and erected digital public services programs such as the "Government Online-Offline Shanghai" program and the "Visit Once" program (Huang and Yu, 2019), using ICT technologies to integrate the fragmented public service system and improve service delivery and citizen satisfaction. For such purposes, most Chinese provinces have established their digital government agencies or mechanisms and made efforts to adapt to the new virtual working environment. Government official blogs and WeChat accounts prospered and disseminated information promptly. A recent development is that the National Data Administration was established in 2023. As a result, a global ranking of China in e-government has improved fast. In 2022, China ranked 43rd among 193 member states in the E-Government Development Index (EGDI); and 12th in the E-Participation Index (EPI), according to the UN. In the E-Government survey 2022, Shanghai was ranked 10th in the Local Online Service Index (LOSI) among 193 major cities around the world[4].

Meanwhile, technologies were also used to exercise new ways of social control. Digitalization afforded unprecedented capacities for the government to access individual information and impose precise and instant control in areas such as anti-corruption, crime control, traffic regulation, and communicable disease control. Shortly after the Wuhan pandemic outbreak in the end of 2019, cellphone-based digital personal health code was invented to provide nucleic acid test information and other related health information. It then functioned as one major instrument for the government to regulate citizen mobility and enforce pandemic policies. All public and private facilities, as well as transportation lines and vehicles, were incorporated into a national code system so personal health status and mobility information would be monitored in real time. Such a digital system made it almost impossible for a person to use public transport system, go shopping, or travel without abiding by government's pandemic-control policies. Nonetheless, digitalization can also have unintended consequences. One case was the abuse of the health code system during the pandemic. On June 22, 2022, the Disciplinary Inspection Commission of Zhengzhou Municipality CPC Party Committee issued a report that announced its investigation into some local officials and the disciplinary actions taken against them. These officials intentionally changed the health code of 1,317 depositors of some Community Banks in Henan Province to red, and essentially deprived them of the freedom to move. Some of these depositors were going to Zhengzhou Municipality to appeal to government as they could not withdraw cash from these banks.

Table 1 summarizes the four areas of administrative reforms according to the aforementioned four principles of incremental reform. Apparently, changes were still introduced in gradual ways reflected by reform sequence, yet the internal balance between politicization and pragmatism across these four areas was tilted in favor of the former. In other words, under an apparent trend of politicization,

[4] Data source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2022). E-Government Survey 2022. pp. 214, 253, 259. Retrieved from https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/en-us/Reports/UN-E-Government-Survey-2022 (Accessed 30 January 2023).

pragmatism was less emphasized, and a win-win situation got less likely among actors representing politicization and pragmatism. If these trends of reform remain, then further reforms, despite their incremental manner, may cumulate internal tensions that may result in triggering points for the public administration system to go through fundamental changes.

Table 1

Reform trends in the past decade, *2013–2022*

	Politics-administration relations	System coordination	State-market-society relations	Technical upgrading
Political centralization	More	More	More but limitedly bidirectional	More
Reform sequence	Step-wise	Step-wise	Bidirectional	Step-wise but quick
Pragmatism	Toward formalism	Toward formalism	Toward state centrism	Dual emphasis
Winners	Party agencies	Central agencies	State agencies, mixed	Mixed

Sources: Completed by the authors.

Conclusions and discussions

The administrative system of China, a country with a government-oriented tradition, plays a central role in China's socioeconomic development. Since 1978, this system has been undergoing incremental reform, which highlights a delicate reconciliation of system continuity and change so that various values and interests could be balanced and reform, stability and development could mutually support each other in a long process of evolution. Incremental reforms are characterized by loyalty to the party leadership, appropriate sequencing of reforms, pragmatic informalism and an emphasis on positive – sum game. The immaturity of the administrative system, availability of a strong party, learning from external precedents, and China's cultural traditions and institutional contexts have favored incremental reforms, which have been widely recognized as one major factor that accounted for China's governance performance and economic miracle.

However, there is a genuine question of whether incremental reform remained effective as China moved into the 'deep-water zone' with increasing difficulty to introduce gradual changes due to the unsustainability of the old economic development model, the increasing complexity, uncertainty and risks of governance issues, and the increasing awareness of self-identity and pursuit for institutional autonomy. Incremental reform had been facing challenges such as the delay of important reforms, lack of long-term plans and predictability, disfavor of rule of law, and lack of policy coordination. Consequently, the CPC's proposal of the modernization of state governance in 2013 and the China-Style Modernization in 2022 reflected a need for new reform strategies.

The analysis of four major areas of recent-decade administrative reforms shows that incremental reform has been largely kept. Politics-administration relations, system coordination, state-market and state-society relations, and digital governance, as examples, demonstrated inertia to move along established reform trajectories. A foremost trend was the continuous politicization of the administrative system that has fundamentally shaped its structures, procedures, and people. As a consequence, the system tended to be more centralized, more politics-driven instead of rule-driven, control-oriented instead of incentive-oriented, and state-centric instead of market-friendly.

How will these changes affect the success of incremental reform? China's success in the past was characterized by a coexistence of political centralization and economic decentralization and, in other words, a balance between reform, development, and stability. The strong political commitment to a development state and a pursuit of performance legitimacy played as control valves to align the pressures of politics. As China's economic success resulted, in an unanticipated way, in the decline of the importance of development, these political pressure in the system was unleashed and broke the delicate balance. Incremental reform thus may get difficult to achieve good performance and results despite the manner of introducing continuous changes.

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PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PERFORMANCE: NEW EUROPEAN UNION MEMBER STATES

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Abstract. Measuring the performance of public administration systems represents a typical "wicked problem", as it involves a number of complex implementation issues. However, even in the current period, when the ideology of New Public Management is dead for most experts, the European Union, international organizations and think tanks are trying to measure and compare the performance of public administration systems of countries. This paper summarizes the main initiatives of the European Union in this field and tries in its main part to review the situation of the new European Union member states from Central and Eastern Europe. Qualitative secondary analysis of data and simple statistics are the main methods of this paper, which is an original contribution to its general topic.

The findings show that the main tools used by the European Union to measure and manage the performance of public administration in the member and candidate countries are the European Semester, the recent EUPACK project, the standards developed by SIGMA OECD for the candidate countries and various statistical surveys. The data obtained show that the performance of public administrations in the new EU Member States from the CEE region varies widely, with most of them being "followers". The reasons for such large differences in performance should be the subject of further research.

Keywords: public administration; performance; performance measurement; performance management; European Union, new member states; Central and Eastern Europe; backsliding.

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Introduction

Measuring (and managing) became an important part of administrative reforms motivated by the ideology of New Public Management (NPM). The idea that performance should be measured has not disappeared with the demise of NPM and performance measurement and management continue to be used at all levels of the public sector (Vries and Nemec, 2013).

However, measuring performance in a non-business environment presents a typical 'wicked problem' (Head and Alford, 2015; Peters, 2017). An inefficiently implemented system can have far-reaching effects and distort the behaviors of the actors (Van Dooren, Bouckaert, and Halligan, 2010).

Performance measurement is carried out at all levels – from the international to the intra-organizational level. All these levels have received much attention in the academic literature. Our plan is to add to the discussion on performance measurement (and management) at the international level, the area that needs much more attention from researchers, policy makers, decision makers and all other stakeholders. The goal of this paper is to provide a general overview of the most important tools used by the European Union to measure (and manage) the public administration (PA) performance of its member states and to evaluate the situation of the new EU members states, which come from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE).

The importance of this kind of research is obvious – the individual performance of member countries significantly determines the global EU performance, moreover, the EU spends large amount of resources to support national PA developments. The discussion on the validity, effectiveness and progress of the values of the indicators used, as well as on the tools to promote this progress, is of critical importance. Indicators should not only be available, but above all should be used to obtain a meaningful interpretation of progress towards goals: "Indicators indicate and are not an end but one of the means" (Jackson and Mueleman, 2022, p. 2).

There are relatively many published papers related to measuring performance in the CEE conditions (like Suleimenova at al., 2018; Dobrolyubova, 2017; Pisár and Šipikal, 2017; Plaček et al., 2017, Špalková, Špaček and Nemec, 2015, Seoh and Tobin, 2020; Lewandowski, 2019; Manojlović Toman and Lalić Novak, 2019; Jahoda, 2013). However, all of them focus on the institutional level and research related to the national and international level is rather scarce, if non-existent.

The goal of this paper is to summarize what the European Union (EU) does in the area of measuring and managing the performance of the national public administration systems and to document the position (and trends) of the new EU member states from the CEE region in the relevant evaluation systems. Qualitative research methods are used to achieve the planned results.

1. Measuring performance in the public sector

Performance measurement is a collection of deliberate activities which includes defining an object of measurement, formulating indicators, collecting data, analyzing data and reporting (Van Dooren, Bouckaert and Halligan, 2010).

Almost all authors agree that performance management under public sector (public administration) conditions is a typical "wicked problem". "Perfect" methods to measure performance are not available (Nyhan and Marlowe, 1995). Moreover, a poorly designed performance measurement and management system can produce a number of serious side effects (Adcroft and Willis, 2005).

Implementation problems connected with performance measurement immediately arise in the first step, when measurability is usually discussed as a crucial factor in determining the quality of performance data and performance measurement (Van Dooren, Bouckaert, and Halligan, 2010). This dimension of performance research copes with questions such as:

1. What should be measured, and how should it be measured?
2. How should the measurement criteria be made operational?
3. Does measurement measure what it intends to measure?

International literature clearly shows that performance measurement in the public sector is a complex and challenging issue, for many reasons (Andrews, Boyne, and Walker, 2006):

– in many cases social and non-financial costs and benefits are expected to be measured,
– it is a complex task because it usually combines objective and subjective measures,
– the measures often draw together data from a number of sources,
– it should combine qualitative and quantitative approaches, etc.

Performance has multiple and often ambiguous meanings and there are different opinions on how it should be defined and measured (Greiling, 2006). Typically, input indicators (to quantify the resources used), output, outcome and impact indicators (to quantify the achievements) and specifically quality indicators (such as fitness for purpose, quality standards, consistency and customer satisfaction) are used in different combinations to measure performance (Wright and Nemec, 2003; Cicea, 2020).

Performance measurement is really a "black box". Blalock (1999) points out that performance measurement systems tend to be so focused on the measurement of a limited set of outcomes that the true complexity of a program's design is frequently ignored in the information production process. Consequently, too little information may be collected about important elements of program implementation, of the interventions considered unique to a program, or of a richer array of outcomes that may be very significant.

The approach to the actual use of performance data is also a critical issue. Moynihan and Pandey (2010) argue that governments have devoted extraordinary effort to creating performance data, wagering that it will be used to improve governance, but much remains unknown about the factors associated with the use of that information. Van Dooren, Bouckaert and Halligan (2010) describe various distortions connected with the use of performance information and output as well as the performance target paradox. Boyne et al. (2006) addressed the question of which aspects of management influence the performance of public agencies, noting that empirical studies of the impact of management on the real performance of public organizations are scarce.

Performance measurement and management systems should measure as well as secure both the accomplishment of the right objectives and the utilization of the right ways leading to their achievement (Pilařová, 2008). However, there are critical flaws related to this type of evaluation. Performance evaluation often focuses on outcomes, but it is very difficult to identify effective measurable outcomes. Organizations and employees often concentrate only on those criteria on the basis of which they are evaluated, while neglecting the others (Kellough, 2012). Outcomes achieved by an individual player do not necessarily depend only on that player. When organizations focus only on evaluating the performance of their employees, they may fail to meet objectives that are difficult to measure, for example, customer assistance (Daley, 2005). The subject of an evaluation is often an employee's work and social behavior at an organization; in this case, the evaluation is often based on the conviction that desirable behaviors lead to efficient performances. In connection with this, 'behavior-based rating scales' based on required employee behavior have been developed (Kellough, 2012).

The problems of performance measurement exaggerate on the national and international levels. Most existing rankings/ ratings work with quantitative indicators, some of them based on "hard data", some of them on expert opinion. Even in the case of the use of "hard data", indicators may not be true – the history documents that many countries are "heroes" in manipulating official statistical data. For all other cases, "Rankings frequently influence how state behavior is perceived, how states react, and how they develop responsive strategies. However, rankings always contain value judgements, methodological choices, and also implicit political aims. Uncritical acceptance of rankings can therefore lead to unintended internalization of normative assumptions that could lead to poorer, not better, public policy outcomes" (Jackson and Meuhleman, 2022, p. 1).

2. EU "public administration performance management" instruments

The EU uses several mechanisms how to evaluate and indirectly manage the public administration performance of its members and candidate states. In the following text, we introduce three critically important mechanisms – the European Semester, the European Public Administration Country Knowledge (EUPACK) project, and the Support for Improvement in Governance and Management (SIGMA) activities.

2.1. European Semester

The European Semester is the European Union's framework for the coordination and surveillance of economic and social policies (https://commission.europa.eu/content/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester_en). It was established in 2010 as an annual cycle of economic and fiscal policy coordination.

The European Semester is a critical part of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and it delivers different processes of control, surveillance, and coordination of budgetary, fiscal, economic and social policies of the EU member countries – public administration (performance) is the inevitable part of this mechanisms. The European Semester has three main pillars which are a combination of hard and soft law, via a mix of surveillance mechanisms and possible sanctions. The main legislative pillar of the European Semester is the Regulation (EU) No 1175/2011 of the European Parliament. The socio-economic coordination, which includes also the public administration dimension is the youngest part (pillar) of the European semester and deals with soft law, however, also this part includes certain "enforcement" mechanisms.

From the point of the public administration performance, the most critical mechanism is the regular annual report and the set of Country-specific recommendations (CSRs), both documents normally published in May. The CSRs need to be followed and implemented by the Member States. The findings from the report and the set of CSRs are standardly used to formulate "ex-ante" conditionalities for the use of the EU funds by countries. Ex-ante conditionalities are used to ensure that countries implement the most critical European Semester recommendations – if not reflected, resources would not be provided. These instruments supported critical public administration changes in many countries – for example, the developments of the civil service mechanisms in many countries.

The specific instrument to cope with the COVID-19 crisis is the Recovery and Resilience Facility, which requires from the member states to draft and implement plans and strategies for reforms and public investment projects. The use of resources from this facility is directly connected with the fulfilment of concrete milestones defined by the national recovery and resilience plans (which normally include also public administration developments).

2.2. European Public Administration Country Knowledge project

The EUPACK is a multi-annual initiative of the European Commission. The goal of this project is to develop the knowledge of the EU Member State public administrations' functioning and reforms. This initiative was first time realised in 2018 and developed during the consequent years.

In 2018 the country comprehensive reports were prepared (app. 40 pages each) and later on published on the official EU website (https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/structural-reform-support/european-public-administration-country-reports_en) and the summary report was also drafted (Palaric, Thijs and Hammerschmidt, 2018). In 2019 the project used a different approach, and except for country reports and the summary report (not openly published) also the case studies of best practices were prepared.

From 2020 the project uses standardised methodological approach – the country reports are rather short and cover the following issues: overall performance and major reform initiatives, the institutional systems (structure and organisation), and the capacity, performance and management of public administrations in four defined areas (civil service systems and human resources management; policy-making, coordination, and implementation; transparency and accountability; service delivery and digitalisation). The collected data and information draw on existing, publicly available sources and statistics. The country reports are the base for systematic and comparative synthesis, which was published in 2020, yet. The specific result from the project is the set of European public administration thematic studies, which already include ten very interesting publications on different topics (https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/structural-reform-support/european-public-administration-thematic-studies_en).

