

Abstracts

Reforming Government:
New Concepts and Practices in
Local Public Administration

Australia

Reforming Australian Government : Impact and Implications for Local Public Administration

J. Halligan and C. Aulich

Australia has been experiencing comprehensive reform for the past fifteen years. There were earlier experiments at both central and local levels, but what distinguishes this contemporary period is the extensiveness of the reforms, their longevity and long term impact. The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the relationship between the national reform agendas in Australia and the impact on and implications for local government. This chapter first examines the reform context and the all-encompassing nature of the main dimensions of the public sector reform agendas. It take up the question of central-local relations and the relative importance of top-down style and locally drive initiatives. The new concepts and practices that have emerged as a result of these reforms are considered before reviewing the implications for local government as a level of government. Because of the nature of these reform — the emphasis on management and markets has centered on the delivery end — local government, as a provider of many services in the Australian federal context, has been one of the focuses of change.

China

Urban Government and Administrative Reform in China During the Reform Era : Current Issues and Future Prospects

J. M. Keung Lo

In recent years, scholars have given increasing attention to the previously neglected sub-national levels of the Chinese political system.

The central focus of this paper is to identify, examine and analyze the issue of administrative reform at the urban government level in the context of almost two decades of economic reform since the late 1970s. The paper purports to look at three aspects of the problem — the trend toward financial decentralization, institutional changes in local administration and changes in the relationship between urban government and local economy. Through this paper, we will seek to shed more light on the following questions: 1) At the macro-level, how has state power changed in the

realm of central-local relations as a result of the ten years of economic reform?; 2) How the state is going to adapt its centralized structure in face of a half-plan, half-market urban economy?; 3) At the micro level, what is the impact of economic reform on the system, structure and process of municipal governance?; and 4) How urban governments have been able to cope with the enormously powerful forces of economic restructuring which have been encourage by government through administrative reform?

Islamic Republic of Iran

Administrative Reform and Its Impact on Local Administration : The Case of Islamic Republic of Iran

Mehdi Darvish

Iran has a centralized system of administration. Almost all decisions adopted in the Capital affect both central and local (Provincial) agencies. Some reforms specifically relate to the provinces. I have given a general picture of local situations or characteristics of administration in Provincial areas in the first Section, to give create a context in which reforms have occurred. This will help the reader to understand who governs a Province, his duties, and from where and whom he receives guidance. In the second Section I discuss development plans and sources of reforms: any major reform is initiated in the 5-year Economical, Social, and Cultural Development Plans of the country. Supreme Administrative Council (SAC) and State Organization for Administrative and Employment Affairs (SOAE) are the major agents of change in the administrative system. However, the 24 Ministries can also create reforms and facilitate activities within their branches in the provinces. The third Section deals with the SAC's major reforms, mostly related to Provincial units. Some of them are explained in detail; others are only named or briefly described to avoid a lengthy report. SOAE's reforms in the areas of manpower, organizational structure and work procedures are mentioned in the fourth Section. The fifth, final Section summarizes the reform activities of the State Management Training Center (SMTC) in the area of managerial training and development courses conducted for the students residing in the Provinces.

Japan**Japanese Decentralization Reform in the 1990s :
Great Reform or Status Quo ?****Tetsuya Kitahara**

In Japan, decentralization of national power and resources from central to local government has been discussed, sometimes intensely, for years, but with few achievements. Looking back Japan's history of local government, one quickly notices not only a lack of decentralizing reform, but also a local governmental system almost unchanged in the half century since the post-war U. S. occupation reforms. Decentralization reform has been the unobtainable goal of supporters, who call for increasing local autonomy. They believe that the centralized system of government instituted during the Meiji Restoration has in its essentials survived right up until today. In the late 1990s, an opportunity for realizing decentralization reform has arisen. Decentralization reform became an important political issue in the 1990s, as 38 years of Liberal Democratic Party political dominance collapsed, followed by a series of coalition governments. A Decentralization Promotion Law, which established a Decentralization Promotion Council (DPC), was passed in 1995. The DPC has since issued various sets of recommendations. It is anticipated that the cabinet will accordingly adopt a working program for decentralization and revise the necessary laws by 2000. Japan's decentralizing reform represents not only reform of the local governmental system, but may conceivably lead to transformation of the Japanese national governmental system itself.

