

## Statement of Research Interests

Kohei Suzuki  
The Quality of Government Institute  
Department of Political Science  
University of Gothenburg

My research and teaching interests stand at the nexus of public management, public policy, and comparative politics with a focus on comparative public administration and management. In particular, I study how bureaucratic structures, bureaucratic representation, and administrative reforms affect bureaucratic behavior, performance, and broader societal outcomes. My research focuses both on comparative studies of advanced democracies as well as sub-national studies of Japanese municipalities. Specifically, I have developed four lines of research that address these overarching research goals: 1) bureaucratic structure, behavior, and performance, 2) gender differences, bureaucratic behavior, and performance, 3) assessment of administrative reforms, and 4) municipal decline and voluntary activities of citizens.

### 1. Bureaucratic Structure, Behavior, and Performance

Despite the growing scholarly attention to various contextual factors in public management and performance, cross-national comparative research on public administration and bureaucracy remains scarce. In particular, little comparative research has been done on the link between bureaucratic structure and bureaucratic behavior. I aim to contribute to this research gap by bringing comparative perspectives to the study of bureaucracy and public sector managers. My research examines how bureaucratic structures defined by meritocratic recruitment and tenure protection are associated with bureaucratic behavior by using two unique cross-national datasets on public bureaucracies and public managers: the COCOPS Executive Survey on Public Sector Reform and the Quality of Government Expert Survey. In particular, I focus on innovative behavior and attitudes and organizational commitment of senior public executives as dependent variables. My work with Victor Lapuente explores how the type of bureaucracy affects innovative behavior of senior public managers by employing multilevel model analysis based on the survey responses of 5,335 senior public sector executives in 19 European countries. We argue that innovation requires both a competitive job market for public managers (i.e., with low politicization and also low bureaucratic legalism), as well as individual characteristics (i.e., public managers prioritize managerial over legalistic values). Findings support our hypotheses. Public sector managers working in professional administrations where careers highly depend on the merits of the candidates rather than political connections show more pro-innovative attitudes. Public managers in “closed” bureaucracies (i.e., where promotion opportunities are restricted to internal candidates and follow strict legal procedures) exhibit a less pro-innovative attitude than those in “open” bureaucracies (i.e., those that allow lateral entries and have more flexible human resources). And, public managers with a law degree are shown to be less favorable toward innovation than public managers without a law degree. This manuscript is currently under review at *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*.

With coauthor Hyunkang Hur, I also have explored how bureaucratic structures measured by the relative openness of the civil service systems are associated with the organizational commitment of senior

public executives by using the same data sets (the COCOPS Survey and the QoG Expert Survey). The ideal type of Weberian bureaucracy assumes that bureaucrats are loyal to their organization within strict hierarchical structures. However, there is no empirical evidence of the level of bureaucrats' loyalty and commitment to their organizations and their cross-national variations depending on types of bureaucratic structure. In addition, commitment has been considered as one of the significant predictors of organizational performance. We aim to contribute to the understanding of bureaucratic commitment to the organization by combining studies of public bureaucracy with the traditional public management literature, especially organizational behavior. Our results show that there are significant variations in types of commitment of senior public executives across 20 European countries. While senior executives in countries such as Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark show higher emotional attachment to and identification with the organizational objectives and goals, those in countries including Hungary, Serbia, Lithuania, and Portugal tend to show higher commitment to their organizations based on costs associated with leaving. Results also suggest a significant association between the closed civil service system and levels of commitment based on costs and normative obligation, but not commitment to organizational goals and missions. This manuscript is currently under review at *Public Administration*.

Examining the association between bureaucratic structure and country level outcomes is another goal of my research. I and my coauthor Mehmet Demircioglu explore how bureaucratic characteristics measured by impartiality and openness of the civil service system are associated with a country's level of innovation performance by utilizing the QoG Expert Survey data set and the Global Innovation Index data set. Several cross-national studies have been done on the impact of bureaucratic structure on economic development, corruption, and entrepreneurship. However, we still do not know the consequences of bureaucratic structure on country-level innovative activities. Our results suggest that countries with higher levels of impartial bureaucratic decision-making tends to have higher innovation outputs. The manuscript received an invitation to revise and resubmit at *Public Performance & Management Review*, and we are currently working on the revisions.

In developing this line of research, I am currently working—with Steven Van de Walle and Victory Lapuente—on a manuscript that examines the impacts of the use of private sector management skills on public managers' attitudes toward risk preference. In addition, I am currently creating a cross-national data set that contains various public administration/management-related variables for comparative studies collected from different sources with my colleague Carl Dahlström. The data set will be publicly available at the QoG Institute's website. My long-term research plans envisage examining a link between cross-national variations in bureaucratic commitment and behavior with public-sector innovation at the country level, citizens' trust in government, and levels of corruption. My plan also includes further cross-national data collection regarding behavior of individual bureaucrats with larger samples.