2.3. SIGMA initiatives

SIGMA is a joint initiative of the OECD and the European Union, financed especially by the EU. "Its key objective is to strengthen the foundations for improved public governance, and hence support socio-economic development through building the capacities of the public sector, enhancing horizontal governance and improving the design and implementation of public administration reforms, including proper prioritisation, sequencing and budgeting" (https://www.sigmaweb.org/ourexpertise/#d.en.259002).

SIGMA was initiated very much as the reaction to the need to support public administration developments in post-Soviet countries and this initiative is working with its partners on strengthening public governance systems and public administration capacities since 1992. SIGMA really effectively supported the accession process of the first new EU member countries, which joined the EU in 2004 (in this period public administration was not the direct part of "Acquis Communautaire" and related required developments of the candidate countries).

Recently SIGMA in the partnership with the European Commission Directorate-General for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement negotiations works with the EU candidate/ potential candidate countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, the Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia, and Turkey) and with the EU Neighbourhood countries (Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Georgia, Jordan, Lebanon, Moldova, Morocco, Tunisia, and Ukraine) to help them to develop their public administration systems. Main SIGMA partners on the national level are the centre of government and key co-ordinating ministries, state agencies (e.g. public service, public procurement), independent oversight bodies (e.g. Supreme Audit Institutions, ombudsmen), and parliaments. SIGMA assists especially in the following areas (https://www.sigmaweb.org/ourexpertise/strategic-framework-public-administration-reform.htm):

– "Designing and implementing PAR policy and programmes, including setting priorities, involving key stakeholders, sequencing actions and costing reforms.
– Establishing the institutions and strengthening the capacities required to oversee, execute and monitor the progress of reforms.
– Reviewing existing strategic and management arrangements, diagnosing the main challenges, and providing guidance in scoping and prioritising PAR".

In 2014 SIGMA in close cooperation with the EU published the Principles of Public Administration (SIGMA, 2014) covering six core areas:

– the strategic framework for public administration reform;
– policy development and coordination;
– public service and human resource management;

– accountability;
– service delivery;
– public financial management.

The Principles define detailed requirements for a well-functioning public administration in each of these core areas. Later SIGMA has developed more tailored Principles for EU candidate countries and potential candidates (SIGMA, 2017a) and more generic Principles suited for a wider range of countries, including those working with the EU under the European Neighbourhood Policy (SIGMA, 2017b).

3. Public administration performance of the new EU member states from the CEE region

This part tries to compare the public administration performance in CEE countries, which already joined the EU (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia). At the beginning the World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) data are used (Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi, 2010). These aggregate indicators are based on hundreds of individual underlying variables and reflect survey respondents' as well as public, private, and NGO sector experts' views nationally. There are several limits, mentioned by experts related to how these data can be used for international comparisons, however, these indicators should be sufficiently reliable for the "informed comparisons of trends", moreover, there is no other effective database with a sufficiently long data set to be used instead of WGI. From the six indicators used by the World Bank, the article does not work with "Political Stability and Absence of Violence" indicator, because of too complicated relation between the conflict and the public administration performance (Nemec and Reddy, 2023).

3.1. Control of corruption

The development trends for this indicatorcapture "perceptions of the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as "capture" of the state by elites and private interests" (Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi, 2010, p. 4) are provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Control of corruption – percentile rank

	1996	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2021
Bulgaria	44,623	51,063	56,585	51,904	47,115	45,673	48,557
Croatia	32,795	57,446	58,536	58,571	63,461	61,538	59,134
Czechia	74,731	60,638	68,780	69,047	68,269	70,673	72,596
Estonia	69,892	77,659	80,975	80,476	88,461	92,307	89,903

	1996	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2021
Hungary	74,193	75,531	72,195	65,714	62,019	60,576	56,25
Latvia	50	56,914	65,853	63,333	67,307	75,480	76,923
Lithuania	68,279	67,021	64,390	68,571	70,192	79,326	80,288
Poland	75,806	73,404	61,951	71,904	75,480	73,076	70,192
Romania	39,247	38,297	48,780	45,238	53,365	52,884	52,884
Slovenia	81,720	77,127	80	79,047	76,442	78,846	75,961
Slovakia	62,903	62,234	68,292	63,809	61,538	66,346	62,019

Source: Completed by the author, based on WGI (- hereinafter, unless otherwise noted).

The percentile rank data (relative country´s position) indicate significantly different current performance and significantly different trends. Three Baltic countries progress during the whole investigated period and today they seem to be leaders regarding the effectiveness of their anti-corruption policies. Other countries stagnate, or even show a recent degressive reversal. For example, despite the proclaimed "anti-corruption" character of the Slovak after the 2020 government (Prime Ministers Heger and Matovič), the WGI data suggest that the situation in Slovakia in 2021 is the same as in 1996, and far below an acceptable level. Several studies speak about "systemic corruption" in many CEE countries (see for example Langr, 2018 or Rodionova et al., 2022).

3.2. Government effectiveness

The WGI data related to this indicator, which captures "the perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies" (Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi, 2010, p. 4) are provided in Table 2.

Table 2

Government effectiveness – percentile rank

	1996	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2021
Bulgaria	56,284	58,469	57,843	54,545	53,846	44,711	47,115
Croatia	58,469	63,934	67,156	69,377	70,673	68,75	70,192
Czechia	72,131	70,491	77,450	77,511	82,211	79,326	82,211
Estonia	71,584	75,956	78,431	82,296	82,692	88,461	89,423
Hungary	78,688	81,967	73,529	71,770	71,634	71,153	71,634

	1996	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2021
Latvia	67,759	60,655	69,117	73,205	83,173	76,923	77,403
Lithuania	68,306	59,562	75	73,684	85,096	82,211	81,730
Poland	75,409	69,398	66,666	71,291	75	65,384	63,461
Romania	45,901	46,994	46,078	51,196	58,173	42,307	47,596
Slovenia	79,234	75,409	76,470	80,861	78,365	85,576	84,615
Slovakia	66,120	74,863	75,980	75,119	74,519	69,711	69,230

The picture again reveals major differences between the countries. The only country with consistent progress is Estonia (possibly due to its extremely high maturity in e-government – see the later text). In contrast, the position of Bulgaria has actually worsened between 1996 and 2021 and, together with Romania, these two countries represent "negative" outliers.

3.3. Regulatory quality

Table 3 delivers the picture related to this indicator, which captures "perceptions of the ability of the government to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that permit and promote private sector development" (Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi, 2010, p. 4).

Table 3

Regulatory quality – percentile rank

	1996	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2021
Bulgaria	47,282	60,326	69,607	73,684	70,673	66,826	67,788
Croatia	49,456	50,543	64,705	66,507	62,5	64,423	69,230
Czechia	82,065	74,456	80,392	86,124	81,730	86,538	87,5
Estonia	85,869	89,130	85,784	88,516	93,269	92,788	92,788
Hungary	75,543	82,065	78,921	80,382	74,519	67,788	68,75
Latvia	77,173	71,195	75,490	78,947	81,25	85,096	85,576
Lithuania	82,608	73,369	77,450	79,425	87,019	83,653	86,538
Poland	72,282	72,826	72,549	81,339	79,807	76,442	75,961
Romania	55,978	51,086	58,823	73,205	70,192	63,942	62,980
Slovenia	83,695	70,108	75,980	75,119	71,634	77,403	75,480
Slovakia	71,195	69,021	83,333	79,904	75,480	74,519	77,884

The Baltic countries also show positive development trends in this indicator, although not as visibly as, for example, in the area of fighting corruption. Estonia is relatively stagnant after reaching the global "frontrunner" position, but at a really high level where improvement is really difficult.

Latvia shows almost consistent progress, Lithuania some ups and downs. As for the other countries, the Czech Republic more or less maintains its position; however, several countries show degressive steps backwards, especially after 2010.

3.4. Rule of law

The data for this indicator, which captures "perceptions of the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, and in particular the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence" (Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi, 2010, p. 4) are provided in Table 4.

Table 4

Rule of Law – percentile rank

	1996	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2021
Bulgaria	39,69849	48,25871	49,76077	51,65877	53,36538	50,48077	53,36538
Croatia	31,15578	50,74627	55,02392	56,87204	61,05769	60,57692	60,09615
Czechia	79,8995	68,65672	78,4689	79,62085	84,13461	83,65385	84,13461
Estonia	66,33166	68,1592	80,38277	85,30806	87,01923	89,42308	89,90385
Hungary	79,39699	73,13433	75,11961	72,03792	65,86539	67,78846	69,71154
Latvia	56,78392	56,21891	66,98565	71,09005	76,44231	80,76923	82,69231
Lithuania	63,31658	58,70647	67,94258	72,98578	81,25	81,73077	83,65385
Poland	70,85427	69,15423	62,67942	68,72038	77,40385	69,23077	65,38461
Romania	50,25126	45,77114	46,88995	58,29384	62,01923	64,42308	64,42308
Slovenia	84,92462	81,59204	79,9043	81,51659	80,76923	84,13461	83,17308
Slovakia	57,28643	60,69652	63,15789	66,35071	68,26923	73,07692	74,51923

Also, for these indicators, the trends are different. In this case, Slovenia and Czechia reached very good relative levels already in 1996 and somehow keep their positions. Estonia progressed from the low ranking to the leading position. As opposite, Hungary and Poland demonstrate degressive trends. Croatia shows significant progress between 1996 and 2005, however afterwards certain stagnation.

3.5. Voice and Accountability

This indicator captures "perceptions of the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media" (Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi, 2010, p. 4) and its values are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Voice and Accountability – percentile rank

	1996	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2021
Bulgaria	63,5	62,189	66,346	64,454	61,083	56,038	56,521
Croatia	45	65,174	63,461	61,611	65,517	64,734	64,734
Czechia	78	71,144	75,961	78,672	82,266	79,227	81,159
Estonia	74,5	77,114	80,769	83,412	87,192	88,405	89,371
Hungary	77	85,074	86,538	73,459	66,502	58,937	58,937
Latvia	70	70,149	72,115	72,037	73,399	73,429	75,362
Lithuania	75,5	73,631	74,519	75,355	77,339	81,159	82,125
Poland	80	81,094	78,365	80,094	81,773	66,666	63,768
Romania	59,5	63,681	61,057	59,241	63,546	65,217	64,251
Slovenia	87,5	83,084	83,173	81,516	78,325	78,260	77,294
Slovakia	67	72,636	74,038	74,881	76,354	74,879	76,811

Again, trends are very different. The most interesting issue is the critical decline in the case of Poland and Hungary after the appointment of their current governments (Orbán government in Hungary appointed in 2010 and staying in power, with different majority in Parliament for the whole period and Morawiecki governments in Poland in power from 2017). Both these governments passed several legislative acts which seem to contradict the principle of "voice", and both of them have been investigated for undermining the independence of courts, media and non-governmental organisations by the EU. The best progress was again made by Estonia.

3.6. Positions of CEE countries for indicators used by the EUPACK

The EUPACK project mentioned above works with data from several databases. Table 6 summarises the absolute and relative values of selected indicators. It shows that the majority of the new EU member states are at the bottom of the "rankings" for most indicators. The best performer in our group is Estonia, which is the same as for the WGI indicators.

Table 6

Selected public administration performance data used by the EUPACK project: 2021 data

	Transparency of government		Maturity of open data		Trust to national government		Trust to regional and local authorities		Trust to public administration		Digital public services for citizens		Digital public services for business		E-government users interacting with public authorities		E-Government users submitting completed forms	
	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank	Value	Rank
Bulgaria	51,2	18	78,0%	18	22%	24	44%	22	33%	23	0,0963	24	0,2254	13	19	26	15	26
Croatia	na	na	84,0%	15	22%	26	32%	27	33%	25	0,1111	23	0,1554	24	42	22	24	24
Czechia	54,3	16	74,0%	21	28%	18	62%	9	56%	12	0,1564	18	0,1702	23	58	12	52	12
Estonia	73,0	7	94,0%	5	49%	7	56%	14	63%	7	0,2477	2	0,2738	2	69	6	76	2
Hungary	41,6	23	58,0%	24	45%	11	63%	7	62%	8	0,085	25	0,1726	22	72	5	66	7
Latvia	77,9	4	77,0%	19	26%	22	53%	17	33%	26	0,2286	6	0,2142	18	68	7	65	9
Lithuania	90,0	2	89,0%	13	41%	14	43%	24	43%	19	0,1656	15	0,2663	4	57	13	52	13
Poland	40,3	25	95,0%	3	28%	19	54%	16	46%	18	0,1317	21	0,1264	25	29	24	40	18
Romania	41,4	24	76,0%	20	31%	17	45%	21	41%	20	0,0411	27	0,0442	27	11	27	9	27
Slovakia	38,4	26	50,0%	27	21%	27	46%	20	47%	17	0,1255	22	0,1876	20	52	17	25	23
Slovenia	58,9	15	92,0%	9	25%	23	48%	18	41%	21	0,1728	13	0,1815	21	61	10	38	19

Source: author, selection from EUPACK data.

4. Discussion and conclusions

Table 7 shows the evolution of the positions of the selected countries within their "internal ranking". The data show that the best position before accession belonged to Slovenia, which performed best in four out of five WGI indicators used. However, this country's position has deteriorated, so that in 2021, for example, Slovenia fell into the group of countries with the worst results in regulatory quality. The leader is Estonia, which today occupies all the first places (and as other indicators above show, Estonia is even among the best performing countries in the EU as a whole).

The clear "followers" are Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania, which were at the bottom of the rankings at the beginning and also today. Hungary and Poland show significant regression, falling from the group of best performing countries to the group with medium performing or under-performing countries. Taking into account the limits of the WGI indicators, the positions of the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia remain stable.

Table 7

Country´s position 1996 and 2021: WGI data

	Control of corruption		Government effectiveness		Regulatory quality		Rule of law		Voice and accountability	
	1996	2021	1996	2021	1996	2021	1996	2021	1996	2021
Bulgaria	9	11	10	11	11	10	10	11	9	11
Croatia	11	8	9	7	10	8	11	10	11	7
Czechia	3	5	4	3	4	2	2	2	3	3
Estonia	5	1	5	1	1	1	5	1	6	1
Hungary	4	9	2	6	6	9	3	7	4	10
Latvia	8	3	7	5	5	4	8	5	7	6
Lithuania	6	2	6	4	3	3	6	4	5	2
Poland	2	6	3	9	7	6	4	8	2	9
Romania	10	10	11	10	9	11	9	9	10	8
Slovenia	1	4	1	2	2	7	1	3	1	4
Slovakia	7	7	8	8	8	5	7	6	8	5

Given the "great success" of Estonia, it is quite surprising that it is very difficult to find relevant and comprehensive academic studies explaining the phenomena of this country. Most sources try to argue that the combination of neo-liberal policies, new young generation, strong national and cultural heritage, and high investments into the human capital are the main positive factors that allowed Estonia to shine nationally and internationally (see, for example, Laar-Kelam, 2017). More critical authors (especially from Estonia), do not forget to mention remaining or new challenges (for example, Kattel and Raudla, 2022). Much more on this issue should be done by academia.

