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Intergovernmental Contracting at the Local Level: When, Why, For What, and Who Cares?

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Abstract When academics talk about contracting out in the United States, they often mean with the private sector. Nevertheless, we find that service contracting with other units of government is relatively common at the local level. This article, which uses interviews of local government officials from five states, all of whom share the collective goal of trying to provide the same level and quality of services for their constituents under increasing fiscal demands, explores intergovernmental service contracting — the reasons why local governments do it, its limits and successes, and how it differs from contracting with the private sector.

Key Words Intergovernmental Contracting, Intergovernmental Agreements, Contracting, Local Government

Repercussions of Reform: The Effect of Municipal Form of Government on Citizen Participation Strategies

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Abstract To test the hypothesis that cities with more administrative forms of government use fewer citizen participation strategies than do municipalities with more political structures, a random survey was conducted of 91 American municipalities in 32 states with populations of over 25 000 residents. Respondents were asked to identify up to 16 citizen participation strategies. This study refutes the conventional

wisdom that public officials in political cities use more citizen participation strategies than do public officials in administrative cities. The full OLS regression model (N = 91) predicts with marginal statistical significance that cities with more administrative structures use slightly more citizen participation strategies than do cities with more political structures. A second OLS regression model (N = 53) demonstrates that the robustness of the statistical significance between administrative structures and the number of citizen participation strategies dramatically increases when city population exceeds 50 000. A possible explanation for this finding relates to the contribution that professional managers and staff make in strengthening the fabric of civil society and “delivering democracy” in 21st century America.

Key Words America, Local Government, Municipal Form of Government, Citizen Participation

• **SYMPOSIUM II : HOUSING POLICY AND PRACTICE**

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Housing Policy, Home Ownership and Asset-Building: An Alternative Perspective on East Asian Social Policy

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Abstract The last few decades have witnessed the growth of home ownership in East Asia, largely the result of a combination of factors including rising affluence, government policies and favorable prospects of capital accumulations brought about by owner-occupation and booming economies. Using examples and experiences from Hong Kong, Singapore, this paper addresses the complex relationship among housing policy, home ownership, social policy, social security and risk. The central argument is: given the beneficial potentials of home ownership and the inherent risk of the housing market within the context of an increasingly volatile global economy, government should reconsider its role in housing and social policy along the line of an asset-based (AB) principle. The reason behind hinges on understanding housing and social policy from an alternative perspective which sees housing policy as central to socio-economic development. An AB housing policy forms part of a larger scheme

to counteract the negative effect of a neo-liberal urban housing policy.

Key Words Housing Policy, Home ownership, Asset Building, Social Policy

Realizing Housing Rights in China: Development and Challenges

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Abstract Housing is a necessity of life and housing rights have been considered as a basic component of human rights and social rights of citizens in modern societies. This paper examines the definitions and components of housing rights and different housing models developed in western societies, documents the development of housing rights and housing policy in China, followed by an exploration of achievement and limitations in terms of the realization of housing rights in China. It concludes by analyzing challenges faced by the Chinese government in protecting housing rights for its citizens and thus suggesting a more active role for the state to undertake.

Key Words Housing Rights, Housing Security the Residual Housing, Policy Model

The Institutional Dilemma of and Reform Proposals for Housing Provident Fund in China

..... *Jie Chen* 91

Abstract Housing Provident Fund (HPF) is a key component of housing finance system in China. It played a vital role in the Chinese housing reform in the 1990s. But recently this system has been under intense criticism and some commentators even suggest a complete termination. Chinese central government is also planning a comprehensive reform for it in the near future. At this turning point, this paper attempts to contribute to the further development of HPF by first providing an all – inclusive summary of the key arguments of debates surrounding this system and then giving critical comments on all major reform proposals of HPF. The author also offers some policy suggestions on how HPF should be used in the financing of public affordable housings. The conclusion is the system of HPF should be maintained but its function must be redefined and its organization needs to be restructured.

Key Words Housing Provident Fund, Housing Policy, Housing Finance

• ARTICLE

The Lesson to China from the Budget Deficits and Policies after Finance Crisis

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Abstract As a response to the global finance crises and economic recession in 2008, most countries reduced interest rates, and adopted expansionary fiscal policies, including tax reduction and refund, financing, subsidies, and increasing government expenditures. As a result, budget deficits and public debts accumulated quickly. The global economy has been recovering since the late 2009, especially showing the signs from the stock and housing markets and international trades. However, from the beginning of 2010, the debt crises of Grace and the deficit problems of European countries lead a depreciation of the Euro and weak performances of the global stock market. So it's time to pay much attention the budget deficit and debt problems.

The paper categorizes the causes of budget deficit into three: economic business cycle, national safety, and revenue-expenditure gap. During the past forties, the most countries of OECD have revenue-expenditure gap structural problems in government budgets. To reduce deficit and debt, OECD countries adopted Macro-budgeting policies, including baseline budgeting, expenditure reduction, fiscal norms (such as deficit and debt to GDP ratio, budget balance etc.). The policies to control the growth of government expenditures, in addition to the internet economy in 1990s succeed in reducing the budget deficits and debts of the OECD countries. The paper argues governments should adopt Macro-budgeting again to set up a series of fiscal norms to establish sound government finance.

Key Words Budget Deficit, Budgetary Policy, Finance Crisis, Public Debt, China

• THEORETICAL REVIEWS

Reform of Human Resource Management in the Public Sector in the West: A

Review of Literature

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Abstract The theories and practices on human resource management reformis an important part of academic research in the field of public administration in the West. Since the 1980s, a large number of valuable studies emerges in the West. However, apparently not much has been learned from this rich body of literature. This paper

begins with a discussion on the patronage system and the merit system, introducing many important researches on public sector's recruitment, salary and benefit management, human resource development, performance appraisal, human resources outsourcing and so on in the West, and then discussing human resource management's professionalism, informatization and important values. To conclude, this paper attempts to figure out what we can learn from the West in improving our public sector's human resource management.

Key Words Public Sector, Human Resource Management Reform, Decentralization

A Review of Literature on New Regionalism

..... *Lin Ye* 175

Abstract Globalization has brought not only economic impact but also profound implications to urban development to every corner of the world. Metropolitan (City) regions have become the magnet of development in the global economy and competition. Facing today's global challenge, how to foster strong metropolitan regions has become a major urban policy issue. There have been several waves of regional theory and practice in different countries and new regionalism has been the latest development in the last two decades. This article will provide a comprehensive review of the subject of new regionalism, in terms of its historical evolution, theory formation, and policy development by synthesizing literature from various countries. With this review, the author wants to encourage more studies on this subject and help promote China's regional development.

Key Words New Regionalism, Regional Government, Government Consolidation, Globalization

• **BOOK REVIEW**

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