

Editorial Note

As globalization has progressed in the Asia and Pacific region, many countries have increasingly come to face similar administrative issues and policy problems. In different parts of the region, rapid urbanization often generates incredible traffic congestions. This is a major apprehension many governments in the EROPA region ought to share. They must help ease air pollution and other environmental predicaments at the earliest possible opportunity in order to protect the health of the general public. Social welfare and corruption are another set of common and conspicuous issues among the states in the region. The alleviation of poverty and the accountability of public officials are critical for the achievement of good governance agenda.

Confronted with these common issues, the governments in the region initiate similar approaches. Decentralization more often comes to the fore as an effective means to control urban growth and similar social impediments. Likewise, several governments in the region start devolving central powers to lower level authorities while others attempt to deconcentrate capital city functions and transfer administrative roles to diverse districts. The EROPA member countries have contrived these policy mixes to meet the challenges generated from the rapid rate of globalization and urbanization.

Nevertheless and despite these efforts, the governments in the EROPA region remain being exposed to common dilemmas. The lack of competent public officials more often impede decentralization: a high incidence of corruption likewise deters entrenchment of good governance platform. Similarly, both devolution and deconcentration would increase the burdens on local governments. The previous experience holds that these programs would not usually come along with financial and monetary supports from the center. Consequently, many states would have to keep struggling against the ongoing policy dilemmas.

These are the major backdrop to this twelfth volume of *Comparative Public Administration*. The book tries to examine shared issues, similar approaches, and common dilemmas among various governments in the region. The current volume has tried to analyze these questions from the view of local government perspectives. Taking these into account, the board members decided the panoptic theme of the book to be: *Enhancing the Quality of Local Governance*. The main title has three sub-themes. They are: Institution, Capacity Building, and Intergovernmental Relationships. Many countries within the Asia and Pacific region have been robust and active in entrenching and improving local system of governance. Bhutan, China, Indonesia, Pakistan and Thailand are one of the few examples on this score.

In different ways and means, they all have attempted to expedite decentralization and to consolidate community-based governments. In fact, each country has been compelled to foster local government development since it has become

tantamount to the global governance standard and prerequisite for securing different official development aids from international donors. From the donors' perspective, local units of government, especially in developing countries, have several critical values. One is economic value: community-centered administration seems much effective and efficient since it will most likely reflect local resident needs. Another value is political: constant resident participation in local politics will often become a cradle for mature democracy and lead to the realization of good governance.

With these questions in mind, the editorial board met several times in Tokyo during the year 2014. They discussed and decided the overarching theme for the twelfth volume while they also began searching for prospective authors. At the onset of the discussion, the members all agreed to invite Professor Emeritus Dr. Helmut Wollmann from Germany. They hoped to have this prominent scholar as a lead author of the current issue. Fortunately, he accepted our offer and has contributed an important depiction of the European case to this volume. Although his manuscript confined its scope to the European countries, Asian readers would certainly learn a lot from his outstanding analysis of the European experience.

The board was likewise honored to have Professor Heungsuk Choi of Korea University. He is one of the pronounced scholars and specialists in public administration in the Republic of Korea. He delineates both the Korean achievements and efforts to enlarge the scope of local governments in his country. His contribution has substantially improved the quality of the present issue. The members of the editorial board was also fortunate to have the very first author from Bhutan. Mr. Sonam Penjor's manuscript describes the roadmap for the growth of local administrative system in his country.

The editorial board welcomes Professor Dr. Nisada Wedchayanon, who is the incumbent Dean of the Graduate School of Public Administration in the National Institute of Development Administration in Bangkok, Thailand. Her work also highlights the dilemmas that Thailand has in developing the local governments in its soil. The issues she has delineated will certainly become important lessons for other states in the region. Many readers will appreciate her in-depth knowledge and analytical skill of the subject matter.

The present issue includes two Japanese authors. Mr. Akio Kamiko, a Professor and the Vice President of the College of Asia Pacific Studies at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, has been writing corruption control over the years. In the present article, he discusses administrative ethics in the context of local governments. Another Japanese author, Mr. Atsushi Konishi, is a senior official in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication. He also teaches administrative law at Kyoto University. His manuscript points to different local responses to administrative mandates of prefectural governments, some of which are devolved to various cities.

The editorial board is highly fortunate to have come across a young Chinese scholar who is an expert in local government in China. Professor Yifan Yang of Southwest Jiaotong University has coauthored a chapter, 'The Levels, Dimensions and Structure of Local Governance Capacity in China: A Theoretical and Empirical

Study.' This work, being highly empirical and objective, will become an important addendum to the collection of scholarly works on local government in the EROPA region. We expect that Professor Yang and his associates will bring forth yet another empirical study in the near future.

Dr. Dwarika Nath Dhungel has already contributed a number of works to this monograph series. He is a regular member of the EROPA conference and delivers analytical presentations in the different occasions. He has co-authored with his associate and together compiled a chapter on the personnel system in the Nepalese local governments. The editorial board all appreciates their effort and contribution to this volume. While writing this note, we were informed that Nepal was hit by devastating quake in April, 2015. The board members were naturally worried about Dhungel and others' safety. We were relieved, however, to learn that they were unharmed. We are all hoping that Nepal will recover from the disaster soon.

Professor Prijono Tjiptoherijanto of the University of Indonesia is one of the well-known economists in Indonesia and another regular contributor to different academic journals in this region. The board is thankful for his active participation in this volume. As the author points out, Indonesia has been in the horn of diametric dilemmas between centralization and decentralization. The author discloses various problems which are closely linked to the issue of national integration and decentralization. Many readers will share the quagmires that Indonesians ought to overcome before attaining the public trust in government.

As a chief editor of the twelfth volume of *Comparative Public Administration*, I would like to thank Professor Koichiro Agata of Waseda University, Vice President Kamiko, Professor Osamu Koike of the Yokohama National University and Dr. Masao Kikuchi of Meiji University. As the editorial board members, I highly value their collaborations and supports as well as suggestions. These are indispensable for the completion of this project. Likewise, my deep appreciation goes to President Akihide Hirashima and staff members of the Local Autonomy College of Japan. They have provided me with the rare opportunity to edit this monograph series. Once again, I thank them all for their cooperation and contributions.

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