The data in all provided tables, however, indicate the problem of stagnation to back-sliding situations, which have recently become evident for most countries from our sample. The problem of backsliding in the CEE area has already been described in the academic literature. Already in 2011, the article by Bouckaert, Nemec and Nakrosis (2011, p. 31) reported: "If public management reforms in the new EU member states were heavily influenced by the prospect of EU membership, it is no longer true in the post-accession period. Following their accession to the EU, the ex-ante control of the European Commission was replaced with much weaker instruments of the ex-post control in the case of non-implementation or delayed implementation. In combination with several deficiencies in the political and party systems, these factors possibly reduced the willingness of the new EU member states to engage in coherent public management reforms at the domestic level".

Excellent analyses of the purposes for backsliding have been delivered by Agh (2016, 2019), with a focus on Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, and Poland. He argues that some of these countries already shifted from chaotic democracy to authoritarian rule. He suggests that a purpose for such negative change might be the "problem of political participation". According to him, electoral and other participation has become socially asymmetrical, providing space for populism and authoritarianism.

There should be several factors, which catalyse serve as catalyst for backsliding, most of them seem to have a path-dependence background. As also the WGI data for "voice" propose, impacts by the citizenry and civil society on the policy-making and service delivery are very limited, due to the absence of a culture of co-operation between the decision-makers, public sector, and NGOs. NGOs are sometimes even seen as being under external influence and working against the interests of the state.

The state administrative system in most countries is fragmented and has "silos" character. Administrative practices are based on conformity, unwillingness to change, secrecy and the circumvention of responsibilities partly inherited from the socialist period.

The political situation (politics and politicians) seems to be the main barrier to public administration performance progress. The explanation exists and can be found, for example, in the public choice theory (Cullis and Jones, 2009). This theory argues that politicians serve their own interests and not those of their nations (and in many cases the main private interest of politicians is selfish personal gain). This kind of politicians (and seems that their proportion is at least not diminishing – look at control of corruption data) cannot be expected to promote participatory democracy that limits the possibility of advancing selfish personal interests.

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EGYPT GOVERNMENT EXCELLENCE AWARD: WHO'S PERSPECTIVE IS BEING ASSESSED?

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Abstract: This research assesses the gap between how citizens perceive government performance and how the government evaluates itself based on the criteria identified as New Public Management (NPM) practices and the criteria used by the Egyptian government in its excellence awards. Criteria assessed included performance orientation, transparency and accountability, innovation and creativity, and responsiveness. This research is empirical in nature and utilizes exploration and description to serve the theoretical background. A gap exists between the archival measure used by the government to assess and award excellence, and the perceptual measures reflected in citizens' responses regarding how worthy the institution researched deserves the excellence award granted by the government. The findings of this paper suggest that NPM application in the Egyptian context does not show improvements in public service delivery and that receiving the Government Excellence Award has minimal impact on citizen perception of the institution receiving the award.

Keywords: Egypt government excellence award; citizen satisfaction; public administration reform; New Public Management.

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Introduction

Public administration reform has been a chronic problem for both Egyptian politicians and citizens since President Nasser's era in the fifties, when every Egyptian citizen was offered a free university education and a guaranteed government job. With the number of employees growing exponentially in the bureaucracy reaching a staggering five million employees in 2019 versus a mere twenty-five thousand employees in 1952 (CAPMAS, 2019; Said, 2004), rigid and mediocre public service delivery, budgetary pressures resulting from the overpopulated government machinery wage bill, and a vast number of overlapping laws, regulations, and policies, inefficiency became the trademark of the Egyptian bureaucracy. This situation required thorough intervention on both normative and political levels. There have been many attempts at administrative reform, and most of these attempts did not achieve their objectives (Ayubi, 2015; Al-Araby, 2014; Barsoum, 2018; Handoussa and El Oraby, 2004; Palmer et al., 1989). The past reforms did not achieve their goals due to overreliance on laws resulting in reactions to specific issues, and consequently creating more spontaneous national committees, proposing even more laws and regulations, thus entering a loop of inconsistent and inapplicable laws and regulations (Ayubi, 2015; IMF, 2015). By 2014 a new national public administration reform policy was endorsed by the government. Officials and practitioners politically promoted the new policy under the premise of adopting the best practices of NPM represented in adherence to good governance practices in public administration, a shift away from personnel management towards human resources development, highlighting performance and merit over seniority, an inclination towards decentralization, and a focus on citizen centric public service delivery. However, the core of the reform was built on a normative reform design (Dahl, 2018; Wise, 2002) either intentionally or not. Normative reforms were already represented in the Egyptian constitution (2014) that was promoting democratization and decentralization. Moreover, the civil service law (2016) and its executive regulation (2017) endorsed social equity through more employment rights, increased diversity, and better working conditions. Furthermore, Egypt's Vision 2030 launched in 2015 and reviewed in 2018, highlighted the importance of individual career growth and development through continuous capacity building. With this newly introduced public administration reform policy, the Egyptian government through the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MPED) started in 2018 an ambitious administrative reform plan promoted under the NPM platform and good governance practices including performance orientation, responsiveness, efficiency, and innovation of service delivery, overall citizen experience, and comprehensive application of technology (MPED, 2021).

This research evaluates the relationship between the application of the principles of New Public Management (NPM) based on the framework set by the Egyptian government to conduct public administration reforms and how these reforms affect the citizens. This is achieved by comparing citizens' perceptions with both the NPM practices criteria and the criteria for granting the "Egypt Government Excellence Award" by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development.

Literature review

The Egyptian public administration system is a highly centralized one, trying for decades with minimal success to reform and decentralize. According to article 175 of the Egyptian constitution, under subsection three titled "Local Administration", the state is divided hierarchically into local administrative units, with each governorate having several cities, and each city has a number of districts or villages (Egyptian constitution, 2014). As the constitutional section title indicates, the local public administration system in Egypt is a local administration system and not a local government one, with civil service employees working on a local level rather than in the central government. The Egyptian constitution refers to the selection of governors and local unit heads to the corresponding law, namely Law 43 issued in 1979 and its amendments which are based on articles in Egypt's older constitution issued in 1971. According to law 43 and its executive regulation, the governor who is the highest representative of the executive authority in the governorate as well as the vice governor is selected and appointed by the President, while the city and district heads are appointed in coordination with the Minister of local administration. Local government in Egypt operates as part of the central government, without involvement in public policy and political decision-making, and with a clear function limited to local administration and the provision of local public services cascaded from the central level of government to the local level (Mahmoud, 2012; Mayfield, 1996; Zengin; 2022). Accordingly, the District service centers and HDSC among them, is part of the overall government initiative to reform and modernize its public administration system by facilitating public service delivery and improving citizen access to local public services (GIZ, 2022; MCIT, 2022).

NPM has been widely used to define and refer to different concepts such as professional and competitive government (Clarke, Gerwitz, and McLaughlin, 2000), efficient and citizen-centric management (Stewart and Walsh, 1992; Lynn, 2006), private sector like management style (Hood, 1991), entrepreneurial and innovative public administration (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992; Mazzucato, 2013), bureaucratic modernization that is agile and flexible versus the traditional Weberian rigid organization (Graeber, 2015; Wollmann, 2004).

Many researchers, however, highlighted the potential problems of copy-pasting one successful NPM reform in a specific national context to a new different one, and that many undesirable results could take place and the positive effects could be minimal (Box et al., 2001; Fernandez and Rainey, 2017; Wise, 2002). By time and practice, NPM-based reform became viewed as one of the many reform tracks governments can utilize, and that NPM was not the best solution to government efficiency, but rather it could become an impediment to reform itself as it poses some contradictory principles and its blind application could lead to negative results due to the many different political, economic, social and cultural differences across countries (Hood and Dixon, 2015; Kamensky, 1996; Torfing et al., 2020; Terrhy, 1999; Mintzberg, 1996). Thus, improving public service quality should not be reduced to NPM theory and practice. Promotion of the idea that only business-like operations is the solution to better service quality and citizen satisfaction could be highly debated since normative best practice. Weberian public administration should initially exist and might be sufficient to provide citizen-centric and quality public service delivery (Drechsler, 2005; Grönroos, 2019; Cejudo and Michel, 2017).

While most of the literature focuses on NPM's practices in other parts of the world (Diamond, 2017; Klikauer, 2015; Machovcová, Zábrodská and Mudrák, 2019; Røiseland, Pierre and Gustavsen, 2015), this research attempts to offer an empirical study of NPM as an administrative reform approach in Egypt. To boost awareness across the Egyptian bureaucracy the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MPED) introduced the "Egypt Government Excellence Award" competition across the national administrative system (MPED, 2021). The award consists of six categories, with the main award the "Governmental Institution Excellence Award", the other five categories include the "Governmental Service Institution Award", "Governmental Services Websites Award", "Innovation and Creativity Award", "Leaderships Excellence Award", and the "Individual Excellence Award."

When going in-depth it becomes clear that the "Governmental Institution Excellence Award" evaluates the back-office operation of the institution and not the quality of services delivered by the front office which is evaluated in another award category the "Governmental Service Institution Award". This second award is granted to citizen service centers, units, and offices that meet several conditions before applying and becoming eligible for the award. Eligibility conditions include having a dedicated director and a separate fully automated administrative center with a sign showing the entity's name that is consistent with the institutional identity; at least two front offices serving at least one thousand citizens per month over the previous six months (MPED, 2021).

The "Governmental Service Institution Award" utilizes a mystery shopper team to assess the service quality and delivery of the participating government organizations and grants the award on the condition that the organization receives a higher average score than the participating entities (MPED, 2021). This award has five different sub-categories that interact directly with citizens. These include Post Offices, Notary Public Offices, Health Offices, Food Subsidy Offices, and Citizen Service Centers. This research study focuses on the Heliopolis District and its service center as this is the primary interface between citizens of the district and the government. According to the Egypt government Excellence Award website, the assessment Criteria of the "Governmental Service Institution Award" is based on the results obtained from the mystery shopper team assessment of "Strategic Connectivity and Leadership; Priority for Citizen/customer; Services and delivery channels; Customer experience; Service efficiency and innovation; Empowering human resources; and Integrated technology" (MPED, 2021).

The reason for choosing Heliopolis District as a representative of an Egyptian bureaucratic institution is that in 2021, MPED awarded Heliopolis District the first prize "Governmental Institution Excellence Award" in the category of districts throughout Egypt, as Heliopolis District achieved the highest performance in its category. The criteria for the award are shown below in Table 1.

Table 1

Assessment Criteria for "Governmental Institution Excellence Award"

Pillars	Main Criteria
Vision realization 60%	Egypt vision 2030
	Main functions
	Smart government
	7stars services
Enablers 20%	Human capital
	Governance
	Resources and assets
	Risk management
Innovation 20%	Future foresight
	Innovation management

Source: MPED portal.

While the Heliopolis District received the "Governmental Institution Excellence Award" based on the three pillars with different weights and the ten main criteria as shown above in Table 1, it did not even rank among the top three winners in the "Governmental Service Institution Award", reflecting a gap between back office and front office operations. From a broad NPM perspective and focused citizen-centric viewpoint, what counts is the quality of the services delivered by the district service and technology center and not much of the success of the back-office operations. Thus, having the case of Heliopolis District receiving the 2021 "Governmental Institution Excellence Award" would only be relevant to citizens if the award is coupled with the "Governmental Service Institution Award" that would be then awarded to the Heliopolis District Service Center (HDSC).

It is worth noting that these and other awards are the result of strategic cooperation between the governments of Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, as the latter has a track record of applying this model to public administration reform (MPED, 2021; UAE Government Excellence Model, 2021).

Research Purpose and Objectives

This article contributes to exploring the gap between the archival measure of government performance adopted by the Egyptian government in granting the Excellence awards, and the perceptual measure that citizens use to assess government performance (Boyne et al., 2006; Song and Meier, 2018; Jilke, Olsen, Resh and Siddiki, 2019; Gębczyńska and Brajer-Marczak, 2020). Although the archival measures used by MPED to assess government performance use quantified NPM components, these components are highly related to back-office operations and discount the front office operations and the citizens' needed service delivery standards.

In this study, NPM components are proposed to generate a perceptual measure to assess the existing archival measure for assessing and rewarding excellence in governance. The proposed components are a combination of the early writings of Drucker (1974), Pollitt (2016) and Hood (1991), including performance, transformation, financial efficiency, and innovation, as well as some of the applicable assessment criteria used in the original mystery shopping application in the United Arab Emirates, in addition to relevant components adopted by MPED. Relevance here refers to the assessment of service delivery, as some of the criteria mentioned in MPED mystery shopping could be irrelevant to the citizen as a service recipient, such as strategic connectivity and leadership.

The above-mentioned components are thus assessed in a survey to capture the perception of citizens in the HDSC. It would not have been possible to achieve this objective unless the components of NPM existed and were communicated across executing organizations.

It is hypothesized that NPM adoption and practice in an Egyptian government institution shall lead a participating institution to earn the Egypt Government Excellence Award.

This research answers the following questions:

- To what extent does granting the "Governmental Institution Excellence Award" reflect improved public services delivered?
- Does the MPED approach in granting the award reflect a holistic reform agenda or does it represent back office and front office operations separately?

The objectives of this research study are:

- To provide empirical information on the NPM practices in an Egyptian public administration context.
- To explore the gap between how citizens perceive government performance in terms of the criteria identified as NPM practices, as well as the criteria identified through the excellence awards, and how the government evaluates its own institutions.

Methodology

Survey Design

To assess the level of the citizen-centric NPM practices in the HDSC, this research study attempted to use a data collection instrument that is based on exploring the components highlighted above. It is hypothesized that NPM adoption and practice in an Egyptian government institution shall lead a participating institution to earn the Egypt Government Excellence Award. The empirical findings of this study encourage senior Egyptian state policy makers to know that NPM carries a lot of potential in the administrative reforms needed in the Egyptian public administration, however, the focus should be on citizen-centric and front office operations as much as it is on back office and structural ones.

A quantitative survey was used to capture both citizens' perceptions of NPM in general and service delivery in specific in HDSC. This empirical study follows two citizen satisfaction survey instruments that were tested and validated, and used previously (Emirates Government Service Excellence program, 2021; Vigoda-Gadot, and Yuval, 2003). Unlike the case in Egypt where citizens' experience with government service centers are assessed through mystery shoppers working for the government among the MPED team to assess government service institutions by checking several criteria as mentioned earlier, the case in the UAE is quite different and offers more valid citizen feedback about government service delivery. The UAE launched a mystery shopper application where any individual living in the UAE and dealing with a government service center can provide feedback and suggestions regarding public services offered. Citizens use their smart phones to download an application offered in eight different languages that allows them first to rate their overall experience with the government service center they dealt with. The rating choice is either positive or negative, then according to the initial rating the citizen is asked to choose if they were satisfied with the service if the initial answer was a positive rating, and what they were dissatisfied with if the initial answer was a negative one. The criteria listed in this part of the application to assess the level of citizen satisfaction include timeliness of service delivery, clarity of information and process, ease of access, employee professionalism, the efficiency of application submission, service quality, availability of support, complaints handling, communication and transparency, and the payment process. Finally, if there was a specific employee who managed to leave a certain impression, the assessing mystery shopper could leave a comment about that employee (Emirates Government Service Excellence program, 2021).

