

Peer Review

Review of: "Governance of Local Public Service Delivery: Between Policy, Efficiency, and Legitimacy"

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This manuscript examines the governance of local public services, emphasising the conflict among industrial efficiency, political control, and democratic legitimacy. The study offers a well-structured and convincing discussion that successfully links established theoretical perspectives with policy-relevant reflections. The clarity of exposition, combined with the capacity to link theoretical arguments to practical considerations, makes the contribution pertinent for both academic discourse and practitioners involved in local service delivery. This is a commendable and significant study that merits publication. Nevertheless, certain aspects of the work could be reinforced to augment its total efficacy.

First, the research occasionally oscillates between a broad examination of governance and specific allusions to sectors such as waste, energy, or water. It is essential to determine from the outset whether these cases serve solely as illustrative examples or constitute a fundamental aspect of the analytical emphasis. A more precise definition of scope would better assist the reader.

Secondly, although the conclusions are clear, they may be made more compelling by providing a more incisive synthesis of the principal findings. A concluding paragraph that reiterates the primary contribution – specifically, the elucidation of the “paradox of public control” and the function of governance systems in mitigating it – would enhance the article’s sense of closure and emphasise its key insights.

Moreover, several portions, especially in the theoretical parts, reiterate issues regarding the relationship between efficiency and control. A minor editorial revision to streamline these parts would improve readability without compromising the richness of the argument.

Finally, considering the focus on the trade-off between efficiency and control, a visual component could significantly enhance value. A clear figure or diagram summarising the dynamic, and illustrating the role of the proposed governance arrangement, would make the argument more accessible, especially to a broader readership. In the same way, explicitly emphasising crucial concepts such as “exit versus voice” or the “paradox of public control” – whether through stronger phrasing or subtle visual emphasis – would help to convey their importance.

In conclusion, this work is a well-written and well-structured offering a pertinent and innovative contribution to the discourse on local public sector governance. The suggestions above are intended to improve clarity and communicative strength rather than to alter the substance of the argument. For these reasons, I recommend publication subject to minor revisions.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.