

From the editors

We have just received some great news: the journal's impact score rose from 0.75 in 2011 to 1.03 in 2012. For those of you not versed in the arcane language of journal citation rankings, this might not mean very much (as was the case for the editors before they started out at JPP!); but the score is a sign of the growing impact and reputation of the journal. JPP now ranks 14th out of the 47 journals in the public administration category of the journal citation rankings (JCR). It also got ranked 49th out of 147 in political science. We see this as no mean feat for JPP, especially as we have only been editing it for a short period of time. We expect more leaps in future years.

This issue comes at an important moment for the management of the journal. We say farewell to Aubrey Hicks, who was Managing Editor at our start in November 2011. She is now playing a greater role in the Bedrosian Centre in the Price School at the University of Southern California. We thank her for her dedication to the work of the journal, in particular for setting up procedures and systems that enable us to function effectively. We welcome Rebecca Pizzitola who took over as Managing Editor in August 2013. We very much look forward to working with Rebecca in the years to come.

In this final issue of 2013, we continue to publish interesting and high-quality papers in the field that is our delight to edit. In previous issues, we have been able to find links between papers, even a theme-related issue on public administration. However – bar a few imaginative segues inserted into the text below – these articles mainly stand on their own as particular contributions to their fields.

Our first contribution is by Johannes Urpelainen and Michaël Aklin called, “When and How Can Advocacy Groups Promote New Technologies?”. This article examines the strategies nation states engage in to protect themselves from adverse energy price increases. The authors show that countries without corrupt institutions can insulate themselves from these potential shocks by engaging in adjustment policies, such as spending on research and development. Overall, readers will find this is a well-written piece, which is sophisticated in its analysis and pays careful attention to the causal determinants of energy policies.

Linked to the incidence of corruption across countries is the degree of trust, which has been a continuing theme in the study of the welfare state. In our second article, “Institutional Trust and Welfare State Support: on the Role of Trust in Market Institutions”, Arvid Bäckström and Jonas Edlund bring a fresh perspective to bear on this much-studied subject: the incorporation of trust in market institutions as an important variable that needs to be modeled alongside other kinds of trust, in particular trust in public institutions. Through analysis of survey data from Sweden, they show that models of relationships between trust and support of the welfare state perform much better from the incorporation of trust in market institutions.

Next, Michael Lynch and Anthony Madonna, in, “Partisan Brand Name Building and Deficit Politics: Examining the Role of Power Sharing on Party Issue Consistency”, make a contribution to an important field of scholarship, the relationship between party politics and public policy making. They argue that the brand of the party is crucial in explaining how legislators act on policy issues, as they are acutely aware of the impact of public policy decisions on their reputations. The opportunity for party politicians occurs when they share power with other parties whether in coalitions or across separated political institutions. Much of the literature suggests that such power-sharing might worsen policy making in this respect, but Lynch and Madonna argue that it can lead to more informed and considered public policies. Such considerations might affect the varying party positions in the United States on deficit reduction, making politicians more likely to moderate their positions when there are shared powers. The empirical heart of the paper is a test of this claim using item response theory on data from the 110th to 111th Congress. They find that members of Congress’s responses to deficit reduction changed in the expected direction when a party shared power.

The Penultimate article by Giacomo Benedetto, “The EU Budget After Lisbon: Rigidity and Deflation?”, continues the theme of the politics of the separation of powers. It is a review of the impact of the Lisbon treaty on the institutions in the European Union, in particular their ability to influence policy. On one level, the paper is an instructive description of the impact of the treaty; on another, it raises interesting questions about the nature of institutional reform and exposes its many-sided nature. Nothing is certain in a complex policy-making system, and reforms that appear to benefit federal institutions can in fact help nation states in their budgetary fights. Such an argument might support a wider claim from the literature in comparative finance policies that spending might be lower in separation of powers systems.

The final article is called, “Policing Methamphetamine Problems: A Framework for Synthesising Expert Opinion and Evaluating Alternative

Policy Options” by Janet Ransley, Christine Smith, Lorraine Mazerolle and Alana Cook. These authors have taken a fresh look at methods of evaluation in the drugs field, which might be extrapolated to other kinds of intervention in this and related policies. In place of standard cost-benefit models, they argue for a multi-criteria method, which is a structured approach to reviewing the different components of decision-making. Critically, the method uses summaries of expert opinion that are weighted as part of the policy evaluation. They apply this method to project STOP, which is a real-time online system that can show pharmacists a client’s prescription history.

With policy analysis at one end of the spectrum, moving to party politicians, treaty reform, attitudes to the welfare state and then to comparative public policy at the other end, readers can observe in this issue the diversity of studies in public policy today.

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