In order to receive meaningful and contextual results, this research study utilized the above-mentioned criteria listed in the UAE mystery shopper assessment and divided them into four NPM components based on Vigoda-Gadot, and Yuva (2003) survey. The four components are Employee performance level, Transparency and accountability, Innovation and creativity, and Responsiveness. Each component included four survey questions. The employee performance level section included questions regarding the professionalism and other performance qualities of the employees in the HDSC. Citizens were asked to rate the level of professionalism; efficiency and effectiveness; understanding and care; and willingness to serve. Transparency and accountability questions included citizen perceptions' regarding employees' attitudes towards criticism; the seriousness of handling suggestions for service improvement; employees' reaction to citizens' complaints; citizens' perception of how employees could be held accountable for their actions. The Innovation and creativity section asked citizens questions on how they compare public service quality in Egypt to other countries; if new and creative ideas were introduced in the HDSC that would improve citizens' quality of life'; if advanced technology is utilized in improving quality of service; and if the payment process reflects a simple and fast way to receive the services. To assess the Responsiveness component of NPM and the accuracy and speed of public services provided by the HDSC, citizens were asked if the employees of the service center responded to public requests quickly; if the citizens' service center is efficient and provides quality solutions based on public needs; if the citizens' service center is responsive to public opinion and employees exert genuine efforts to support the citizens who need help; and if citizens' appeals are processed professionally and in a reasonable time (Vigoda-Gadot and Yuval, 2003). The final section of the questionnaire included dependent variable questions to analyze the effect of the independent variables discussed above. This section asked respondents about the "Egypt Excellence Award". Citizens were asked if the "Egypt Government Excellence Award" that included the "Governmental Institution Excellence Award" and the "Governmental Service Institution Award" helped in the enhancement of public service delivery; if the citizen agrees with Heliopolis District receiving the "Governmental Institution Excellence Award"; if HDSC deserves to receive the "Governmental Service Institution Award"; if the respondent is satisfied in general with the quality of services delivered by Heliopolis District. A 5-point Likert scale ranging from "1" to indicate "strongly disagree" and "5" to indicate "strongly agree" was employed to capture the citizens' perceptions versus real practices. Also, the survey instrument included demographic characteristics of the respondents, including gender, age, education, technological knowledge, and international travel experience. The survey was translated by the author from English to Arabic, and back-translated by a specialized translator to ensure the accuracy and meaningfulness of the statements, that they match the intended aims and context of the study instrument, and that it measured what it intended to measure.

Sampling and data collection

As mentioned above, the sample for this study was drawn from the target population, namely citizens coming to HDSC to receive different government services. A pre-test was conducted for the study tools by contacting 25 people onsite of HDSC. Based on the pretest the survey has been rearranged in a better form. The full questionnaire is shown in Appendix 1. A total of 440 questionnaires were distributed to citizens exiting the HDSC. Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaires and submit them to the research team member. 400 respondents submitted fully answered questionnaires for analysis at a 90% response rate. This high response rate could be attributed to the fact that the questionnaires were distributed and collected onsite. The 40 respondents that submitted incomplete questionnaire answers were removed from the analysis.

Survey Results and Descriptive Analysis

Demographic statistics

Table 2

Demographic statistics

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	264	66
Female	136	34
Age	**Frequency**	**Percent**
24–30	37	9,3
31–43	85	21,3
Above 43	278	69,5

Educational level	Frequency	Percent
Less than secondary education degree	8	2,0
Secondary education degree	9	2,25
University education degree	362	90,5
Post graduate education degree	21	5,25
Technological knowledge	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Excellent	26	6,5
Very good	69	17,3
Good	265	66,3
Weak	40	10,0
International travel experience	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Yes	75	18,8
No	325	81,2

Source: Compiled by the author (-hereinafter, unless otherwise noted).

As shown above in Table 2 the demographic data of the participants: 264 representing 66% of the participants were males and 136 representing 34% were females; 278 were above 43 years old representing 69.5%, 85 and 37 representing 21.3% and 9.3% representing ages 31–40 and 24–30 respectively; 362 representing 90.5% held a university education, and 21 representing 5.3% held a postgraduate degree, and 9 representing 2.3% had a secondary education degree, and 8 representing 2% held an educational degree less than secondary education. Regarding technological knowledge 265 participants representing 66.3% responded with having good technological knowledge, and 26 representing 6.5% responded with having excellent technological knowledge, 69 representing 17.3% responded with very good, and 40 representing 10% responded with weak technological knowledge.

The last demographic question asked participants about international travel experience showed 325 representing 75% showing a negative answer, and 75 responding with a yes representing 18.2%. This question was intended to relate to question 9 of the survey, which asked participants to compare public service delivery in Egypt with other countries. With regards to the gender of respondents, although as shown above and having 66% males, this is culturally understood as in Egypt men have the social role to go to government agencies to do paper work. As for the age, it is understandable that these are the age brackets that deal with local government and their service centers. Moreover, when comparing the results of the report published by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS, 2021) showing the characteristics of the general population of the Heliopolis District, the differences between the data results from the research sample and the official corresponding data in the target population show little differences, and hence the sample shows representativeness, and their stratification has no impact on the results of the study.

For instance, in the age category of 24–30, the sample male represents 73% while the general population represent 79.4%; the sample female represents 27% while the general population represent 20.6%; and in the age category of 31–43 the sample male represents 67.1% while the general population represent 66.9%; the sample female represents 32.9% while the general population represent 33.1%; and in the age category above 43 the sample male represents 64.7% while the general population represent 77.1%; the sample female represents 35.3% while the general population represent 22.9%; and regarding the educational level with regards to the sample with less than secondary education degree it represents 2.0% while the general population represents 6.5%; and the sample with secondary education degree it represents 2.25% while the general population represents 5.4%; and the sample with university education degree it represents 90.5% while the general population represents 82.1%; and the sample with post graduate education degree it represents 5.25% while the general population represents 5.8%.

Descriptive statistics

Table 3

Descriptive statistics

Question	1	2	3	4	5
Employees performance					
HDSC employees are professional when dealing with citizens	22,0%	448,8%	114,8%	333,5%	11,0%
HDSC employees are effective and efficient when dealing with citizens	22,0%	554,0%	222,8%	221,3%	11,0%
HDSC employees show understanding and care when dealing with citizens	119,0%	668,3%	00,3%	111,0%	11,0%
HDSC employees show a willingness to serve citizens	119,0%	668,3%	00,0%	111,8%	11,0%
Transparency and accountability					
HDSC employees accept criticism and react objectively	22,0%	885,8%	00,0%	111,3%	11,0%
HDSC employees are serious in handling suggestions for service improvement	119,0%	778,8%	00,0%	11,3%	11,0%
HDSC employees react to citizens' complaints without affecting service delivery	119,0%	778,8%	00,0%	11,3%	11,0%
HDSC employees could be held accountable for their actions and citizens could identify the employee who delivered the service	444,0%	336,8%	117,0%	11,3%	11,0%

Innovation and creativity					
Service quality of public service delivery in Egypt is equal to other countries	22,0%	226,0%	660,0%	111,3%	00,0%
New and creative ideas were introduced in HDSC that improve citizens' quality of life	22,0%	552,3%	11,0%	444,8%	00,0%
Advanced technology is utilized in improving the quality of service	22,0%	66,8%	00,0%	991,3%	00,0%
The payment process reflects a simple and fast way to receive HDSC services	33,0%	115,5%	118,5%	660,0%	33,0%
Responsiveness					
HDSC employees respond to public requests quickly	44,0%	882,8%	44,0%	99,3%	00,0%
HDSC employees provide quality solutions based on public needs	221,3%	773,8%	00,3%	44,8%	00,2%
HDSC is responsive to public opinion and employees exert genuine efforts to support the citizens who need help	221,3%	774,5%	00,0%	44,3%	00,0%
Citizens' appeals are processed professionally and in a reasonable time	443,8%	333,8%	118,3%	44,3%	00,0%
Egypt Government Excellence Award					
"Egypt Government Excellence Award" that included the "Governmental Institution Excellence Award" and the "Governmental Service Institution Award" helped in the enhancement of public service delivery	33,0%	224,0%	668,8%	44,3%	00,0%
Citizens agree with Heliopolis District receiving the "Governmental Institution Excellence Award"	221,3%	664,8%	99,8%	44,3%	00,0%
HDSC deserves to receive the "Governmental Service Institution Award"	221,3%	664,8%	99,8%	44,3%	00,0%
I am generally satisfied with the quality of public services delivered by Heliopolis district	33,0%	883,0%	00,0%	114,0%	00,0%

Notes: Descriptors: 1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly agree.

The results in Table 3 show that almost 70% of respondents were neutral regarding the public service delivery enhancement effect of the "Egypt Government Excellence Award". However, it is clear from the results that citizens are neither satisfied with the quality of public services delivered by Heliopolis District, nor think that Heliopolis District deserves to receive an excellence award whether the "Governmental Institution Excellence Award" or the "Governmental Service Institution Award". Respondents gave identical answers to the two questions referring to the two different awards. Responses to the question "Citizens agree with Heliopolis District receiving the Governmental Institution Excellence Award" and the question "HDSC deserves to receive the Governmental Service Institution Award". Responses show that citizens cannot distinguish between the reforms that take place in the back office of the bureaucracy and what they receive at the front office.

While this is the case with citizens, the Egyptian government itself differentiated between the two awards, and these responses actually prove one of the objectives of this study, that a success story of a reformed government entity requires both strategic and structural organizational reform and a citizen-centric focus. Moreover, these two decisive results answer this research's question "Does the MPED approach in granting the award reflect a holistic reform agenda or does it represent back office and front office operations separately?." The results show that whatever back office reform the government does, shall not have a spillover effect on the level of citizen satisfaction without coupling it with front office citizen centric orientation. The two answers with highest approval responses of strongly agree and agree are in the innovation and creativity section, showing a link between reform efforts and citizen satisfaction.

Responses to the question "New and creative ideas were introduced in HDSC that improve citizens' quality of life," and the question "The payment process reflects a simple and fast way to receive HDSC services," show that citizens have physically realized the use and benefits of new and advanced payment methods introduced in HDSC which was an ever existing problem in government service delivery. The answers to the question "Advanced technology is utilized in improving the quality of service," in specific were not consistent with the rest of the answers and thus was omitted from the reliability of the innovation and creativity variable.

The question "HDSC employees could be held accountable for their actions and citizens could identify the employee who delivered the service" while important and responses show an agreement level of 80.8%, was omitted from the transparency and accountability variable to gain a higher level of reliability as shown in Table 6.

Constructing the Reliability statistics

To assess the reliability for each set of variables, Cronbach's alpha was checked. In this study, the cut-off value of 0.5 of Cronbach's alpha was set as the minimum value for reliability based on the literature (CHO and KIM, 2015; Lance et al, 2006; Griethuijsen et al., 2014).

In the first set of variables the data is reliable as shown in Table 4 with Cronbach's alpha 0.78

Table 4

Reliability statistics for Employee performance items

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0,780	4

In the second set of variables representing transparency and accountability, the data shows that the reliability analysis of Cronbach's alpha is equal to 0.633, as shown in Table 5, when the four items are included. However, there would be a significant increase in the reliability statistics when the question "HDSC employees could be held accountable for their actions and citizens could identify the employee who delivered the service," is omitted, resulting in a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.828, as shown in Table 6.

Table 5

Reliability statistics for transparency and accountability

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.633	4

Table 6

Reliability statistics for transparency and accountability (2) after omitting the question (HDSC employees could be held accountable for their actions and citizens could identify the employee who delivered the service)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0,828	3

In the third set of items, the data had low reliability, as shown in Table 7, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.426. In order to increase reliability and reach the acceptable Cronbach's alpha level, the question "Advanced technology is utilized in improving the quality of service," was dropped to ensure consistency of the variable innovation and creativity with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.534, as shown in Table 8.

Table 7

Reliability statistics for innovation and creativity

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0,426	4

Table 8

Reliability statistics for innovation and creativity (2) after omitting the question "Advanced technology is utilized in improving the quality of service"

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0,534	3

As for the fourth set represents the responsive variable, data is reliable as shown in Table 9 with Cronbach's alpha 0.642.

Table 9

Reliability statistics for responsiveness

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0,642	4

As mentioned earlier in this article, a quantitative survey was used to capture both citizens' perceptions of NPM in general and service delivery in HDSC specifically, to assess how the citizens' responses reflect the adoption of the NPM practices as proposed by the government public administration reform initiative, as well as how worthy the institution researched deserves the excellence award granted by the government. The researcher has found it beneficial to partially rely on the UAE's citizen satisfaction survey instrument, which was tested, validated, and used previously, as well as the literature output and the relevant components adopted by MPED in constructing the statistical model of this study. Consequently, the dependent variable "Egypt Government Excellence Award" was extracted from citizens' opinions regarding the four statements shown below. The data is reliable as shown in Table 10 with Cronbach's alpha of 0.880. The dependent variable, Egypt Government Excellence Award, was extracted from the following data array:

- General satisfaction among citizens regarding the quality of public services delivered by the Heliopolis District.
- HDSTC deserves to receive the "Governmental Service Institution Award".
- Citizens agree with the Heliopolis District receiving the "Governmental Institution Excellence Award".
- "Egypt Government Excellence Award" which included the "Governmental Institution Excellence Award" and the "Governmental Service Institution Award" helped in the enhancement of public service delivery.

Table 10

Reliability statistics for Egypt Government Excellence Award

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0,880	4

Determinants of Egypt Government Excellence Award: Empirical Findings

As explained in the previous section, the Egypt Government Excellence Award is the dependent variable, and it is continuous in nature where the highest value represents the higher level of satisfaction. Also, more than one independent variable, meaning multiple linear regression is suitable in this study. The regression model takes the following form:

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \cdots + \beta_k X_k, \quad (1)$$

Where,
X is the set of k predictors/independent variables
α_j is the intercept,
β is the parameter for each predictor variable.

As mentioned before, we have four predictors/independent variables which are Employee performance, Transparency and accountability, Innovation and creativity, and Responsiveness.

Empirical Findings

To study the effect of the explanatory/independent variables on the dependent variable namely the Egypt Excellence Award, a regression analysis was conducted. The results for the regression analysis are summarized below in Table 11.

Table 11

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-1,210	0,391		-3,094	0,002		
	Employee performance level	0,200	0,037	0,237	5,454	0,000	0,314	3,186
	Transparency and accountability (2)	0,075	0,071	0,051	1,054	0,292	0,250	4,006
	Innovation and creativity (2)	0,147	0,038	0,101	3,824	0,000	0,849	1,178
	Responsiveness	0,810	0,037	0,676	21,618	0,000	0,606	1,650

From the coefficients Table 11, the estimated regression equation for this study's' model is:

$$\hat{Y} = -1.210 + 0.2X1 + 0.075X2 + 0.147X30 + 0.810X4$$

Where $\hat{Y}$ represents the estimated value of earning the Egypt excellence award.

Test of Hypotheses (T-Test):

The P-value for each coefficient *(β)* in this model is tested against alpha (α=0.05) for significance as shown in Table 11 and all of them are less than 0.05, indicating that each value of β is not equal to zero and that it is significant to the model.

