

Editorial

Mark M. Michalski

We are very happy to present to you this current issue of *Business and Public Administration Studies*.

Ms. Jing Xie opens the *Journal* with her two recent papers. Jing, who has worked for the World Bank for the last few years, has taken sabbatical to complete her Masters' degree in Public Administration (MPA) at Princeton University. She is graduating in the summer of 2025. Her article is titled: *Informal Sector Microfinancing for Poverty Alleviation in Namibia*. This paper is a result of a study which examines the role that micro financing may play in alleviating poverty in Namibia's extensive informal sector. With employment largely within the informal sector reaching around seventy percent the paper highlights some of the critical financial challenges faced by informal workers in that country, worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. It draws comparisons with India, where successful microfinance initiatives have been implemented, and explores the same strategies in Namibia. Microfinancing is one possible solution for informal workers who are not covered by banks because of the need for collateral and high default risks. In the paper, policies in India that have been successful in creating entrepreneurship and economic stability include mandatory rural bank branches and microfinance institutions like Spandana Sphoorty. The paper ends with policy recommendations for Namibia, advocating for government support in microfinance expansion through subsidies and regulatory frameworks. It also supports complementary programs to alleviate poverty, ensuring sustainable economic development and an improved standard of living among informal sector workers.

Next article is titled *Unveiling the Hidden Economy: Exploring the Root Cause of Informal Economy in Accra, Ghana*. This research paper investigates the persistent growth of the informal economy in Accra, Ghana. However, contrary to classical economic expectations, the informal sector has dramatically increased, while GDP per capita has been on the rise. This research focuses on the following main factors driving informality: poverty, regulation of labor, economic crises, and slums, with a case study of the Agboghoshie e-waste recycling community. Field observations and literature review identified intricate interactions between these variables. Conclusive evidence for policy actions to recognize informal settlements, grant property rights, provide basic services, and ensure environmental safety is given. The author points out numerous challenges across employment, entrepreneurship and the economic environment of the informal economy in Accra. Understanding these root causes can guide policymakers in improving the livelihoods and protections for informal sector workers. The main conclusion of the author is that "It is unrealistic to eradicate the settlements with a forced demolition approach, which would destroy all the residents" efforts and exacerbate their resentment towards the government. Instead, governments should set up regulatory frameworks to

recognize informal settlements, grant property rights, provide essential public services, and administer essential training to ensure environmental and public health safety. Only by considering them in policy-decision procedures could the government build sustainable and economically viable settlements for those residents".

Mauricio Garita is a professor at the Universidad Francisco Marroquin. His article titled: *What is the Iberosphere? Cultural identity and opportunities in a region of the future*. According to definitions of the Iberosphere it encompasses Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries. To summarize the definition, in the essay we will refer to the Iberian Peninsula and the Latin American continent. At times we can find definitions of countries that narrate in a region that, for someone who has not experienced its cultural mosaic, could mean difficulty in understanding. Having defined the center of research, the author starts with the past to build the future or, as Luis Sepúlveda would mention, the importance of knowing the past to understand the present and imagine the future. This is why the research is based on the history of the Iberosphere, from its vision of classical liberalism, its concealment and the emergence of an amalgamated vision between various political systems with the purpose of directing the future of the region. Having defined the evolution of intellectual traditions, the future of the Iberosphere is discussed, thinking about what the region may or will be like ten years after the writing of this text. The author concludes that "it is imperative that the region learn quickly from the past, that it uses its appetite for certainty to create legal frameworks that allow the region to act better in the face of the political, social, economic and climatic challenges of the region, specifically the most urgent one. It would be corruption. Since independence, during economic crises and finally during continuous constitutional discussions, the Iberosphere has always sought to improve, perhaps not at the speed expected, but it has sought change. A new generation is glimpsed which is seen as one of the engines of change. This generation that seeks to take a greater participation in the arena, regardless of whether it is political, economic or social, can be the engine of change for the region".

Next, is Dr Robert Matysik article titled: *Activities of organised crime in the area of cross-border waste shipments - a case study*. Technological advances and rapid global population growth are degrading the environment. One of the problems is the growing amount of waste, which affects people's lives and health while posing a threat to the natural economy. Waste is generated in industry, agriculture and households. Considering their properties, they can be flammable, irritant, carcinogenic, toxic, mutagenic, corrosive, infectious or have a harmful effect on reproduction. Internationally, environmental degradation has begun to become such a serious problem that there have been proposals to deal with acts that harm the environment as an environmental crime. Efforts in this respect began in 2010 and are being

pursued by lawyers from around the world. The aim of this article is primarily to introduce the mechanism used by one of the criminal groups in Poland, whose activities adversely affected the environment. In addition, the irregularities that occurred and the legal qualifications of the crimes accompanying waste management will be presented. The source base for writing the article was information obtained from the Tarnów Regional Prosecutor's Office, which is conducting the case, as well as from scientific studies and newspaper articles.

Sergio Martinez Cotto argues in his article titled: How can machine learning identify the potential of digital trade facilitation in bridging inequality? His research paper is the result of an exploratory application of machine learning (ML) methods for identifying the potential that digital trade facilitation can have in bridging inequality gaps between and within countries. Most well-known country classifications guiding country-level technical assistance are based on income level, socio-economic development dimensions, and geographical location of countries. While policymakers and researchers have approached these indicators as a valid criterion to characterize structural patterns that differentiate countries among themselves, more objective criteria could

play a potential role in bridging effectiveness gaps in allocating technical assistance efforts among countries. ML methods, such as clustering methods, could enable adopting a more objective approach for classifying countries according to desired strategic objectives, such as leveraging digital trade facilitation for reducing between- and within-country inequality. This paper then has two objectives.

First, it aims to contribute to existent country classification criteria by identifying a set of variables to cluster countries according to their levels of digital trade facilitation, inequality, and other institutional, social, and economic factors. Second, it intends to explore some possible policy implications for countries from Asia and the Pacific region. Section 1 introduces the ML analysis used and states the underlying motivation. Section 2 explains the data sources and variables used, as well as the process followed to clean and explore the data. Section 3 and 4 present two ML clustering methods applied for this paper's analysis and their corresponding results. Section 5 concludes and discusses areas for future improvements. Section 6 includes an appendix with data visualizations that resulted from the analysis presented in this paper.