



EDITORIAL

A New Year in Court Administration

Tim Bunjevac*, Gar Yein Ng†, Philip Langbroek‡ and Markus Zimmer§

Dear readers

We are pleased to present the first standard issue of the journal in 2021. Our journey this year takes us to Portugal, Hungary, China, Indonesia and Romania, where the authors are examining a range of practical, scholarly as well as emerging issues in court administration.

Paula Casaleiro, Ana Paula Relvas and João Paulo Dias provide a comprehensive review of the empirical literature on judges' and public prosecutors' working conditions. Their article highlights the increasing importance of research into the working conditions of professionals responsible for delivering justice, because, without proper judicial working conditions, the probability increases of having a malfunctioning judicial system that delivers poor quality outcomes.

László Örkényi reports on the results of his empirical study of Hungarian courts, seeking to provide a theoretical basis for an objective measurement system for judicial workload. Using the examples of criminal cases at first instance district courts, the author points out that judicial working time demand per case is a much more reliable means of measuring the judicial workload and allocating judicial resources than simply the statistical number of cases.

Changqing Shi, Tania Sourdin and Bin Li analyse the development of Smart Courts in China, which rely on computer technologies enabling big data use, blockchain formation and advisory and determinative forms of artificial legal intelligence. The authors argue that the system has promoted easier access to justice, enabled faster dispute resolution and saved costs, by moving judicial processes online and ensuring that judgments can be enforced. At the same time, the authors raise concerns relating to the use of technologies that include the use of automated judgments, digital divide issues, judicial independence, as well as issues linked to privacy and data protection, which could potentially have detrimental impacts on the delivery of justice.

Miguel Romão and Pedro Correia report on an innovative statistical technique recently developed by the Portuguese Ministry of Justice, which uses Sankey diagrams to provide informative civil justice and criminal justice system overviews to both experts and the general public. This technique provides an effective and visually appealing way to present multiple data types and different tasks in a single flow diagram.

M. Lutfi Chakim analyses the organisational experiences of the Indonesian Constitutional Court, providing insightful and comparative reflections on the appointment, supervision, and dismissal of justices. The author points out the problems arising from the selection system,

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where there are no clear standards set for the selection of justices. Additional concerns arise with respect to the supervision system, which were highlighted in corruption cases that involved two justices. The court's research supporting function is also identified as an area for future improvement, because the number of researchers is still relatively small when compared to the Korean or German Constitutional Courts.

Controversy regarding the promotion of judges is a live issue in Romania as well. Dragos Calin and Lucia Zaharia argue that the absence of any merit-based and objective selection standards may dampen the incentive of professionally trained and experienced judges to pursue future executive leadership positions. The authors propose a series of enforceable regulatory control procedures to address the identified deficiencies in the process of judicial promotion.

Johannes Riedel pens a book review of Joe McIntyre's, *The Judicial Function: Fundamental Principles of Contemporary Judging* (Springer, Singapore 2019). Judge Riedel describes the book as a 'comprehensive review of all principal aspects of the functioning of courts; not in the sense of technical performance, tools and abilities, but of the role of courts in modern society.'

Happy reading!

The editors

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Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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