Korea**Local Government Reforms in Korea :
A Transition from a Marionette Performance
toward an Elementary Class Day****Dalgon Lee**

This paper deals with the recent reform-oriented measures in the area of national local policies. The just begun local autonomy in Korea now faces opportunities as well as serious challenges. The new developments are divided into four categories: 1) local politics and autonomy; 2) recent consolidation of local governments; 3) distribution of Government functions; and 4) financial arrangement.

The first section involves difficulties of independent local politics and local

autonomy under strong culture of centralism. Local political elites are basically dependent upon the national politicians, while the nomination as the central political machinery and national politicians directly influences a candidate for local position.

The second section discusses the strength and weakness of the recent consolidation measures of local government, which has been carried out nationwide. They may be claimed to facilitate managerial economies, but technical efficiencies of specific local service delivery cannot be improved easily.

The third section deals with the bureaucratic struggle of government over the task of redistribution of power after the introduction of local autonomy system. This is followed by the last section that discusses the recent developments in the area of local tax, central-local financial coordination system in terms of central-local configuration.

Philippines

Reforming Government : New Concepts and Practices in Local Public Administration in the Philippines

Mila A. Reforma

Administrative reform first emerged in the Philippines following the grant of formal independence. It was due largely to the realisation of the discontinuities between a colonial administrative system and the needs and demands of sovereign governments. Efforts to foster national unity took up a lot of time and resources in the post immediate independence years of the newly developing independent nation. Eventually, there came a growing awareness that a strict regulatory system could not meet the more differentiated claims for public service, which was typical for a maturing welfare state. The democratic stage followed this period. It was the era when politics governed. The law became a less stable phenomenon. The law came to be an instrument for reform. The great expansion of government services, government budgets and payrolls and government influence on daily life was the characteristics of this stage. The third stage in the Philippines reflects a shift to a market-oriented public administration. The demands of the people become more differentiated. It becomes increasingly difficult to meet this differentiated demand by use of a simple majority decision-typical of the welfare state. Public administration must increasingly treat the citizen as *consumer*-free to choose what he can pay for.

United Kingdom

Local Government Reform in the United Kingdom

B. Guy Peters

This manuscript argues that local government reforms of the 1980s and 1990s in the United Kingdom have had the effect of removing many elements of local autonomy and centralizing control in London. This movement is in marked contrast to the pattern of reform in other industrialized democracies. The Conservative government in power from 1979 to 1997 instituted these reforms for both political and managerial reasons. They wanted to both bolster their own political power and improve the efficiency of local government. They appear to have been more successful in achieving the latter than the former goal.

United States of America

Political Reform in the American States and Cities

Ronald J. Hrebenar

Reform on the state and local levels in American politics tends to occur in waves led by reforming movements. The states were most impacted by waves which were called the Progressive Movement between 1900 and 1920 and a post World War Two to the 1960s structural reform wave. The central objective of state level reforms have been to strengthen the powers of the state governor. This has been accomplished in most states by allowing governors to have multiple terms, longer terms, power to make budgetary proposals and to select other executive branch personnel. A major part of the executive branch reform was based in civil service reforms where the patronage is sharply reduced. Legislative reforms have generally tried to give the legislatures more tools to do their job: better staff, more information, longer sessions and more power to set their own agenda. State judicial reforms have included the establishment of appellate courts to ease the work load on state supreme courts and the adoption modern administrative techniques to manage the courts resources.

Reforms on the local government level have also run in waves and the last wave has run its course. There is very little energy for local government reforms other than those seeking to cut taxes or reduce the size or roles of local government. The Privatization Movement seeks to get local governments out of traditional services and expenditures. Other recent changes have tried to improve local governments' communications with their citizens by opening up Little City Halls and neighbor-