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ARTICLES

Editorial Introduction EDNA ESTIFANIA A. CO	1
Mobility of Civil Servants in Selected Local Governments in Indonesia: Barriers and Strategies LINDAWATI, YANA SURYANA, and SUWATIN.	4
Central-Local Government Relations in Turkey and Yemen: A Comparative Study MARWA ALTOWAITEE, ISRAEL NYABURI NYADERA, and MURAT ONDER.	24
The Malaysian Trust School Program: A Public-Private Partnership (PPP)? SIVAKUMAR VELAYUTHAM and RASHEDUL HASAN	42
Administrative Reform for Sustainable Public Water Services in Japan: A Case Study of Sewerage Management Reform NAOKI FUJIWARA	54

Editorial Introduction

EDNA ESTIFANIA A. CO, Editor-in-Chief

Four articles constitute the *Asian Review of Public Administration (ARPA)* volume for 2019. This volume presents country cases and experiences on public service reforms using the lens of public–private partnerships in two different sectors, namely, in education and in water service management. An interesting article discusses the evolution of administrative systems in two countries sharing a common history but, eventually, diverged paths due to the impact of the war on the country’s economy, politics, and society. Another article touches on the experiences and design of human resource strategy and its challenges at the local government level.

Case analysis, in this volume of the ARPA, yields added value as the diversity of experiences in this vast region of Asia unravels the dissimilarities in service and management approaches even as the tangential lessons affirm public management changes and innovations in post-modern times.

The paper of Lindawati, Yana Suryana, and Suwatin of the National Institute of Public Administration contributes to an appreciation of the Indonesian civil service at the local government level. “Mobility of Civil Servants in Selected Local Governments in Indonesia: Barriers and Strategies” describes the movement of civil servants as civil service plays itself out in the context of public sector’s agility to face up to the challenges of a flexible employment. The sustainability of public service, whether at the national or local level, largely depends on the availability, accessibility, and quality of civil servants. Through selected local government experiences, the paper unravels the problems in human resource management including an uneven distribution of civil servants, inadequate planning, and lack of suitable competency. Additionally, the paper discusses the barriers to civil servants’ mobility.

The challenge in this regard includes some redesigned strategies on the distribution of civil servants based on a flexible mobility framework. The paper argues that competency, agility, and redeployment of human resources are essential to public service sustainability.

Scholars from the Ankara Yildirim Beyazit University of Turkey, namely Altowaitee, Nyadera, and Onder, in their paper, “Central-Local Government Relations in Turkey and Yemen: A Comparative Study”, examine the evolution of public administration systems in two countries: Turkey and Yemen. Using administrative history as the take-off framework, the two systems which shared similar historical experiences under the Ottoman Empire, evolved with different structures and systems. The paper compares the central and local government systems of the two countries and shows their differing impacts on the social, economic, and political situation of the respective countries. Due to ongoing civil wars of Yemen, the country pales in comparison to Turkey which illustrates some continuing administrative reforms. An underlying message in this comparative study is that administrative modification may be challenged unless a peace condition safeguards continuing reforms.

Two other articles in this volume articulate administrative and public sector reforms. Malaysian scholars from the Nilai University's Siyakumar Velatutham and INTI International University's Rashedul Hasan show public-private partnership in the education sector. The other paper, produced by Naoki Fujiwara of Otemon University in Osaka, vividly brings out management reform in the public water services in Japan.

Whilst public-private partnership (PPP) seems to be a commonly adopted modality of reform in the infrastructure sector, Malaysia's paper, "The Malaysian Trust School Program: A Public-Private Partnership (PPP)? "discourses that, through its Trust School initiative of the Malaysian Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Yayasan Amir Foundation, PPP could carry out and contribute to an innovation in the delivery of education services. Although the paper relies heavily on secondary data and sources, the initial study could be pursued by examining holistic outcomes and processes of the partnership. The fact that the project involves the sovereign wealth fund of the Malaysian Government invites looking into accountability relationships amongst stakeholders of the Trust School initiative. Lessons from this experiment of Trust schools in Malaysia render a deeper examination of joint venture in the education sector.

Naoki Fujiwara's "Administrative Reform for Sustainable Public Water Services in Japan: A Case Study of Sewerage Management Reform" paints another dimension of reform in service delivery. The paper picks up from the lessons of crisis that Japan faced in the aftermath of a world financial crisis in 2007 and the horrendous earthquake and tsunami events. Public water service reform is at the heart of Fujiwara's paper demonstrating organizational approach through corporatization and partnership with the private sector for greater efficiency. It shows as well the grit challenges of such approach by examining the roles of national and local government whilst also bringing in citizen participation in the water service processes. The paper also highlights what it considers as redundancy in the resources of a water sewerage service management.

Biographical Sketch

Edna Estifania A. Co has a doctorate in Public Administration and is full professor at the University of the Philippines (UP). She served as Dean of the National College of Public Administration and Governance (2010-2013), Director of the Center for Integrative and Development Studies (2014-2016), and Vice President for Public Affairs (2016-2017) at the same university. Dr. Co was the first Professorial Chair Awardee under the Metrobank Foundation Professorial Chair Lectures and Ateneo Professional Schools in 2007.

The Editor-in-Chief has received numerous international publication awards including a special recognition as "Champion of Migration" from the International Organization for Migration in 2019. She has published works on democracy assessment, citizenship, and policy reforms. She was a member of the Advisory Council of the Philippine Civil Service Commission from 2011 to 2016 and the Technical Working Group of the Senate Committee to amend the Local Government Code of 1991 from 2016 to 2017.

At present, Dr. Co concurrently serves as Director of the United Nations-affiliated *Centre International de Formation des Autorites et Leaders* – Philippines, and Director of UP Clark and Olongapo campus. She is also currently Member-at-Large of the Governing Board of the National Research Council of the Philippines and full member of the Philippine-American Academy of Science and Engineering.