

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### A SPECIAL ISSUE OF *PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION* ON PUBLIC SERVICES AFTER THE CRASH

Following the dramatic financial crisis of 2007–8, the world of political discussion and public opinion is awash with proposals for public spending cuts and efficiency ‘rationalizations’. The crash was a near-global event. Practically all nations were deeply affected, from the richest nations of the US, Japan and Europe, to less-developed and transitional economies. Its effects have been diverse. While certain governments (notably in the USA) are already starting to sell off their equity stakes in failed banks, others remain mired in failure and uncertainty. The public and private finances of many nations have become interlocked in crisis. Estonia and Hungary, for example, have seen their currencies slump in value as their banking sectors entered near-collapse. In turn, Sweden has become heavily exposed since its banks invested an estimated \$90bn in these now-struggling East European economies. The Greek economy has required a €110bn EU and IMF bailout that was highly unpopular in many member states. In the Republic of Ireland, real-term pay cuts of up to 6.5 per cent have already been applied in several public sector occupations.

Budget deficits in many OECD nations have hit record highs. Following the sub-prime collapse, banking bailouts and stimulus packages have radically eaten into public funds while the recession chokes off tax income. Practically all major political parties describe dramatic spending cuts as ‘unavoidable’. In the UK, for example, the Chancellor’s pre-budget report of 9 December 2009 announced plans to make ‘efficiency savings’ of £12bn. Major political parties across OECD countries have promised to make substantial cuts across wide ranges of public services, including *inter alia* healthcare, local and central government, education, prison and probation services, and armed forces. In some cases, for example in many US states, cuts of this kind have already taken place. Sell-offs, efficiency drives, policy reforms, and the raising of the mandatory age of retirement are also on the agenda, as commentators predict a new era of austerity in many nations. Paradoxically, the crash has also been associated with *increases* in public spending in some areas, including the revival of quasi-Keynesian public works programmes aimed at stimulating demand.

### WHY CONTRIBUTE TO THIS SPECIAL ISSUE?

Major reform appears to be in the offing. This call for papers aims to bring together international scholars to debate the theory and practice of public services reform initiated around the world in response to the 2007–8 crash. The aim is to explore what the crisis means for public administration at multiple levels: organizational, political, social, economic, financial, and theoretical. Papers on the following themes are especially welcome:

1. What mechanics, policies, philosophies and technologies are being used to create ‘efficiency’ in public sector organizations? How successful might they be, especially given that public organizations in much of the world have already been through many rounds of transformation under the rubric of New Public Management?
2. In what ways are public sector employees facing up to cuts? What employee entitlements (such as pensions, pay and job security) are being threatened and why? How will reform affect the quality of working life for public servants?
3. Many nations are posting record budget deficits. But what effects will the differing institutions and political traditions associated with the ‘varieties of capitalism’ have on the way in which governments and public organizations respond to this crisis? Is there an emerging ‘world best practice’ for public sector change in recessionary times, or are nations each going their separate ways?
4. What roles might be played by transnational organizations such as the WTO, IMF, EU and World Bank in promoting ‘best practice’ for public administration worldwide?
5. To what extent can the marketplace remain the ‘model’ for public sector efficiency given widespread market failure of recent years? Has New Public Management been discredited by the crisis, especially since it originated from the highly liberalized economy of the USA?

6. How will reforms affect service provision? Is the quality and coverage of public service provision in decline following cutbacks? Or can a virtuous circle be drawn in which public services can be made cheaper *and* more effective?
7. To what extent are different parts of the public sector more vulnerable to cuts than others? Why might some countries be better able to survive the crisis than others?
8. How will public sector professionals respond to the pressure for reorganization? Will they embrace or resist change, and why? What role will organized labour play in the new era, especially since public sector union density and coverage remains relatively strong across OECD nations?
9. What, if any, historical inferences can be drawn from changes to public sector provision that took place during crisis periods in other times and places?
10. A wide range of new (and old) theoretical discourses have been used to understand and explore public services reform, examples being Weber on bureaucracy; Foucault on performance management; public sector workers as 'immaterial labourers'; New Public Management as 'a New Spirit of Capitalism'. In what ways can we theoretically understand the role of public services in what could be a new era of austerity?

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE SPECIAL ISSUE**

The objective of the special issue is to generate a discussion that is international and multidisciplinary, cross-cutting multiple lines of political ideology. Such a rich and detailed discussion of the future of public services around the world may turn out to be crucial for our understanding of the emerging contours of state and market in these highly uncertain times.

The call is open to contributions based on empirical data (qualitative and quantitative) as well as to high-quality theoretical and/or 'position' papers. We welcome submissions from a range of relevant social science disciplines (for example, political science, public administration, business and management, economics, sociology, social policy, and industrial relations) from scholars in all regions of the world, and from researchers at any stage of their career.

### **HOW TO MAKE YOUR SUBMISSION**

All submissions will be blind peer-reviewed as per the usual review process of *Public Administration*. Papers should adhere strictly to the published author submission guidelines (<http://www.wiley.com/bw/submit.asp?ref=0033-3298&site=1>).

### **DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION**

The deadline for submission of full papers is 31 January 2011. Papers should be between 6000–8000 words long (those longer than this will be automatically returned for cutting). Please submit papers through the *Public Administration* Manuscript Central pages (<http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/padm>).

Initial expressions of interest and any informal enquiries about the special issue should be sent to:

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