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Continuity and change at PPA

Keith Baker, Claire A. Dunlop and Edoardo Ongaro – PPA editors

In June 2017, *Public Policy and Administration* (PPA) received its first Impact Factor of 1.529 in 2016 Journal Citation Reports®. It is a fantastic score, even more so considering this has been the very first year the journal was included in the index. As a result, PPA is now ranked 19/47 in the field 'Public Administration'! This is major change for PPA, which this year celebrates its 30th year, and bodes very well for its future. And so, we want to take this opportunity to send a strong message of continuity to our readership and all the prospective contributors.

When we took the helm in January 2015, we emphasized our view of PPA as a journal that truly values methodological pluralism (Baker et al, 2015). Accordingly, we tend to be quite sceptical of some recent trends which put a high premium on a form of methodological rigour which often seems to us 'Neo-Positivism in disguise'. We do prize methodological rigour, but we recognise there are different forms of rigour, and conceptual clarity and awareness of philosophical premises of a work is a key requisite for getting published in PPA, no matter which approach gets chosen. To be clear, we do consider Neo- as well as Post-Positivism to have provided and continuing to provide an important contribution to the field of Public Administration and Public Policy, but we also consider it to be just one part of a much larger picture of co-existing intellectual traditions based on different philosophical foundations (see Ongaro, 2017, sections 4.5 and 7.2, and Riccucci, 2010, chapter 8).

Content-wise, PPA remains firmly at the crossroads of the two fields of public administration and the administrative sciences, on one hand, and public policy analysis on the other. We consider these two fields to be closely interconnected, up to the point that in depth knowledge and understanding of one presupposes the other. It seems to us that PPA is uniquely positioned for the generation and accumulation of knowledge at the nexus between policy and administration. This is a core strength of the journal. As editors, we intend to further build on this asset and provide a natural outlet for publication to the ever growing community of scholars delving into policy/administration's manifold interconnections, as well as to a wider readership of scholars and practitioners alike.

We conclude this editorial with a note of gratitude to the many people that have made the success of PPA possible. First, our fantastic reviewers, who combine the most rigorous attitude with the most supportive stance towards the authors: inflexibility in asking for the necessary improvements and flexibility in welcoming a variety of methodological approaches and substantive themes. And, of course, we are most grateful to the many authors who have believed in this journal and have chosen to submit their work to PPA. We are aware that many works do not make all the way to publication (recently, our rejection rate is in the range of 80% or more), and yet all submissions contribute to the field, and we hope to have been able to provide constructive advice to all those who have submitted their work to PPA. A big thank you also goes to the members of the Editorial and Advisory boards, whose support has been absolutely crucial for the success of the journal, and will continue to be decisive for the years to come. Our gratitude also goes to the Public Administration Committee of the Joint University Council of the Applied Social Sciences, for its incessant support to our work, as well as to our home institutions these years (Northumbria University, Oregon State, University of Exeter and

The Open University, UK), for bearing with us while we were spending one more Friday afternoon (evening, night, and well into the weekend) reading and assessing the submitted papers. Our publisher, Sage, has provided a tremendous support, and we owe a huge 'thank you' to our editors at Sage – Amy Ellis Thompson and her predecessor Amy Appleyard: 'our two fantastic Amyes', who have made this success possible – and further 'downstream' in the production process to the impeccable Divya Jyoti Munjal, who has edited and produced each and every article published in PPA over these years.

Last but not least, our thank you goes to each and every reader of PPA. If 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating', then it is to you that we owe our gratitude, as ultimately PPA is at the service of all those who are part of the worldwide community that makes public administration and public policy work better.

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