
Introduction to the special issue

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We would like to express our gratitude to Professor Peter K.W. Fong, Editor-in-Chief, for giving us the opportunity to serve as Guest Editors for this special issue of *Public Administration and Policy* on “Public Governance, Integrity, Performance and Inclusiveness in Asia”. The nature and shape of public governance have been changing since the 1970s and taking on new patterns of interrelationships embracing structural, functional, behavioural and ethical elements. The realization of the goals of productive public governance has been an indispensable condition in most government initiatives aimed at public sector reform. National governments and international organizations, along with citizens and civil society, have articulated the urgency for establishing and practising sound governance to ensure the integrity of the systems, effective performance of the civil service, and inclusiveness of institutional processes to contribute to better management of state activities and improved conditions of living.

Continuous analyses and new interpretations of public governance take place in response to domestic demands and global changes, and they help identify the causes of weak governance in Asian states. Corruption is a major factor affecting almost all aspects of governing, while the lack of capacity of governments to perform expected tasks is another area of concern. Despite some progress in developing the framework of governance, the inclusion of various stakeholders remains a challenge. The articles in this special issue explore the state of public governance in the context of developing countries and are expected to contribute to discussions and debates to promote understanding of this vital issue.

The articles explore diverse issues related to governance. Ahmed Shafiqul Huque and Patamawadee Jongruck compare the history and strategy of civil service reforms in Hong Kong and Thailand and conclude that different strategies were adopted to achieve similar goals. Keshav Kumar Acharya and Habib Zafarullah examine the process of institutionalizing federalism in Nepal and find the process of operationalizing the power of local government bodies as conventional and hierarchic with federal government constraining fiscal control over resource mobilization. In another study on Nepal, Ishtiaq Jamil and Hasan Muhammad Baniamin examine the extent of representativeness in the bureaucracy and find that high caste Hindus still dominate the process while other ethnic communities remain under-represented.

Akm Ahsan Ullah and Faraha Nawaz identify the loopholes in surrogacy policy based on interviews with surrogate mothers and commissioning parents and argue for the adoption of a uniform policy to define and improve the surrogacy programs. Abu Elias Sarker and Mohammad Habibur Rahman explore initiatives of social engineering by the government of the United Arab Emirates for enhancing the participation of indigenous Emiratis in the labour market and register concern over the gaps between the targets and accomplishments in the private sector.

Ramesh Ramasamy examines the trends of governance and public administration in Sri Lanka and finds a mixture of paternalism and alliance of political dynasties, kinship,



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Public Administration and Policy
Vol. 23 No. 2, 2020
pp. 109-110
Emerald Publishing Limited
1727-2645
DOI 10.1108/PAP-09-2020-040

ethnicity, religion and elitism that impact political and administrative commitment and quality of governance. Finally, King C.T. Duho, Mark Opoku Amankwa and Justice I. Musah-Surugu consider the determinants and convergence of government effectiveness in a large number of African and Asian countries and identify positive and negative factors that impact their performance.

Let us thank all the contributors to this special issue of *Public Administration and Policy*. They are a diverse body of scholars from different countries with a keen interest in the study of public governance in Asia. Their contributions will advance our understanding of the complexities and challenges of public governance in the region. We also owe our gratitude to the peer reviewers for their thoughtful comments and useful suggestions that helped fine-tune the articles. Finally, we would like to put on record our deep appreciation for Professor Peter Fong, Dr Alice Te and Dr Franky Choi—all members of the excellent editorial team, for their support in publishing this special issue.

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Guest Editors