Editor's Note

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Editor's note

I am delighted to introduce you to the International Review of Public Policy (IRPP) also on behalf of the other editors, and excited to share with you our vision for this new journal. The flagship journal of the International Public Policy Association (IPPA), IRPP arises out of deliberations and commitments taken within the executive committee of the Association. It would not exist without the passion and dedication of the executive committee and the President and General Secretary of the Association who defined the need and scope of a new journal.

IRPP shares the aim of the Association to support the global community of researchers in the fields of policy analysis, public management and the study of the public policy process. Our editors and international scientific committee are open to all disciplinary and theoretical approaches, proud to offer a journal that stands exclusively for the highest quality standards in the profession, rather than for a particular paradigm, method or disciplinary approach. Our vision is to demonstrate over the years, with the articles we shall publish, that public policy can contribute to the understanding of the major problems of contemporary societies.

All too often the policy researcher is perceived as someone who has considerable knowledge of a given policy or certain categories of policy processes, but is limited in scope when it comes to addressing issues such as democratic governance, the choice between open markets and state intervention, the causes and quality of economic growth, the role of science and knowledge in so-called 'post-truth' society, the accountability of institutions, and the foundations of illiberal regimes. We believe the opposite, that there is already considerable knowledge on these issues in our discipline. Almost invariably, this knowledge is more granular and more sophisticated than the knowledge provided by scholars of comparative politics, elections and mass politics – exactly because policy researchers have an intimate knowledge of the policy processes they talk about, of how decisions emerge in complex organizations, and of the cycle that goes from public attention to agenda-setting, lawmaking and implementation. They are also rightly cautious of assuming linearity in this cycle, and of the risks of treating public policy as output of the political system, whilst, following Theodore Lowi, it is often policy that defines the territory and arenas of power.

In a sense, our goals are the same of the social scientists who identified the mission of the policy sciences at the very beginning of policy research almost one hundred years ago. But today this mission requires a new vision and new outlets. In terms of vision, we believe that good research should meet the professional social scientific standards. The progress in research design, robustness and quality of methods, ontological and theoretical lenses on the policy process has been amazing over the last three decades.

But, in addition, good policy research should also 'translate' well in terms of being accessible and potentially usable by vast categories of readers, such as our colleagues working in other domains of the social sciences, public managers, independent policy research institutes, civil society organizations, campaigners and politicians. We are not the only ones to say this! Actually, we are glad to join an emerging community of researchers that genuinely care about knowledge utilization and the wider peripheral vision we need when we write up our findings for publication.

In terms of outlets, IRPP's contribution is to provide a journal that is free to its readers and to its authors. This is an important choice of the Association and the Editorial Board: we are entirely committed to providing free access to policy knowledge to everyone. Today, knowledge is the key resource for societies and political systems. In all disciplines we witness a movement to democratize access to knowledge but also resistance and vested interests. With our journal, we want to demonstrate that real free access can go along with high quality of content. This orientation is a major innovation but also a costly one supported by IPPA. To help the journal and its mission, we will soon launch soon a "call for IRPP Support" addressed to all institutions and individuals who believe in this commitment.

Over the years, we shall experiment with other innovations in peer review and publishing that will push forward our ambition to contribute to translational policy research. IRPP is in for a marathon, not a sprint - our plans and result will unfold only gradually. This ambition and goals need time. We will make sure that we will learn as we go along and make the necessary adjustments swiftly, also in line with the evolution of technology and open access standards in academic publishing. The contribution, comments, and criticisms of our authors, peer reviewers, readers and various publics will be decisive – it really matters to us. We are extraordinarily grateful to those brave authors who are joining us for the first issue and to the reviewers who assisted us in the evaluation of this first batch of manuscripts. Thank you all for being here.

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