Table 12

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1641,498	4	410,375	323,111	0,000[b]
	Residual	501,679	395	1,270		
	Total	2143,177	399			

Testing the significance of the overall Model (F-Test):

This test will examine the significance of the model through the following hypotheses:

H_0: Model is not significant ($\beta_1 = \beta_2 = \beta_3 = \beta_4 = 0$)

H_1: Model is significant (At least one $\beta \neq 0$)

Based on the ANOVA Table 12, the P-value of Model is 0.000<0.05, therefore the decision is to reject H_0 and accept H_1. This means that the overall estimated model is highly significant.

Table 13

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0,875[a]	0,766	0,764	1,12698	2,660

The adjusted-R^2 for our model is 0.764 as shown in Table 13. This means that around 76.4% of the variations in the estimated satisfaction $\hat{Y}$ is explained by the independent variables (Employee performance level, Transparency and accountability, Innovation and creativity, and Responsiveness); while around 23.6% of the variations are unexplained and can be due to other factors not included in this model.

Statistical Checks

To receive reliable results from the regression analysis Statistical checks were conducted before data integration, fulfilling linearity, normality and homoscedasticity assumptions, and avoiding multicollinearity (Taber, 2018). In this study, all assumptions are verified for the model, in which the linearity assumption was fulfilled through a constant rate of change occurring in the dependent values due to changing the independent variables, and normality took place in which the residuals of the model were normally distributed with a mean of zero (Lindstromberg, 2020). Moreover, homoscedasticity residuals were approximately equal for all predicted dependent variables in this model (Taber, 2018). Finally, multicollinearity was avoided in this model manifested in an avoidance of a correlation among the independent variables (Ragsdale, 2021). As shown in Table 10, the variance inflation factor (VIF) for each independent variable in the regression model is used to verify that multicollinearity is avoided between the independent variables. From Table 10, VIF for the four variables is less than 5 meaning there is no multicollinearity.

Conclusions and implications

While the Egyptian government acknowledges practicing NPM to achieve public administration reform goals, the results of this study prove to be different. The findings of this paper suggest that NPM application in the Egyptian context does not show improvements in public service delivery, and that receiving the "Government Excellence Award" has minimal impact on citizen perception of the institution receiving the award.

As shown in the model summary, the NPM practices represented in the independent variables Employee performance level, Transparency and accountability, Innovation and creativity, and Responsiveness affect the possibility of earning the Egypt government excellence award level 76.4%. This is not reflected in the responses in the survey used in this research and a clear gap exists between what the government assesses as excellence and what the citizens perceive, hence much more improvements are needed in the application of these four variables in order to achieve higher citizen satisfaction levels and align the perception of both government and citizens on the application of NPM and citizen satisfaction from services delivered. Moreover, it can be argued that the obtained negative results of testing the hypothesis are not just a reflection of modest NPM practice but could be a notice for the Egyptian government that NPM is not the best fit public administration reform track, and its success in one country could not be replicated in the Egyptian context due to different economic, social, and political conditions.

The findings also suggest that the MPED approach in granting the award is not reflective of a holistic reform agenda and that the NPM practice and assessment is done for back office operations in a separate form than the one performed for front office operations or in other words is done from a process oriented view rather than a citizen-centric view. A true Egyptian success story in public administration reform shall require a revision of which reform approach will be adopted by the government. NPM adoption to reach a citizen-centric orientation and public satisfaction from the quality of services delivered, could not be the best solution for the government to adopt. NPM adoption could complicate the original problem, since the cloning of the successful NPM practices in other countries could be uncertain in Egypt. Many setbacks exist in the case of Egypt including high levels of corruption among civil servants putting Egypt in the 117th rank out of 180 countries in the Corruption Perceptions Index (Transparency International, 2021), as well as deeply rooted cultural resistance (Schedler and Proeller, 2007) that run in the veins of a seven thousand year bureaucracy. It is possible that the negative results of testing the hypothesis of this research are not just the result of poor application of NPM practice by the Egyptian government, but also a reflection of the problems of the NPM theory itself and the claimed potential and positive change that it can offer. Probably, a return to a more rational Weberian paradigm as the basis for public administration reform could end up as the most convenient one for Egypt.

The findings also point to the need for future practical research regarding the mystery shopping approach conducted in Egypt when granting the "Governmental Service Institution Award." The initial recommendation based on this study is to follow a mystery shopping approach similar to the one conducted in the UAE, and have an online application that can be used by citizens receiving the public services, where the citizens evaluate the quality and delivery of services throughout the year, rather than a mystery shopper team composed of government employees assessing the service of the participating government organizations during the award shortlist assessment phase.

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THE KEY FACTORS TO IMPROVE THE GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: A LESSON FROM INDONESIA

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Abstract. This study aims to identify the critical factors for enhancing the government performance management system in Indonesia. The research was carried out in three major provinces: Yogyakarta, South Sumatra, and West Java Province. Employing a mixed-method approach, the study utilized descriptive research with both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The quantitative analysis involved multivariate regression analysis conducted using R-Studio, while the qualitative aspect included insights from selected key informants. The findings of the study highlight that leadership commitment and internal policy support are the most influential factors in sustaining the government performance management system in Indonesia. Additionally, such factors as organizational structure stability, working culture, conformity to national policies, clarity of performance cascading, and quality of human resources showed positive correlations. However, the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) was found to have no comprehensive correlation in supporting performance management systems.

Keywords: government performance; management system; organizational structure; multivariate regression.

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JEL Classification: H79, H83, P47.

Introduction

In recent years, the notion of public organization has been furnished by various thoughts, values, and perspectives from multiple disciplines (Manzoor, 2014). In this case, it is difficult to neglect contributions from other dimensions beyond the nature of the public organization theory. The emerging concept of New Public Management (NPM) in the 1980s blurred the rigid principles in the public organization through the injection of business values within the organization's cycle (Osborne and Gaebler, 1993). Accordingly, this phenomenon has enabled public organizations to perform similarly to the business concept, especially in terms of performance management to be more customer-driven oriented (Pollit and Bouckaert, 2011).

The emerging concept of NPM is becoming a pivot point for the public organization to adopt greater organizational attributes such as technological change or cultural reforms (Pratama and Kalalinggi, 2019). In purely Anglo-Saxon countries, the concept of NPM might be easily adopted and applied without significant modifications, for example, massive collective reforms in the healthcare sector driven by the Swedish government (Anderson, 2006), the shift of the public finance system in Romania in the early 1990s (Matei and Chesaru, 2014), or the long series of administrative reforms in France from the 1990s to the 2000s (Bezes et al., 2012).

Mauro, Cinquini, and Pianezi (2019) stated that there is a gap between the theory of pragmatic constructivism and the real implementation of NPM-based reform in the field. They even called it illusion to express the implementation of the NPM concept without modifying its origins. In line with this statement, Cavalcante and Camoes (2016) also confirm a similar tone by exploring a conceptual model of the NPM that won the Federal Government Innovation Award. Both of these statements indicate a need for modification within the NPM concept when adopted as a guiding principle for administrative reform. These observations highlight the importance of adapting the NPM concept to drive administrative reform effectively. Then, the further question aligning with this fact is „What kind of modification is needed?" and „How should the modifications be delivered to maintain the maximum performance as the output of the NPM concept?". The answer to these questions lies in the fundamental thought of NPM itself, which is an output orientation according to Hughes (1998) and Strathern (2000).

This study intends to review the determination of performance management factors, as Roh (2018) conveyed. Its purpose is to assess the performance management system that has been applied in some provinces as part of the NPM-based reform in Indonesia. Three different provinces have been selected as a case study for this research, comprising: Yogyakarta, South Sumatra, and West Java province. These three provinces have been selected as the case study due to their different grade of government institution performance accountability reports. In this case, Yogyakarta province has attained the highest constant score, while South Sumatra province indicates a declining score. In contrast, West Java province has shown a positive trend in the score. This difference is expected to reflect the real portraits of determinant factors to improve Indonesia's government's performance management system. By conducting this research in Indonesia, we can gain insights into the unique factors that contribute to the effectiveness of the government's performance management system.

This study aims to provide valuable information that can support improving performance management practices tailored to the Indonesian government's specific needs and challenges. This paper follows a coherent structure. It begins with an introduction that outlines the study's objective. The theoretical discussion section explores relevant literature on government performance management systems. The research methodology section explains the mixed-method approach used. The analysis and interpretation of the findings is discussed, followed by a brief conclusion that summarizes the main points and offers recommendations.

Theoretical discussion

Government Performance Management

Performance management is defined as a system of information through strategic planning and performance measurement routines that connect this information to decision venues and a range of possible decisions (Moynihan, 2008). This importance has been discussed in depth in the context of the conceptual idea of strategic management. The question that strategic management experts often ask is how to operationalize organizational strategy into technical actions. For this reason, performance management theory is to translate the concept of strategic management into technical and organizational activities.

Many experts defined performance management and its benefits for public sector governance. Armstrong and Baron (1998) define performance management as a strategy and approach to providing organizational success through improving employee performance and increasing individual and group capabilities. The performance management system seeks to ensure the ease of implementing integrated performance management. The availability of a performance management system will be a strategic bridge in managing various systems that can connect the needs and expectations of various interest groups (Abad, 2016).

The performance management system consists of three parts: correct poor performance, create good sustainable performance, and improve performance (Lee, 2005). The same thing is also explained by Johnson and Shields (2007), who stated that effective performance management has two important goals, namely to communicate organizational strategy with several related employees, to discuss organizational goals and ideals, and the data helps to create a harmonious relationship between the employees and the leadership of the organization.

Sustainable Performance Management

Performance management, based on Gheorghe and Hack (2017), concluded that performance management activities are like running several businesses in different scopes and a continuous activity starting from planning, implementation, measurement of results, and action plans. Activities can lead to organisational outcomes. Each organization has different challenges, so handling the activity cycle in each organization will be different.

Roh (2018) describes the division of sustainable performance management based on the correlation between three dimensions. These three dimensions include Institutional, Operational, and Value-Added dimensions. Sustainable performance management needs to be developed and requires organizations to be adaptive and responsive. The outline of this theoretical framework is built from the main theory (Grand Theory) of Performance Management. Roh (2018) and Brusca and Montesinos (2016) argue that performance management must undergo improvement and development that leads to improvement in performance management to achieve sustainable performance management that ultimately leads to sustainable development.

Research Model

This study aims to examine the variables that influence sustainable performance management. The variables under investigation include Leadership Commitment (X1), Suitability of organizational structure (X2), Internal Policy Support (X3), Use of information technology (X4), Work Culture (X5), National Policy Conformity (X6), Performance Cascading Clarity (X7), and HR Quality (X8). These variables have been identified as important factors in the effectiveness and sustainability of performance management systems. The research model showing the relationships between these variables is illustrated in Figure 1:

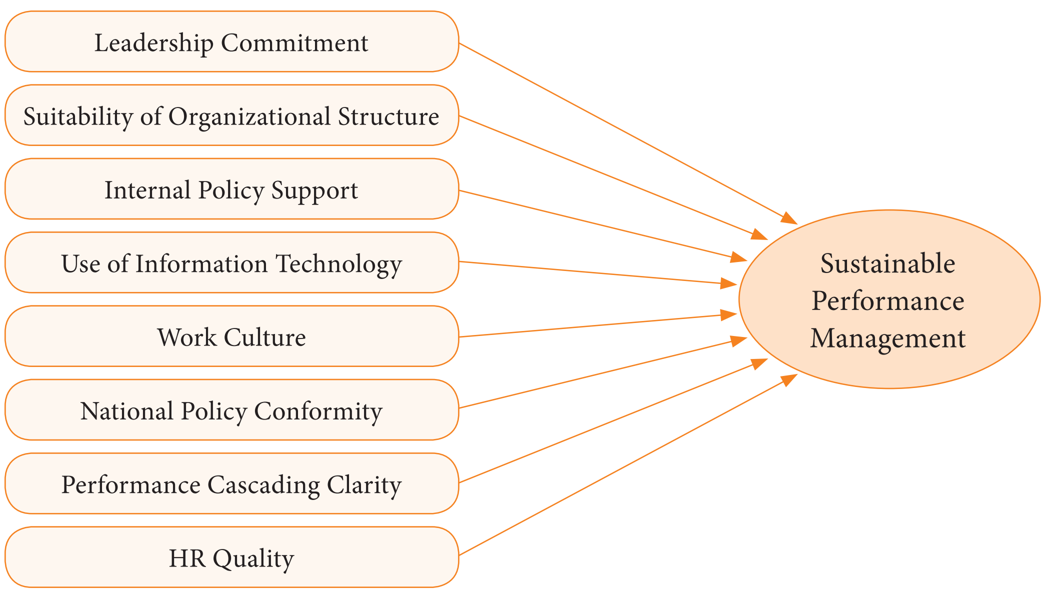

Figure 1. **Research Model**

By analyzing and understanding the impact of these variables, this study aims to provide valuable insights into enhancing sustainable performance management in organizations. The subsequent sections will delve into the findings and discussions regarding the influence of each variable on sustainable performance management, shedding light on the key factors that contribute to organizational success.

Research Methodology

This research applies a mixed method approach demonstrating a combination of qualitative and quantitative exposure with a multivariate regression method. Accordingly, the data collection technique included interviews and a questionnaire survey. The interview section is aimed to explore the supporting and inhibiting factors that affect performance management. While the questionnaire survey aimed to understand how far those supporting and inhibiting factors affected performance management.

The questionnaire used in this study incorporates a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 to measure the participants' level of agreement with the presented statements. The scale consists of response options such as "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Neutral," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree," allowing respondents to express their opinions on a spectrum of agreement. The distributed questionnaire provided data that yielded descriptive statistical results as presented in the following table.

Table 1

The demographic profile

Measure	Items	Frequency	Percentage
Work Location	Special Region of Yogyakarta	124	31,7%
	West Java Province	135	34,8%
	South Sumatra Province	132	31,7%
Gender	Male	211	54,1%
	Female	180	45,9%
Age	20–25 years	0	0%
	26–30 years	11	2,8%
	31–35 years	76	19,4%
	36–40 years	131	33,7%
	41–45 years	113	28,8%
	46–50 years	34	8,7%
	51–55 years	26	6,6%
	56–60 years	0	0%

Measure	Items	Frequency	Percentage
Total Income (Monthly)	1–2 million	0	0%
	2–4 million	1	0,3%
	Above 4 million	390	99,7%
Education	D3 (Diploma)	0	0%
	S1/D4 (Bachelor)	208	53,3%
	S2 (Magister)	183	46,7%
	S3 (Doctoral)	0	0%

Source: Completed by the authors, 2022 (- hereinafter, unless otherwise noted).

The survey conducted shows that the majority of respondents were from West Java, 34.8%, followed by respondents from Yogyakarta and South Sumatra with 31.7%. Most respondents were between 36 and 40 years old (33.7%), with a higher proportion of male than female. The survey results also show that most respondents have a monthly income of over 4 million rupiah (99.7%), and some others (0.3%) have an income of 2 million to 4 million rupiah. In addition, the data shows that most respondents 53.3% had a bachelor's degree, and 46.7% a master's degree, Subsequently, conducting reliability and validity tests on the questionnaire survey becomes imperative when it is used as a research instrument to assess how the identified supporting and inhibiting factors impact performance management.

