

## From the editors

The four papers in this issue deal with the important issues of human trafficking, taxation, decision-making and the impact of European Union institutions. They all address questions of social science theory and have implications for some of the pressing issues that policy-makers face today. So they are good examples of the unique contribution that public policy scholarship can make. The first paper displays this balance very nicely. Nazli Avdan in “Human trafficking and migration control policy: vicious or virtuous cycle?” asks whether there are feedback effects from policies on human trafficking. Are modern states in a bind: whether they are lax or tough in their controls, do they end up encouraging human trafficking? The paper finds that particular policies, such as visa controls implemented at borders, have this unwanted effect. The findings show importance of feedback, but they also demonstrate to policy-makers the impact of the policies they adopt.

Hanna Lierse in “European taxation during the crisis: does politics matter?” wants to find out how policy-makers respond to the economic crisis that began in 2008. There is a long line of literature in comparative political economy that suggests that parties have the capacity to act differently over public finances, but Hanna Lierse shows that they do not for taxation. Both left and right governments do the same kinds of things over taxation and respond similarly to the exigencies of the international economy given their circumstances. This finding might suggest either that the conditions since 2008 are special or that they have a more general implication. Either way, the results are interesting and we hope they stimulate a debate.

Moshe Maor in “Policy overreaction” seeks to develop a new account of decision-making. He breaks this phenomenon into four types, using the literature from psychology to understand how policy-makers can misuse the tools under their command. Given the large literature on policy failure and disasters in recent years, this paper seeks to understand why these kinds of decisions take place and what causal mechanisms are in operation.

Finally, Stephen Padgett in “Multilateral institutions, accession conditionality and rule transfer in the European Union; the Energy Community in South East Europe” examines the impact of conditionality in the context of accession of countries to the European Union. He finds an impact of both the rules and the institutions on the transfer of new rules. This paper shows the powerful leverage that supranational institutions have.

Now that we are at the last issue of the year, it is our chance to thank the many reviewers who have helped us so much. As new editors, we are struck

by the generosity of our reviewers and their thoughtfulness when writing their reports. Special thanks to scholars who thoughtfully evaluated several manuscripts as well as those reviewers who also serve on the Editorial Board. Our sincere thanks go to the individuals listed at the end of the issue; you have helped the review process remain fair and efficient.

Looking forward, after a period of transition time when handling papers submitted to the previous editorial team, we now have the chance to make our mark. To that end, Cambridge University Press has agreed to a new look for the journal, and the next issue will be a point of celebration for us with a redesigned cover and improved layout. In our first issue of the refreshed *Journal of Public Policy*, we will showcase some excellent papers that we have had the pleasure to edit. We hope you will enjoy them too.

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Peter C. John