

Foreword

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Three papers in the current issue of the *Croatian and Comparative Public Administration*, written by Geert Bouckaert, Lisheng Dong, and Kristof Steyvers, were presented at the International Scientific Seminar and Summer School *Researching, Theorizing, and Teaching Administrative Science and Public Administration: Croatia, South East Europe, and Beyond* held in Dubrovnik, Croatia, from 10th to 15th July 2017. The conference and summer school was organized by the Institute of Public Administration in cooperation with the Department of Administrative Science and Local Governance, Faculty of Law in Zagreb. Additional support was provided by the two Croatian law faculties (Zagreb and Split) and some other Croatian institutions.

We re-print here a paper written by Geert Bouckaert, president of the International Institute of Administrative Science. The paper offers insight into the organisation of scientific knowledge on reforming public administration from various disciplines in the public administration field. Bouckaert also claims that the knowledge provided by administrative science is a significant part of a wider body of knowledge about public policies. Knowledge on the functioning of the public sector is clustered and scientifically organised in the field of public administration. He reflects about shifting mechanisms of PA knowledge supply, demand, and the match of supply and demand, claiming that the people developing grounded and evidence-based reform policies for a functional public sector need to be thoroughly informed about these mechanisms.

The second paper in the row, written by Lisheng Dong, deals with the transposition of western-type public administration knowledge to studying public administration in China. Chinese public administration as a discipline has been restored and developed in an active exchange with the western public administration. Despite obvious development, Dong sees an identity crisis of the Chinese public administration and opts for the

development of its own unique paradigm, including concepts, theories, and methodologies. He clarifies his standpoint in more detail, describing current tasks and needs of administrative science in contemporary China.

Kristof Steyvers presented his methodology-focused paper about comparative research on local politics in Dubrovnik. He explains the need for more rigorous and systematic comparative research. In his paper Steyvers distinguishes between three phases: the first two address the challenge (institutionalism) and the third one theorises (new institutionalism). He also offers the prospects for improvement within the field, particularly in regard to the explanations, theories, designs, and measurement.

Iztok Rakar's paper summarises the development of local government system in Slovenia in the past two decades. He evaluates local democracy development against the criteria from the European Charter of Local Self-Government (ECLSG). His particular focus is on subsidiarity and financial autonomy. Slovenia has difficulties with the implementation of subsidiarity principle. Municipalities cannot take over a larger share of public functions due to their limited capacities. The reasons for the ECLSG implementation gap are discussed and a broader political context is explained in his paper.

Mariza Menger offers an understanding of the local government reform outcomes adopting the garbage can perspective as an explanatory model. In her interesting paper she examines the case of reforming the Croatian local self-government during the past 25 years. The author argues that reform outcomes are a result of the garbage can type of decision-making of central state politics. She concludes that the model has emerged because local government changes took place in a turbulent setting and because of low central state decision-making and administrative capacities.

The paper co-authored by Diego Sanjurjo and Karlo Kožina was a result of the Croatian Institute of Public Administration's research grant awarded in 2017 and spent in Zagreb. The authors analyse public security policy development and implementation based on the Croatian 2007 disarmament strategy. Firearm violence and control are important topics in Croatia and in the Western Balkans because of the 1990s wars on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. The paper concludes that the joint implementation of legal amnesty for those who turned over illicit weapons joined with the "Citizen Alert" and "Disarmament for Development" voluntary weapon-collection programmes, and the "Fewer Arms, Fewer Tragedies" awareness-raising campaign have had a positive impact on the overall security situation in Croatia.

At the end, I have a pleasant duty to introduce our new editorial team to you. The Executive Board of our main publisher, the Institute of Public Administration from Zagreb, has re-appointed me as the editor-in-chief and Professors Carmen Navarro (Universidad Autónoma, Madrid, Spain), Jill Tao (Incheon National University, Seoul, South Korea) and Stephen Jones (University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia) as my co-editors. For the first time in our journal's history we have three professors from abroad in our core editorial team. I expect that they will substantially contribute to the quality of our journal, along with my re-appointed colleagues, Professors Romea Manojlović Toman, Vedran Đulabić and Dario Čepo (University of Zagreb, Croatia).

I expect us to work as a vibrant and reliable editorial team during the next four-year period, in fruitful and joyful cooperation with our authors, reviewers, and all other colleagues and friends who participate in the dynamic life of the *Croatian and Comparative Public Administration*. Our main intention is to further promote the comparative "side" of our journal and to focus on comparative research. I am confident that we will succeed and that we will develop a more internationally recognized and even better esteemed journal. Wish us good luck in the next four-year period.

Have a good read!

Professor Dr. Ivan Koprić
Editor-in-chief