Reliability involves consistency, reproducibility, and test scores, i.e., the extent to which one can expect an individual's relative deviation scores to remain constant across test situations on the same or parallel testing instruments (Vatankhah et al., 2013). The most common method to test the reliability of research instruments is using alpha coefficients. The most frequently used is Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. This coefficient has a value between 0 and 1. If it is 0.6 or less, it generally indicates insufficient reliability of internal consistency. In the social sciences, acceptable reliability estimates range between 0.70 and 0.80 (Vatankhah et al., 2013).

The validity of an instrument is said to be valid if it measures what it is supposed to measure (Mujis, 2004), or in other words, if an instrument accurately measures a particular variable, it is considered a valid instrument for that particular variable. To be valid, conclusions drawn from scores must be precise, meaningful, and useful. This difference explains the inseparable relationship between validity and reliability. A valid instrument must be reliable, but a reliable instrument is not necessarily valid.

The quantitative data in this inquiry is processed through R studio software. The research questions aligning with this research comprised of:

RQ1. What are the supporting and inhibiting factors for sustainable performance management in the provincial government in Indonesia?

RQ2. How far do those supporting and inhibiting factors affect the management of sustainable performance in the provincial government in Indonesia?

Findings

The first step is to perform reliability and validity tests to ensure the quality of the data. Reliability tests assess the internal consistency of the research instrument, while validity tests ensure that the instrument accurately measures what it is intended to measure. The results of these tests are presented in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2

Validity Test

Item	R	*P-value*	Item	R	*P-value*	Item	R	*P-value*	Item	R	*P-value*
1	0,153	0,002	11	0,612	0,000	21	0,917	0,000	31	0,797	0,000
2	0,878	0,000	12	0,455	0,000	22	0,910	0,000	32	0,852	0,000
3	0,859	0,000	13	0,580	0,000	23	0,879	0,000	33	0,812	0,000
4	0,931	0,000	14	0,889	0,000	24	0,394	0,000	34	0,980	0,000
5	0,521	0,000	15	0,886	0,000	25	0,856	0,000	35	0,631	0,000
6	0,539	0,000	16	0,761	0,000	26	0,753	0,000	36	0,650	0,000
7	0,579	0,000	17	0,660	0,000	27	0,756	0,000	37	0,685	0,000
8	0,734	0,000	18	0,852	0,000	28	0,124	0,000			
9	0,678	0,000	19	0,872	0,000	29	0,765	0,000			
10	0,845	0,000	20	0,860	0,000	30	0,771	0,000			

The final result of a credible instrument is expected to get a good appreciation and understanding from the subject/respondent. Content validity was measured statistically using Pearson's product moment. The value of the r-table for 319 samples (n) is 0.099. This analysis shows that all question items are valid for use.

Table 3

Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha
0,872

Reliability test results showed that the items in this questionnaire were reliable with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0,872 (> 0.600). The alpha test developed by Cronbach was used to statistically test the internal consistency between the items.

The alpha test provides an estimate of the internal consistency of several items when applied to a specific population at a specific time and for a specific purpose. If the tested items were closely related, a high alpha value is likely to be obtained (Travakol and Dennick, 2011).

Table 4

Statistical Test

X	t-test	F-test	R^2
Leadership Commitment (X1)	5,979	337,6	0,87
Suitability of organizational structure (X2)	5,666		
Internal Policy Support (X3)	6,854		
Use of information technology (X4)	-2,161		
Work Culture (X5)	4,162		
National Policy Conformity (X6)	3,579		
Performance Cascading Clarity (X7)	1,643		
HR Quality (X8)	1,594		

The F-test determines the combined effect that the independent variable has on the dependent variable. The F-test value is 337.6 with a p-value of < 0.000; because the p-value is < 0.05, the null hypothesis can be rejected and the test shows that the independent variables together have an effect on sustainable performance management. To determine the effects of each variable, the t-test can be used in Table 4. Then the R-squared value is used to calculate the impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable of the model. The calculation results show an R-squared value of 0.87, which means that the variables of managerial commitment, organizational structure conformity, internal policy support, use of information technology, work culture, national policy conformity, performance cascading clarity, and quality of human resources influence 87% of the diversity of sustainable performance management variables. In comparison, the remaining 13% are influenced by other variables outside the model.

Table 5

Results of Multiple Regression Analysis

Variables	Coefficient	*P-value*
Leadership Commitment (X1)	0,25385	5,16e-09***
Suitability of organizational structure (X2)	0,23272	2,88e-08***
Internal Policy Support (X3)	0,19965	2,90e-11***
Use of information technology (X4)	-0,0631	0,031326*
Work Culture (X5)	0,10932	3,90e-05***
National Policy Conformity (X6)	0,06578	0,000389***
Performance Cascading Clarity (X7)	0,06080	0,101180
HR Quality (X8)	0,04278	0,111837

Notes: * sig 0,5; ** sig 0,01; *** sig 0,001

Source: Author (2022).

The model is formed as follows:

$$SPM = 0{,}56903 + 0{,}25385\ X1 + 0{,}23272\ X2 + 0.19965\ X3 - 0.06308\ X4 + 0.10932\ X5 + 0.06578\ X6 + 0.06080\ X7 + 0.04278\ X8$$

Based on Table 5, the results of the study show that of the eight variables used, six variables, namely leadership commitment, organizational structure conformity, internal policy support, use of information technology, work culture, and national policy conformity, proved to have a significant effect on sustainable performance management. In comparison, the other two variables, performance clarity cascading, and quality of human resources, have no significant effect on sustainable performance management.

The leadership commitment is the most influential variable in sustainable performance management. Every unit increase in this variable increases sustainable performance management by 0.253385 units. Leadership plays an important role in sustainable development as it influences organisational behaviour and employee attitudes (Hallinger and Suriyankietkaew, 2018). According to the NRBV theory, environmentally friendly resources are mandatory to deliver better organizational performance sustainably (Hart, 1995). Being environmentally friendly, this study takes sustainable leadership as a resource. Sustainable leaders share long-term visions, identify sustainability problems, spur green initiatives, and institute green management policies (Avery and Bergsteiner, 2011).

Leadership is one of the most important requirements for sustainability and organizational change, because top management's commitment is a basis for change (Enquist et al., 2007a). As an institution, companies require a shift in mindset and practical initiatives to integrate stakeholder management to face the prospect of an evolutionary leap to sustainable value (Laszlo, 2003). Stakeholder management practices have favorably affected long-term performance and status of companies through the implementation process, governance and their impact (Post et al., 2002).

The next influential variable is the suitability of the organizational structure, which has an effect of 0.23272. Every one unit increase in this variable increases sustainable performance management by 0.23272 units. The third variable is internal policy support; one unit increase in this variable increases sustainable performance management by 0.19965.

Organizational structure normally describes how responsibility and power are allocated, and work procedures are carried out among the members of the organisation (Nahm et al., 2003). In the practical field, many companies want to follow successful firms by adopting organizational structures, learning from advanced experiences, and encouraging innovation. Leitao and Franco (2008) give strong evidence about the relationship between structure and performance; efficient organizational structure positively impacts both non-economic and economic performance.

The variable use of information technology is detrimental to sustainable performance management. Every one unit increase in this variable reduces sustainable performance management by 0.0631 units.

The variable Use of information technology is detrimental to sustainable performance management because every one unit increase in this variable leads to a decrease in sustainable performance management. This is primarily attributed to the inherent challenges faced by government organizations, which operate within a strict bureaucratic framework governed by regulations and constraints. The rigid structures, lengthy procurement processes, resource limitations, and security concerns impede their agility in adopting and leveraging new technologies effectively. Similar results were also shown by Loveman (2001) who found no evidence of performance increase from IT investments. According to Cerere (1993), organizations have always sought and adopted technologies that enhance the efforts of their manpower in production and management.

However, implementing a new information system only sometimes significantly benefits the organization. The success of system implementation is dependent on many factors. When a business implements its drive to become more efficiently interconnected, risks arise from the new technology, which is loaded with uncertainties that evolve and cannot be fully known when making decisions (Wu et al., 2008). A major problem with the technology implementation process is that few threats and risks of implementation failures are recorded in the literature, perhaps because only some companies wish to publicize their failures (Hakim and Hakim, 2010).

Performance culture has a positive effect on sustainable performance management. Each one unit increase in this variable increases sustainable performance management by 0.10932 units. Then, each increase in the variable National Policy Conformity will increase sustainable performance management by 0.06578 units. Following social interaction and interpersonal relations, organizations dominated by a human relations culture will emphasize internal staff development, learning, and capacity building to pursue organization sustainability.

It adopts a strong and clearly defined organization's ethical position on discrimination, business ethics, and fraud. The focus on internal staff development also suggests that the organization invests in human potential and capital, learning and education, and is interested in pursuing environmental health and safety, human welfare and health, and fair and socially equitable practises to improve the skills, satisfaction, commitment and productivity of employees (Daily and Huang, 2001; Dunphy et al., 2003; Wilkinson et al., 2001). The last is the Cascading Clarity of Performance and quality of HR which has a positive but insignificant effect on sustainable performance management, respectively 0.06080 and 0.04278.

Discussion

This subsection of the discussion focuses on two key aspects related to sustainable performance management: the importance of leadership commitment and the impact of information technology on management performance. Leadership commitment is crucial for driving sustainable performance management, while information technology can hinder effective management performance. Improving communication and relationships between managers and employees, integrating performance management, and addressing challenges in decentralized governance are essential for enhancing sustainable performance management in organizations, especially in developing countries like Indonesia.

The findings show that the leader's commitment is the most important factor in improving sustainable performance management. The important influence of leadership has been extensively studied in various fields, for example, job satisfaction (Brimhall and Mor Barak, 2018), talent management (Kremer et al., 2019), innovation success (Domínguez-Escrig et al., 2018), promoting creative organizations (Hu et al., 2017), creating customer value (Luu, 2019) and sustainable value (Epstein and Buhovac, 2014). Zhu et al. (2008) and Vargas et al. (2018) state the importance of the support provided by the leadership to achieve organizational success and competitive advantage through actions that promote efficient and effective sustainability.

Leaders are role models for organizations with a strong understanding of the process (Santos et al., 2018). In an organization, leaders are required to set an example for employees. Therefore, leaders must show commitment and support for quality management (Wong et al., 2018). Leadership commitment comprises cognitive and affective states (West and Cianfrani, 2014). Previous research on leader commitment focused on affective states (Luburic, 2015). Therefore, the leadership commitment is also about the leader's attitude. Leader commitment can be seen when the person can prioritize the resources needed to improve quality management (Talib and Rahman, 2015; Hall et al., 2018).

One of the objectives of this study is to determine the inhibiting factors for sustainable performance; the results show that information technology has a significant negative impact on management performance. Although the technology and systems used are currently increasingly sophisticated, the technology cannot produce effective management performance. Technology can make and reduce or even break communication between managers and employees. Therefore, communication and relationship aspects between managers need to be improved to enhance the performance management process in the organization.

Survey data consistently shows poor attitudes towards performance management. Many employees state that their systems need to provide useful feedback and set clear expectations. Sustainable performance management is a human capital system that is difficult to practice (Pulakos and O'Leary, 2011). Many studies support the statement that communication positively impacts the relationship between managers and employees. The results of research by Pulakos and O'Leary (2011) also show that the integration of manager-employee performance, formal management systems, and work plans from managers to employees can be applied today to improve performance management in an organization. These plans can not only improve communication through direct on-the-job training of employees, but also demonstrate behaviors that can improve the performance of sustainable management.

Decentralization is a programme of central government program that aims to improve aimed at improving the welfare of the people's welfare by delegating authority to local governments to manage their institutions with the authority of autonomy. Effective management of local government performance can be seen through the services provided to the community, especially in developing countries where public performance management is lacking (Janjua et al., 2018). However, technology management systems are widely used to improve services to citizens of local governments that require public performance management (Melkers and Willoughby, 2005; Ma, 2017).

Various kinds of literature reveal that performance management has been used to increase accountability. Such as fulfilling bureaucratic responsibilities or increasing local governments' the efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness of local governments (OECD, 2005). Performance measurement is still important, especially for governments in developing countries like Indonesia. This is due to the limited institutional capacities, such as a lack of human resources, multi-levels of public accountability, weak regulations, administrative inefficiencies, and a lack of facilities and funding (Van Helden and Tillema, 2007).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of the study highlight the significance of leadership commitment, organizational structure, and internal policy support as crucial factors that contribute to sustainable performance management in the provincial government. Effective leadership plays a pivotal role in driving sustainable development by influencing employee behavior and mindset within the organization. It serves as a foundation for change and is considered one of the key requirements for sustainability and organizational transformation. On the other hand, information technology emerges as a hindering factor for sustainable performance management. While organizations continually seek and adopt technological advancements to enhance their production and management efforts, the implementation of new information systems does not always guarantee benefits. The success of a system implementation is contingent upon various factors, and the literature often lacks documentation of threats and risks associated with implementation failures, possibly due to companies being hesitant to publicize their shortcomings.

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FROM TRADITIONAL TO INNOVATIVE PUBLIC SERVICE: A REVIEW OF PARADIGM SHIFTS

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Abstract. This research paper presents a comprehensive overview of paradigm shifts in public administration over time and their implications for public service delivery. The paper starts with the Old Public Administration and moves into the New Public Management. It then delves into post-NPM trends, including the New Public Service, New Public Governance, Public Value Management, Digital Era Governance, and the Whole of Government approach. Each paradigm is discussed in detail, highlighting its unique features and their effects on public service delivery. Overall, this paper makes a significant contribution to the field of public service, offering valuable insights for policymakers, administrators, service providers, scholars, and practitioners.

Keywords: public service; paradigm shift; citizens and public servants.

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Introduction

Public services refer to the goods and services provided by the government, either directly or indirectly, to citizens in the interest of promoting public welfare. Public services are specifically designed to cater to the demands and expectations of citizens. The provision of public services is an indispensable function of the government, as it facilitates national progress and advances justice and welfare in society (Pareek and Sole, 2022). The government may opt to deliver public services directly or through private or non-governmental institutions and networks. Regardless of which modality is chosen, it is the government's responsibility to ensure the smooth delivery of public services (Pokharel et al., 2017).

Citizens have the right to receive public services, and the government should provide them, serving as a means to strengthen the relationship between the state and its citizens (Gupta et al., 2023). Public services bridge the gap between the state and citizens, facilitating interaction through street-level agents of the state and promoting the welfare and well-being of the people (Pareek and Sole, 2022).

The provision of high-quality services to citizens that align with their expectations and demands is a fundamental responsibility of the government (Lamsal and Gupta, 2022). Failure to meet such expectations can erode trust and impede the establishment of democracy within a nation over time (Gupta, 2021). The quality of public services plays a crucial role in ensuring citizen satisfaction and restoring trust in the government (Pokharel et al., 2018; Pareek and Sole, 2022). It is the primary responsibility of the government to meet citizens' demands and expectations through the provision of high-quality public services (Gupta et al., 2023). Timely and seamless provision of quality public services is an indication of good service performance, while citizens facing unnecessary difficulties in accessing services indicate poor public service performance (Gupta and Shrestha, 2021).

