

Public Sector Leaders and Policymakers

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Overview

- Skills for public sector leaders (the literature)
- Skills for top civil servants (OECD)
- Can these read-across for Eurasian countries?
- Issues for developing countries

VUCA World

21st Century
Public Sector
Leaders operate
in a volatile,
uncertain,
complex and
ambiguous
environment
(VUCA) world



VUCA World

- Volatile: disruptive events, scandals, crises, and shocks.
- Uncertain: frequent leadership transitions which change public policies
- Complex: multiple stakeholders each with their own agenda
- Ambiguity: pressured to implement 'innovative' and untested new solutions as technologies evolve and tech-savvy citizens demand better services

[Van der Wal (2017) The 21st Century Public Manager]

21st Century public sector leader should be:

- Smart, savvy and astute
- Entrepreneurial
- Collaborative and connected
- Active anticipator
- General specialist



Skills for top Civil Servants

- **Policy advisory skills:** leveraging technology and synthesizing a growing range of evidence-based scientific insights (e.g. behavioural economics, data science, strategic foresight)

[OECD Report 2017: Skills for High Performing Civil Service]

Skills for top Civil Servants

- **Engagement skills:**
working directly with
citizens and users of
government services to
improve service
experience



“How did it happen, Mike? I thought I was too smart, too idealistic to end up this way, but LOOK at me! I’ve become an entrenched bureaucrat!”

Skills for top Civil Servants

- **Commissioning skills:**
designing/oversee
contractual
arrangements
(outsourcing, PPPs,
service level
agreements)



Skills for top Civil Servants

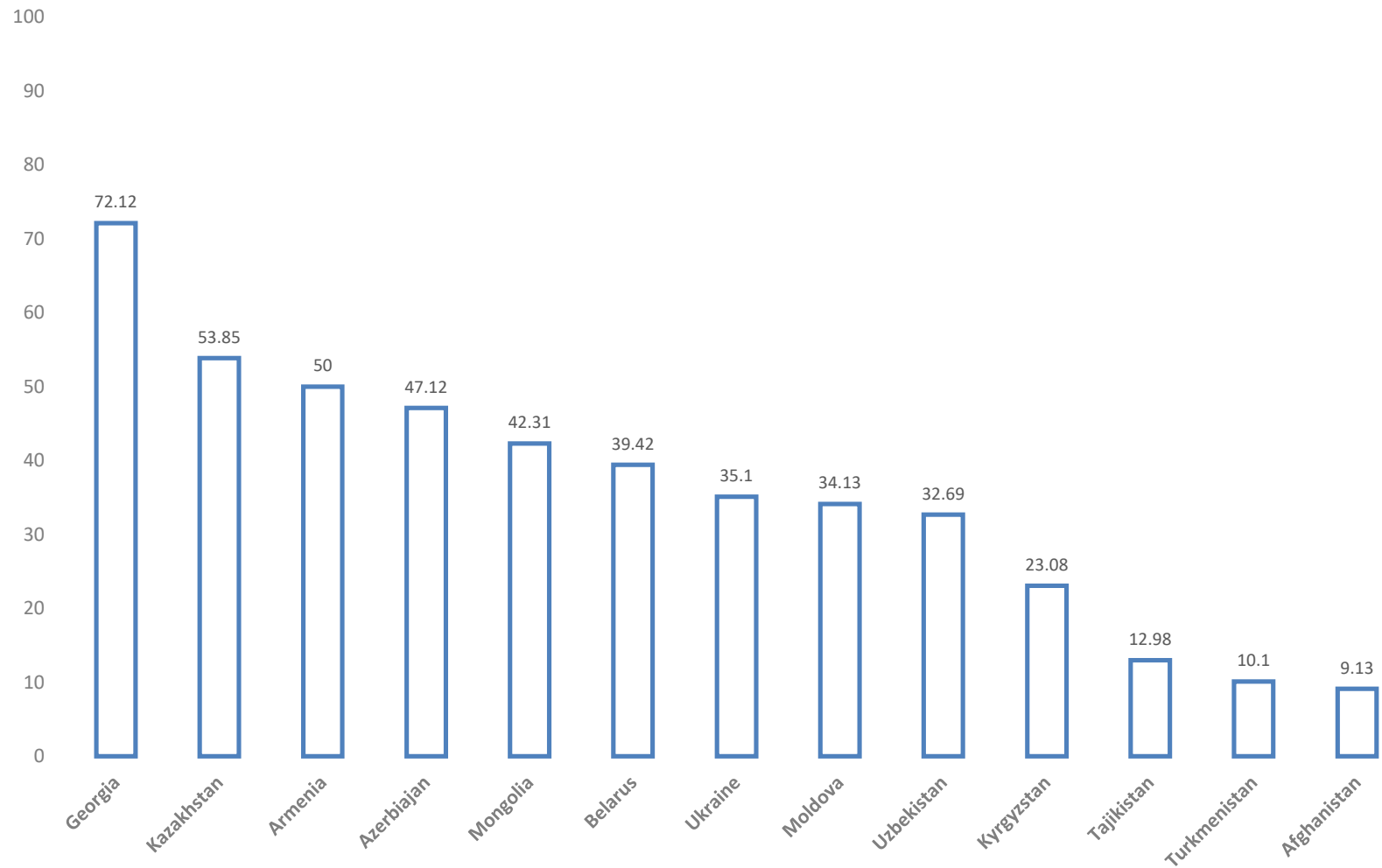
- **Network management skills:** collaborating with a range of independent partners to address complex/wicked policy challenges



Government Effectiveness

- Government effectiveness measures: quality of public services; capacity of the civil service and its independence from political pressures; and, quality of policy formulation

Government Effectiveness: Eurasia (2018)



Read-across to developing countries?

- Policy advisory
 - better evidence: collect credible data
 - benchmark against peers
 - use data to design and improve policy interventions
- Engagement
 - open government channels (do they work)
 - social media: opportunity or threat
 - engagement: real or tokenistic (public councils)
 - citizen input to improve public services

Read-across to developing countries?

- Commissioning skills
 - size of public sector
 - low capacity of private sector
 - grow the third sector
- Network management
 - cross cutting approach for wicked problem
 - breaking down silo government
 - outcomes based accountability

Overarching Issues for Leaders in Developing Countries

- Lots of strategies: poor implementation and evaluation
- Politicization of civil service leaders (upward looking rather than citizen centric)



Overarching Issues for Leaders in Developing Countries

- Legal codification of public policies:
 - stifles creativity
 - encourages risk aversion
 - Creating and amending legislation becomes end goal, rather than means to an end



Overarching Issues for Leaders in Developing Countries

- Shift from transactional to transformational leadership
 - Reward or punish (transactional)
 - Charisma; inspirational motivation; intellectual stimulation; and, individualized consideration (transformational)



*Thank You For
Listening*