

Foreword

UDK: 35.07(497.5)(042.3)

The final issue of the 25th volume of the *Croatian and Comparative Public Administration* journal contains articles addressing several topical issues in the field of public administration and related disciplines. As usual, the articles are grouped into three thematic sections: Public Administration Theory, Good Governance and Public Management, and Public Law. The issue concludes with a review of the book *Capital and Ideology* by the influential French economist Thomas Piketty.

The opening article of the issue, entitled *From Legal Rules to Systemic Regulation: The Role of Feedback Loops and Holism in Modern Governance*, is authored by Mirko Pečarič, full professor at the Faculty of Administration, University of Ljubljana (Slovenia). The author connects systems theory and cybernetics with legal regulation and institution-building. The central idea of the article is that regulation should be adaptive, incorporating feedback loops, dynamic systems modelling, and stakeholder engagement in order to address complex societal issues. Legal regulation – one of the key building blocks of public institutions – is analysed from the perspective of systems theory and related concepts. System characteristics such as feedback mechanisms, interconnections, and adaptation to diverse environments (Ashby's 'law of requisite variety') are advocated as essential components of legal regulation. By contrast, the rigidity and static nature of legal norms often hinder the development of an environment receptive to such characteristics. Consequently, the author outlines research questions and methodological approaches (including dynamic modelling, adaptive management, scenario planning, and participatory design) aimed at making legal systems more responsive, data-driven, and resilient.

The second article is authored by Mariza Menger, assistant professor at the Faculty of Law in Rijeka (Croatia). Entitled *Behavioral Public Administration – Development, Scope, and Challenges*, the article examines the evolution and core features of this theoretical and doctrinal approach

within administrative science, which has gained considerable prominence in recent decades. Behavioral public administration represents an interdisciplinary departure from traditional rational-choice explanations of behavior and decision-making in public administration. The focus of analysis is human behavior and decision-making, which are not purely rational but are shaped by cognitive characteristics influencing actors' outcomes. The author highlights that, alongside its practical applicability and policy relevance, this approach also faces significant limitations, including methodological challenges related to experimental research, issues of originality, a limited scope of studies, and ethical concerns. Overall, the article provides a comprehensive overview of the current state of this influential interdisciplinary approach in administrative science.

The following section includes two articles addressing key aspects of good governance, such as trust, participation, and legitimacy in public administration at different levels of government.

The first article is authored by Luh Komang Merawati, I Dewa Made Endiana, and Ni Made Sunarsih, all lecturers at the Faculty of Economics and Business, University Mahasaraswati Denpasar, Bali (Indonesia). Their article, *Good Governance and Trust in Village Funds: The Role of Accountability and Community Participation*, presents a multiple case study of good governance practices in nearly thirty villages in the Indonesian province of Bali. Although the study has methodological limitations that restrict the generalizability of its findings, the results are nevertheless relevant and practically applicable. The research reaffirms that, in addition to the establishment of formal procedures for accountability, participation, and trust in public administration, various "soft mechanisms" are also required. These include perception management and familiarizing users with the intentions and actual outcomes of previously introduced formal procedures.

The second article in this section is written by Devi Yulianti, Peerasit Kamnuansilpa, and Xenia Ribaya Emperador-Garnace, faculty members at the College of Local Administration, Khon Kaen University (Thailand). Entitled *Linking Governance and Public Service Delivery: The Perceived Legitimacy of the Office of Population and Civil Registration in Indonesia*, the article examines legitimacy as a crucial element of good governance and public service delivery. It identifies factors that significantly influence perceived legitimacy in public service provision, including "... service characteristics, impartiality, responsiveness, and accountability, while communication clarity and trust remain areas of concern." The article offers

valuable policy guidelines for enhancing the legitimacy of public service delivery, providing useful insights for practitioners seeking to improve public service provision within their organizations.

The third section entitled *Public Management and Public Law* opens with an article by Benina Veledar, Amra Gadžo, and Merjema Hadžialić from the Faculty of Economics, University of Sarajevo, and the Faculty of Economics, University of Tuzla (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Entitled *Factors of Successful Implementation of the Balanced Scorecard Model in Public Enterprises*, the article examines, based on survey research, the feasibility and key success factors of introducing public management tools such as the Balanced Scorecard to improve performance in public organizations, particularly public enterprises. The empirical findings indicate that factors such as organizational size, employee competencies, financial costs of implementation, and the model's proven link to organizational performance are more influential in determining successful adoption than organizational culture, managerial awareness of the need for such tools, or perceived benefits.

The final article in this issue is authored by Karlo Kožina, assistant at the Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb. In *Unexpressed Principles of Administrative Procedural Law: Fundamental Norms Beyond the Legal Text*, the author addresses the development of administrative procedural law by analyzing several implicit principles, including the right of the party to be heard, the principle of material truth in administrative disputes, *ne bis in idem*, the prohibition of *reformatio in peius*, and the principle prohibiting excessive legal formalism. Although these principles are not explicitly regulated, they produce significant legal effects in administrative proceedings. They derive from existing procedural norms governing administrative procedure and administrative disputes, as well as from relevant judicial practice.

This issue also includes a review of Thomas Piketty's book *Capital and Ideology*, written by Filip Novinc, senior assistant at the Department of Economic Theory, Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Zagreb (Croatia). The review highlights the connection between economic theory and political ideology as a key to understanding contemporary socio-economic processes. It also emphasizes the author's warning that "... equality of political rights is largely illusory, as media financing and political donations enable the continued reproduction of inegalitarian policies."

The thematic and methodological diversity of the articles, along with the geographical diversity of the contributing authors, is expected to attract

the interest of scholars from various disciplines engaged in the study of public administration. In addition to their scientific analyses and conclusions, the articles offer numerous policy recommendations that can be applied in the everyday practice of public sector organizations, regardless of their geographical location, legal system, or administrative tradition.

Professor Vedran Đulabić
Editor-in-Chief