In recent times, public service institutions have been confronted with an increasingly heightened demand for delivering highly efficient services compared to previous periods (Hailu and Shifare, 2019). These institutions are expected to uphold public values, including but not limited to effectiveness, efficiency, equity, and responsiveness in public service, with failure to do so resulting in media scrutiny, political principal examination, and citizen discontent (van den Bekerom et al., 2021). Public service institutions face a pervasive challenge as they strive to better serve their citizens. In developing nations, public sector institutions face pressure due to the rising awareness and expectations of the public, fueled by civic education, social media, and technological advancement (Pokharel et al., 2017). Citizens anticipate improved public service performance from these institutions. To meet their expectations, public services must be innovatively designed and delivered to effectively and efficiently satisfy the needs and demands of citizens. The advancement of various models of public administration has sparked global interest in reforming public service design and delivery. This paper aims to discuss the different models of public administration and provide an overview of their key attributes and implications for public service delivery.

This paper seeks to answer the question: What are the key attributes of paradigm shifts in public administration from traditional to innovative models, and how do these shifts impact the delivery of public services? By answering this question, a comprehensive understanding of the paradigm shift in public administration, transitioning from traditional to innovative approaches, and its impact on public service delivery can be gained. Furthermore, valuable insights into the distinctive features of each paradigm are provided, enabling policymakers to make well-informed decisions regarding public service delivery. Moreover, this paper contributes to the existing literature, serving as a valuable resource for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners who seek to comprehend the implications of paradigm shifts for public service delivery.

Public Service: A Paradigm Shifts

The landscape of public service delivery has undergone a significant transformation with the emergence of various models of public administration. Societal changes act as driving forces behind paradigm shifts in public administration. The evolving needs, demands, and expectations of society play a crucial role in these shifts in public service delivery. As citizens become more aware, engaged, and technologically connected, their expectations for public services increase, necessitating a paradigm shift. Technological advancements have revolutionized the delivery of public services, leading to the adoption of digital technologies and e-governance platforms to improve efficiency and transparency (Rai and Gupta, 2023). Political ideologies and governance philosophies also influence paradigm shifts as leaders and governments adopt alternative models aligned with their policy priorities and approaches to governance. Since the early 1980s, the public administration system has undergone significant transformations due to the influence of market-oriented management (Elias Sarker, 2006). Economic factors, such as the rise of neoliberalism in the 1980s, have emphasized efficiency, market-based solutions, and cost-effectiveness in public services (Hood, 1989). Additionally, the interconnectedness of the global economies facilitates the exchange of ideas, best practices, and lessons learned, inspiring the adoption of innovative models as countries learn from each other's achievements and challenges.

Throughout the history of public administration, scholars and practitioners have proposed a plethora of principles, models, and theories to augment the effectiveness and efficiency of public service provision (Kularathne, 2017). Some notable paradigm shifts in public administration include the Old Public Administration, New Public Management, New Public Services, New Public Governance, Public Value Management, Digital Era Governance, and Whole of Government approaches. These paradigm shifts have significant practical implications for entire public administration systems. These implications are geared towards enhancing service delivery, improving efficiency, promoting citizen engagement, and adapting to evolving societal expectations. Through the adoption of innovative models, public administrations can effectively meet the changing needs of their citizens and provide relevant, efficient, and accountable public services. Public administration systems in different countries encounter distinct challenges and contexts. Paradigm shifts allow for the customization and adaptation of approaches to fit specific circumstances, considering local cultural, social, and economic factors. This flexibility enables public administrations to address local needs while also benefiting from global best practices. In this article, we provide a detailed discussion of paradigm shifts in public administration, elucidating their salient features and implications for public service delivery.

Old (traditional) Public Administration

The Old Public Administration (OPA), also recognized as traditional public administration, was substantially influenced by the ideas of German sociologist Max Weber. Weber emphasized top-down control through a monocratic hierarchy, where policies were formulated at the highest level and implemented through a series of offices, with each manager and worker being accountable to a superior (Pfiffner, 1999). Weberian thought was characterized by formalism, vertical hierarchies, narrow communication networks, and resistance to external influences (Wojciech, 2017). The OPA emphasized centralized control, the establishment of rules and guidelines, rule-based administration, meritocracy, a career system, impartiality, division of labour, an apolitical civil service, permanence and stability, internal regulation, separation of policy-making and implementation, and a hierarchical organizational structure (Peter, 1996; Osborne, 2006). Essentially, the OPA viewed the government as the sole independent and authoritative actor, owing to its bureaucratic, hierarchical systems and procedures governing public service (Ikeanyibe et al., 2017). Public service delivery was based on legal rational authority, jurisdiction, hierarchy, compliance, processes, and procedures, rather than focusing on outcomes and results.

In the OPA, public servants were expected to provide public services to individuals hierarchically, based on pre-determined compliance that served the public interest rather than the private interest (Robinson, 2015). Public servants played a crucial role in implementing policies that were established by higher-level authorities in the OPA paradigm. Public servants were expected to maintain an exceptional level of professionalism and impartiality in their work. The OPA valued an apolitical civil service, where public servants had to remain neutral and nonpartisan in their work, regardless of their political beliefs. This was deemed indispensable to ensure fair and objective delivery of public services without any discrimination. Public servants were held accountable for their performance by their immediate superiors and ultimately by those at the top of the organizational hierarchy.

Although the OPA was the dominant model of public administration in many countries during the 20th century, it has received criticism for its excessive bureaucracy, inefficiency, lack of responsiveness to citizen needs, and failure to achieve desired outcomes. However, professionalism, impartiality and adherence to rules and guidelines were seen as crucial to public service delivery. Critics argue that an excessive focus on processes and procedures might impede innovation and responsiveness to evolving societal needs. The hierarchical structure and resistance to external influences within the OPA may also restrict collaboration and hinder effective decision-making. These criticisms raise important questions. For instance, does the emphasis on centralized control and rule-based administration hinder the agility and adaptability of public service delivery? Does the emphasis on impersonality and division of labor limit opportunities for collaboration and innovation? Can public servants truly remain apolitical, or does it create a disconnect between the government and the diverse needs of society? These questions warrant careful consideration.

Despite the criticism of the OPA, many countries such as China, France, India, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Spain, the United Kingdom, and Nepal, among others, still adhere to the OPA model. However, the extent of its implementation varies across countries. For instance, China and France have a more centralized and bureaucratic system compared to Japan and South Korea. Furthermore, countries like the United Kingdom, and New Zealand, among others, have implemented NPM reforms (Lapuente and Van de Walle, 2020) to make their administrative systems more market-oriented and performance-based. Currently, several models of public administration have emerged to effectively meet the needs of citizens and society. Nevertheless, the OPA continues to be widely recognized as one of the most influential and renowned theories in the field, with some of its key features endured over time (Hood, 1995; Kickert, 1997), even in the ever-evolving landscape of public governance (Osborne, 2010). Lane (1994) contends that this model remains an indispensable foundation in the field of public administration, notwithstanding the introduction of various ‘modern’ paradigms.

While it has provided a solid foundation, the exploration of alternative paradigms and innovative approaches may be necessary to address complex and dynamic demands of contemporary governance.

New Public Management

In the late 1970s, the OPA faced significant criticism, leading to the introduction of market-based principles known as New Public Management (NPM). Christopher Hood pioneered the NPM paradigm, aiming to integrate private sector and business principles into public administration (Çolak, 2019). The initial NPM reforms were introduced in Anglo-Saxon countries, specifically the United Kingdom and New Zealand (Lapuente and Van de Walle, 2020). Subsequently, these reforms quickly expanded globally, particularly in advanced democracies within the OECD (Clifton and Díaz-Fuentes, 2011), albeit with notable variations among countries (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017). The NPM movement encompassed various reforms in the public sector. These reforms aimed to enhance the efficiency of public service delivery and ensure accountability for performance (Nguyen et al., 2016). NPM advocates for decentralized management, delegation of discretion, contracting for products and services, and the use of market mechanisms such as competition and customer service to achieve better results (Pfiffner, 1999). Furthermore, it promotes a client-centered approach to administration, democratic decision-making, de-bureaucratization, and decentralization of administrative procedures to improve the efficiency and humanistic quality of public services (Hughes, 2003). NPM also strives to make the public sector more competitive and result-oriented, emphasizing community empowerment and customer satisfaction through public services (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992).

Within the NPM paradigm, public servants are expected to create a performance-driven culture, emphasizing the delivery of delivering high-quality services and being responsive to citizens. They are encouraged to think creatively and adopt new technologies and management practices. However, it is essential to consider the potential conflicts that may arise when prioritizing performance over the broader public interest. How can public servants balance efficiency, creativity and the imperative to tackle complex societal challenges and meet the diverse needs of citizens? This question is of great importance and deserves careful consideration in the framework of NPM.

Despite the widespread adoption of NPM by many countries, including the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand (Halligan, 2013) to improve public service performance, criticisms of NPM in the new millennium have emerged, prompting the exploration of alternative models. These models, referred to as post-NPM trends, share some similarities to NPM but focus on specific areas (Lodge and Gill, 2011; Christensen and Lægreid, 2011; Christensen, 2012). The post-NPM trends aim to establish sustainable, effective, and up-to-date public administration, and include concepts such as new public service, new public governance, public value management, digital era governance, and whole of government approaches (Çolak, 2019; Wu and He, 2009). To effectively address the limitations and challenges identified within the NPM paradigm, it is crucial to explore how these post-NPM models can provide effective solutions. Additionally, what valuable insights can be obtained from NPM to guide the development and implementation of these alternative models? Answering these questions is of utmost importance to meet the diverse needs of citizens, tackle the complex challenges faced by society, and ensure the delivery of high-quality public services.

New Public Service

The OPA paradigm and the NPM approach to public services are considered outdated (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2003). They have been replaced by a new and innovative concept called New Public Service (NPS), which is a part of the post-NPM trends. Robert B. Denhardt and Janet V. Denhardt are the pioneers of NPS, which places citizens, communities, and civil society at the forefront of public management (Robinson, 2015). NPS is guided by seven principles that prioritize serving over steering, prioritize citizenship and public service above entrepreneurship, encourage strategic thinking and democratic behavior, focus on serving citizens instead of customers, acknowledge the complexity of accountability, and value individuals over just productivity (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2000).

Public servants are responsible to incorporate these principles into public service delivery. However, it is imperative to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the practical implications of these principles. How can public servants successfully balance between serving citizens and attaining efficient and effective public service delivery? What obstacles might emerge when prioritizing citizenship over entrepreneurship and productivity? How can democratic accountability be effectively ensured in the NPS paradigm? These questions require careful consideration and in-depth exploration.

The NPS underscores that public servants ought to assist citizens in articulating and achieving their shared objectives, rather than steering or controlling society towards new directions (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2000). Public servants (managers) require skills that extend beyond the ability to control or direct society in the pursuit of policy solutions. It is crucial for them to emphasize brokering, negotiating, and resolving intricate problems in collaboration with citizens (Robinson, 2015). Public servants should consider legal and regulatory issues, community values, political norms, professional standards, and citizens' interests (Solong, 2017). The NPS also highlights the importance of building trust and cooperation with citizens and stakeholders, rather than simply responding to customer demands, and promoting opportunities for citizen participation in addressing societal problems (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2000; Robinson, 2015). The NPS stresses the importance of a public service ethos that is rooted in the ideals and motivations of public servants who are committed to the broader public good (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2000). In this paradigm, public servants are expected to facilitate collaboration with citizens and stakeholders through various means, including working across organizational boundaries, forging partnerships with community organizations, and engaging in dialogue with citizens to identify and address public needs and concerns. Public servants have to prioritize citizens, communities, and civil society over customers, aiming to establish trusting and cooperative relationships, encourage citizen participation in resolving societal issues, foster collaboration with citizens and stakeholders, and uphold democratic accountability. Within the NPS, public servants play an indispensable role in achieving public value, democratic accountability, and collaboration with citizens and stakeholders.

New Public Governance

The New Public Governance (NPG) paradigm emerged during the 1990s and has gained significant momentum since the early 2000s. The NPG, which is rooted in governance theory, was introduced by Osborne, and is considered the most prominent model among post-NPM trends. The development of NPG was influenced by several factors, including the growing recognition of the limitations of NPM and the need for a more collaborative and network-based approach to public service. The need for a holistic model that goes beyond the distinction between administration and management and offers a more systematic public management philosophy has led to the development of NPG (Osborne, 2006). The NPG seeks to blend the strengths of OPA and NPM by acknowledging the legitimacy and interdependence of the policymaking, implementation, and service delivery processes (Osborne, 2006). The NPG places the citizen as co-producers of policies and service delivery distinguishing the NPG from OPA and NPM (Robinson, 2015). The NPG emphasizes cost reduction, increasing the overall efficiency and effectiveness of publicly funded services, emphasizing effective partnerships among service providers and well-functioning networks linked to government funders (Vinokur-Kaplan, 2018). The NPG is value-centered, arguing that the purpose of government is to achieve the greater good rather than just increased performance, efficacy, or responsiveness in the execution of a specific program (Moore, 1994, 1995; Alford, 2002; Stoker, 2006).

The NPG paradigm espouses a pluralistic state in which multiple independent actors collaborate to provide cost-effective and efficient public services, and numerous mechanisms inform the policy-making process (Osborne, 2006). This approach enables the use of stakeholders, networks, cooperation, and alliances, emphasizing engagement and unified services, as well as new forms of co-production that prioritize a more engaged citizen model (Çolak, 2019; Ikeanyibe et al., 2017). The NPG seeks to reimagine the role of the public sector through citizen engagement and network governance (Bingham et al., 2005; Boyte, 2005), encouraging public bodies to engage a diverse array of stakeholders in formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative collaborative decision-making processes (Berkett et al., 2013). It places a strong emphasis on inter-organizational partnerships, process governance, service efficacy, and outcomes (Osborne, 2006), setting it apart from OPA, which tends to prioritize intra-organizational processes within the government sphere over inter-organizational processes among government, private, and non-profit actors (Osborne et al., 2013).

The NPG paradigm places a strong emphasis on the indispensable role of public servants in promoting collaboration among stakeholders and delivering public services that prioritize the collective welfare of citizens. In contrast to viewing public servants as mere bureaucratic enforcers of policies and procedures, the NPG recognizes them as active participants in policy formulation, implementation and delivery services. Public servants engage in consensual and deliberative collaborative decision-making processes to ensure that policies and services are tailored to meet the needs of citizens. They are also expected to establish alliances with private and non-profit entities to improve service efficacy and outcomes, involving citizens as co-producers in policymaking and service delivery. This requires strong public relations and engagement skills on the part of public servants to foster a sense of ownership of policies and services delivered. By actively involving various stakeholders in policy making and service delivery, public servants contribute to the overall efficiency and effectiveness of services, which ultimately enhances the well-being of citizens.

The NPG has gained acceptance in numerous countries worldwide. However, the implementation of NPG varies among these nations due to their distinct political, economic, and social contexts. Successful implementation of the NPG necessitates prioritizing reforms that emphasize collaborative decision-making, citizen participation, engagement of diverse stakeholders, fostering an accountable culture, and adopting networked governance structures (Bingham et al., 2005; Boyte, 2005; Berkett et al., 2013). To achieve this, it is crucial to establish a significant level of trust, collaboration, and cooperation between stakeholders. Additionally, creating a supportive political and bureaucratic environment is vital for the NPG to thrive. Failure to meet these conditions may hinder the NPG's impact on public service delivery. By embracing collaboration, networks, and trust as foundational principles, the public sector can unlock its full potential, resulting in improved effectiveness, efficiency, and equity, ensuring the seamless delivery of high-quality public services to citizens.