## **2. Gender Differences, Bureaucratic Behavior, and Performance**

The second line of my research lies in representative bureaucracy, especially gender representation and bureaucracy performance. Previous studies on gender representation find gender differences in preferences, attitudes, and behaviors, and the impacts of such differences on bureaucratic

behaviors and organizational outcomes. However, the intersection of gender representation and public financial decisions is not well understood. Claudia Avellaneda and I examine how gender differences in risk attitudes affect risk-taking behavior in local public finance measured by issuing municipal bonds and local investment in risky assets through a panel data analysis of 764 Japanese city-level governments. Results show that female representation in local councils is positively correlated with risk-averse behavior in financial decisions, as female representation on the legislature is negatively associated both with issuing municipal bonds as well as with local investment in risky assets. Female representation in executive (mayor and vice-mayor) and mid-level administrative managerial positions has no apparent effect on local financial decisions. This manuscript was accepted for publication at *Public Management Review*.

To develop my research interest in gender roles in public administration, my coauthor Victor Lapuente and I explore how gender affects senior public managers' motivation and entrepreneurship. Scholars have not yet agreed about what explains innovative-oriented culture. In particular, we still do not know how gender affects innovative behavior. We examine this link by employing multilevel analysis of 5,909 senior public sector managers from 20 European countries. Results show that gender affects the innovation-oriented culture in public organizations. Female public managers exhibit more pro-innovation attitudes than their male counterparts, however they are more prudent in terms of risk-taking compared to male senior managers. This manuscript is currently under review at *Public Administration Review*.

### **3. Assessment of Administrative Reforms**

The third line of my research investigates how a profound change in public organizational structure—municipal merger—affects policy outcomes, municipal performance, and socioeconomic development. Municipal merger has been planned or implemented in half of OECD member countries with the hope of increased efficiency and effectiveness by taking advantage of economies of scale and scope. However, merger may temporarily and negatively affect other dimensions of performance. Previous studies remain inconclusive as to the effects of municipal consolidation on efficiency and effectiveness of public service provision. Furthermore, little attention has been paid to how mayoral leadership mediates the short-term effects of consolidation on performance. Do consolidated municipalities with no changes in mayoral leadership manage municipality more effectively? My coauthor Claudia Avellaneda and I explore this issue by creating a data set of 764 Japanese city-level governments covering a nine-year period. This manuscript received an invitation to revise and resubmit at *Public Administration*.

In a different manuscript, by using propensity score matching methods, another coauthored piece tests how consolidation increases inequalities in local population growth among consolidating partners. This paper received the Best Public Management Paper Award from the Association of SPEA Ph.D. students and was published in *Asia Pacific Journal of Public Administration* (38 (4), 2016). I also wrote a chapter on the politics of municipal consolidation which was published in *Global Encyclopedia of Public Administration, Public Policy, and Governance* (2016). I have also coauthored a manuscript that assesses the impacts of consolidation on the performance of local democracy operationalized by legislative performance. The manuscript is currently under review at *Journal of Urban Affairs*. One of the strengths of this manuscript is the data collection and its focus on a relatively overlooked but important aspect of

consolidation effects on local democracy. I plan to extend this line of research through further municipal data collection and field research.

#### **4. Municipal Decline and Voluntary Activities of Citizens**

Retrenchment of government activities has become a critical issue among advanced industrialized countries. Governments in advanced industrialized countries such as Japan and Britain have attempted to expand local civil society to compensate for the shrinking activities of government. However, there has been little research on whether and under what conditions the contraction of government activities boosts local civil society. Combining a cross-national study of OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) member countries with a study of Japanese local municipalities, my dissertation research seeks to answer this question. My research is funded by the Konosuke Matsushita Memorial Foundation and the Office of the Vice President for International Affairs at Indiana University. I use data from the World/European Values Surveys for the OECD study and original survey data for 604 Japanese local municipalities.

Contributions of my research to public administration and comparative politics are 1) to find the general relationship between government retrenchment and civil society; 2) to discover how the relationship differs across different contexts, using a dataset of Japanese local municipalities; 3) to compile a unique cross-section dataset of 605 Japanese municipalities, which covers around 39% of the total number, regarding service provisions by local citizens organizations. The manuscript focusing on Japan was accepted for publication at *Asia Pacific Journal of Public Administration*. The OECD study is currently under review at *Public Policy and Administration*. My long-term research plans for this research project envisage extending my comparative research scope to other developed and less developed countries, and developing a cross sectional data set into a panel data set by regularly conducting surveys of Japanese local municipalities.

#### **5. Other Significant Research Programs**

In addition to the above four lines of studies, another vein of my research focuses on non-profit organizations. International nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) provide essential aid and public services in less-developed countries. Despite the increasing roles of INGOs in development, little is known about what motivates INGOs to provide services in other regions. To fill the gap in previous studies, my research with Claudia Avellaneda and Morgen Johansen examines the driving factors that affect Japanese INGOs' decisions to target countries in Latin America for aid. This research is conducted using a database of Japanese INGOs and is supplemented by my interviews with the executive directors of 41 Japanese INGOs. Results show that need and the presence of Japanese businesses in the recipient country are associated with INGOs decision to operate in Latin America. This study was published in *International Journal of Public Administration* (40 (8), 2017).