Despite the significant role played by the NPG in recent years in public service delivery, it is imperative to critically examine key questions related to the

NPG. Specifically, how can public servants effectively engage citizens as co-producers and ensure their meaningful participation in policy-making and service delivery? Moreover, what challenges may arise in balancing citizen engagement with the need for cost-effectiveness and efficiency? It is also crucial to address how public servants can effectively navigate inter-organizational partnerships and ensure accountability and effectiveness in service delivery. Additionally, what measures can be implemented to address potential conflicts of interest or power imbalances among stakeholders? A thorough exploration of these questions is essential to understand the practical implications of the NPG for public service delivery.

Public Value Management

Mark Moore (1994, 1995) introduced the concept of Public Value Management (PVM), also known as the public value model, in his seminal book 'Creating Public Value – Strategic Management in Government'. It was introduced as a critique, reaction, and alternative to the previous public service approaches of OPA and NPM (O'Flynn, 2007; Coats and Passmore, 2008; Wu and He, 2009). The PVM framework emphasizes the importance of creating public value as the primary goal of public managers, akin to the private sector's focus on maximizing shareholder value (Moore, 1995). The PVM, as a form of governance, offers opportunities for extensive exchange between those who govern and the governed, providing PVM managers with the means to facilitate dialogue between these parties (Stoker, 2006; Shaw, 2013). Although public value has gained significant attention, a clear definition remains elusive (O'Flynn, 2007). According to Kelly et al. (2002), public value is generated by the government through services, rules, regulations, and other acts largely decided by the public. In contrast, O'Flynn (2005) views public value as a multi-dimensional construct that expresses the collective and politically mediated desires of the citizenry, shaped not only by outcomes but also through processes that can generate confidence or fairness. Stoker (2006) posits that public value is created through deliberation between elected and appointed government officials and key stakeholders, representing more than just the individual desires of consumers or producers of public services. This lack of consensus raises issues of how public value can be accurately measured, evaluated, and incorporated into decision-making processes for public services.

The public value serves not only as a measure of government performance, but also as a basis for informing policy decisions and shaping service delivery (O'Flynn, 2007). The PVM focuses on creating public value for and with the public through deliberation and co-production processes. These processes go beyond achieving outcomes and involve in deliberative processes to define, deliver, and assessment of public services (Knoll, 2012). Todorut and Tselentis (2015) assert that public value can be generated in a number of ways, a key aspect of which is to engage the group of people in discussions to determine their contribution and benefits in creating public value. The three primary components of public value creation, namely service, result, and trust/legitimacy, as defined by Kelly et al. (2002), are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Components of Public Value

Component	Descriptions
Service	– Vehicle for providing public value to users through actual service experiences and the allocation of justice, equity and related values to citizens. – User satisfaction is a key determinant of public value and is influenced by several factors, including customer service, availability of information, user preferences, service use and advocacy
Outcome	– Achievement of desired end outcomes, which often overlap with services, should be considered separately as they encompass much higher value expectations. – Results are often considered by the public as a critical component of government performance
Trust/legitimacy	– Main sources that are vital to the creation of public value include not only meeting formal service and outcome targets, but also maintaining confidence and trust, as a decline in these factors could ultimately rescind the public value. – Foundation of relations between citizens and government is trust. – Services that have a direct impact on life and liberty, such as health and policing, are of utmost importance and this importance extends to other services, including social services and education

Source: Kelly et al., 2002

In the realm of public administration and policy, the government provides a multitude of services that are highly valued by the public. These services can be broadly categorized divided into three groups: services, outcomes, and trust, with some degree of although there is some overlap between them. The emphasis placed on attaining outcomes and desired results within the framework of the PVM raises questions regarding the process of determining, measuring, and attributing these outcomes to public value. Although outcomes are widely recognized as critical elements of government performance, the task of separating them from services and conducting separate assessments can be intricate and arduous. Identifying appropriate indicators and metrics to evaluate outcomes, and attributing those outcomes to specific public services, can lead to debates about causality, accountability and resource allocation. The PVM framework also places significant emphasis on trust and legitimacy as crucial components of public value. However, the factors that contribute to trust and legitimacy can vary in diverse contexts and among different stakeholders. Debates may arise regarding the establishment, maintenance, and evaluation of trust in the context of public service delivery. Moreover, the inherent tension between meeting formal service and outcome targets and maintaining trust and confidence may pose challenges and require compromises for public servants.

Satisfaction of service users is a crucial factor in achieving public value (Kelly et al., 2002). Citizens who use public services expect a level of satisfaction on par with that of the private sector. Factors such as good customer service, timely and accurate information, and a wide range of options contribute to and influence service user satisfaction (Bojang, 2020). Adopting a public value approach allows organizations to maintain their performance and ensure citizen (customer) satisfaction with their work processes (Yotawut, 2018). The PVM reconceptualizes citizens as active agents in determining service provision and as collaborators in decisions regarding program content and objectives (Shaw, 2013). Recognizing citizens as active agents of service delivery requires careful consideration of their representation, inclusivity and the incorporation of diverse perspectives. Moreover, it may require additional resources, expertise and efforts for capacity-building. Citizen entitlement to services is a defining feature of public services, and the most essential element of such services, public value, has the potential to optimize stakeholder value enhance management, and ensure optimal service delivery (Yotawut, 2018). The PVM acknowledges that adopting a more practical approach to selecting public service providers would lead to a higher degree of public value optimization (O'Flynn, 2007). The PVM approach stresses the importance of public participation, continuous improvement, and service users' satisfaction in the provision of public services. Within the PVM framework, public servants have a vital role in implementing government policies and delivering public services that generate public value. Collaboration with citizens is essential to ensure that public services effectively meet their needs and optimize public value. To achieve this, public servants must incorporate citizens' feedback, preferences, and priorities into the design and delivery of public services through participatory and deliberative processes.

They should also prioritize the maintenance of trust and legitimacy between government and citizens by meeting formal performance and outcome targets and ensuring citizen confidence. Particularly in services that directly life and liberty, public servants must provide high- quality services to uphold citizens' trust in government. Public servants work closely with citizens to design and deliver public services, prioritize citizen satisfaction and maintain trust and legitimacy. Public participation and continuous improvement are crucial for achieving high quality services. Thus, public servants must engage citizens and continuously enhance public services to optimize public value.

Digital Era Governance

Dunleavy et al. (2005) introduced the concept of Digital Era Governance (DEG) in their scholarly article titled 'New Public Management is Dead – Long Live Digital Era Governance' published in 2005. Their proposition originated from the acknowledgment that the existing New Public Management (NPM) system falls short of achieving the desired outcomes in the areas of disaggregation, competition, and incentivization. Thus, Dunleavy et al. (2005) argue for a modification of public administration in light of these developments. The DEG ideology endorses the extensive internet culture in government and acknowledges that the proliferation of the internet brings about not just technical changes but also behavioural, cognitive, organizational, political, and cultural transformations associated with the digital revolution (Wojciech, 2017).

In DEG, digital technologies assume a pivotal role in shaping the organizational structure of government agencies. These technologies drive significant advancements in communication, organizational structures, and service delivery models, and influence citizens' expectations of interactions with service providers (Clarke, 2020). The adoption of information technology, the internet, mobile devices, and social media have transformed the management and delivery of public services (Karippacheril, 2013). Public servants now dedicate the majority of their time to computers, which facilitate all government processes, enable the delivery of public services via the internet, facilitate communication with citizens through social media, and lay the foundation for innovative government action through big data (Meijer et al., 2018). The DEG also encompasses the digitization of administrative processes. The impact of DEG activities can be classified into three key themes (Dunleavy et al., 2005), as depicted in Table 2.

Table 2

DEG Theme and Component

Theme	Components
Reintegration	Rollback of agencification, joined-up governance, re-govern-mentalization, reinstating central processes; radically squeezing production costs, reengineering back-office functions, procurement concentration and specialization, network simplification
Needs-Based Holism	Client-based or needs-based reorganization, one-stop provision, interactive and 'ask once' information-seeking, data warehousing; end-to-end service, reengineering, agile government processes
Digitization Processes	Electronic service delivery, new forms of automated processes-zero touch technologies, radical disintermediation, active channel streaming, facilitating isocratic administration and co-production, moving toward an open-book government

Source: Dunleavy et. al., (2005), p. 481.

The current trend toward DEG encompasses the integration of functions into the governmental domain, a focus on comprehensive and -oriented systems, and the advancement of administrative processes through digitalization (Dunleavy et al., 2005). In DEG, the government adopts a build-and-learn process involving citizens in the co-design of public policies and services. The DEG welcomes and incorporates citizen feedback in the delivery of public services, rendering top-down administration obsolete (Wojciech, 2017). Essentially Digital Governance, an advanced version of DEG, concentrates on two aspects: an administration and public service design framework, and a normative framework for policy-making and service delivery. The framework for governance and public service design is grounded on five principles: the provision of free public services, the use of existing digital information, one-time service delivery, the development of scalable services through competition, and isocratic (do-it-yourself) administration. The normative framework for policy-making and service delivery is based on four principles: the value of equality of outcome over process, the provision of formal rights and real redress, the maintenance of the state's nodal obligation, and experiential learning (Dunleavy and Margetts, 2015). In essence, the DEG lays the foundation for a public service delivery system that leverages digital technology in administering services.

In the realm of DEG, the onus lies on public servants to formulate and implement digital strategies for public service delivery through digital technologies. It is their responsibility to ensure that government agencies have the necessary infrastructure, systems and processes in place to facilitate seamless and user-friendly digital service delivery to citizens. Public servants play a crucial role in designing digital services that meet the needs of citizens and incorporate user feedback into service delivery. They are also accountable for developing policies and procedures that foster the effective utilization of digital technologies in government operations. Additionally, public servants are responsible for enhancing government agencies' digital proficiency and acting as catalysts in promoting a culture of innovation and collaboration both within and beyond government agencies. Ultimately, public servants serve as critical agents of digital transformation in public administration in the digital age.

The role of DEG in delivering technology-based public services has become a top priority for almost all countries in the world in recent times. Countries are actively involved in designing and delivering technology-based public services within the framework of DEG. However, there are critical issues that are closely associated with DEG. Firstly, how can government agencies effectively bridge the digital divide and ensure equitable access to digital services? Secondly, what ethical considerations should be taken into account regarding the collection, storage, and utilization of citizen data? How can public servants adapt to the evolving landscape of digital governance? Comprehensive answers to these questions are essential to effectively address the challenges associated with the practical implications of DEG on public service delivery.

Whole of Government

In response to the NPM reform, a new wave of reform known initially as 'joined-up government' and later as 'whole of government,' emerged (Christensen and Lægreid, 2006). Addressing the issue of coordination, these reform initiatives also sought to tackle the problem of integration (Mulgan, 2005). In 1997, Tony Blair's government in Britain introduced the concept of joined-up government as a response to departmentalism, tunnel vision, and vertical silos (Christensen and Lægreid, 2006). Different countries use different terms for the concept of whole of government, such as 'joined-up government' in Britain, 'horizontal government' in Canada, 'network government' in the United States, 'whole of government' in Australia, and 'integrated government' in New Zealand (Halligan, 2007; Colgan et al., 2014). While these terms are often used interchangeably, they are sometimes considered 'fashionable slogans' (Lægreid et al., 2013). The slogans 'joined-up-government' and 'whole of government' provided new labels for the traditional doctrine of coordination in the study of public administration (Hood, 2005).

This approach is seen as a response to the siloization or pillarization of the public sector caused by the NPM reforms (Pollitt, 2003; Gregory, 2006), which aimed to eliminate independent departments or silos that operated without coordination. There is a growing trend towards integrated approaches to enhance interoperability and collaborative governance and move away from silo-based structures, disaggregation and organizational division (Nfissi et al., 2018). The approach addresses the issue of coordination and coherence in the context of NPM reforms, with the ultimate goal of achieving a seamless government (Colgan et al., 2014). The WOG approach, gaining global momentum, advocates for interconnectedness, coordination, and collaboration of government functions, policymaking, and service delivery. It promotes cross-office cooperation and collaboration to achieve government policy goals (Halligan, 2007), emphasizing a pragmatic working culture over formalized collaboration (Christensen and Lægreid, 2006). The WOG approach takes a comprehensive view of governance and seeks to harmonize policies and activities across diverse sectors and levels of government in pursuit of a common objective.

The WOG approach places significant importance on both horizontal and vertical cooperation to prevent contradictory policies, ensure the efficient use of limited resources, foster synergies by bringing together various policy stakeholders, and provide seamless services rather than fragmented ones (Pollitt, 2003). It represents a unified and coherent set of activities undertaken by various institutions to provide a shared solution to specific problems or issues. The approach integrates collaborative efforts among public sector agencies to achieve common objectives (United Nations, 2014). It underscores the need for unified inter- and intra-agency coordination, cooperation, and partnership in delivery of public services. Therefore, many countries worldwide have begun to incorporate this concept into their service delivery systems (Kularathne, 2017). The WOG approach enables public sector agencies to achieve results that would be unattainable if they worked in isolation. Clear goals, political commitment, feasible joint government structures, strong collaborative cultures, and incentives for collaboration are all critical factors for successful WOG implementation (Colgan et al., 2014).

Public servants have a vital responsibility to promote and ensure coherent and harmonious coordination, collaboration, and partnership among and within government agencies to effectively deliver public services. To achieve shared objectives and overcome conventional silos and departmental barriers, public servants should adopt a holistic approach to governance and an integrated working style that ensures consistency of policy and coordination between multiple government entities. They should promote cross-office cooperation, interconnectedness, collaboration, and unified inter- and intra-agency coordination for government duties, policymaking, and service delivery. In addition, public servants should encourage the efficient utilization of scarce resources by endorsing shared services and eliminating redundant activities. Moreover, they bear a responsibility to cultivate a collaborative culture by upholding transparency, openness, and mutual trust among diverse agencies. The capability of public servants to work jointly with various government agencies is fundamental to achieving collective policy goals and delivering seamless public services.

While the importance of the WOG approach is undeniable in eliminating independent departments or silos that operate without coordination and providing seamless services instead of fragmented ones, its successful implementation raises several issues. Firstly, how can government agencies effectively overcome the challenges of coordination and coherence in a complex and diverse public sector? Secondly, what strategies can be employed to ensure the efficient allocation and utilization of limited resources across multiple government entities? Additionally, how can the WOG approach strike a balance between harmonization and the preservation of diversity among government policies and activities? Addressing these issues is crucial for developing a nuanced understanding of the practical implications and potential limitations of the WOG approach in public service delivery.

Conclusion

Public service delivery has undergone paradigm shifts, which represent a transformation in the design, delivery, and appraisal of public services. Technological progress, societal changes, changing citizen expectations, policy reforms, political ideologies, and economic and external factors drive paradigm shifts in public administration and are constantly evolving.

Each paradigm has unique features and implications for public service delivery. Therefore, public service providers need to understand these paradigms and their implications to navigate the dynamic and complex landscape of public governance effectively. Public servants have a responsibility to stay up to date with global trends in public service and to incorporate them into their national context in order to create a more efficient and effective public service delivery system that meets the needs of society. Therefore, public servants should consistently appraise their public service systems to ensure that they are efficiently and effectively catering the needs of citizens and communities.

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