
Introduction: Government and Policy

Robert J. Bennett

1. Introduction: Interfacing Social Science and Policy Practice

Government policy is a dominant theme of topical media debate and is one of the main streams of academic research across most social science disciplines. The journal *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, from which this collection is drawn, was established in 1982 to link closely with these concerns in the world of topical debate and practice, but as a research journal it has sought to unravel the deeper elements of current policy discourse and offer evaluation and balanced appraisal. It has been eclectic in the policy issues covered, but has also tried to focus on a range of specific dimensions that bring together national, regional and local debates across themes. The journal has aimed from the outset to be relevant internationally and to be interdisciplinary, with focus on 'social, economic, spatial, historical, and political aspects concerning the functions of information gathering, administration, legal and constitutional involvement, the policy process, the philosophy of decision making in government, and public finance' (Bennett, 1983, p. 2). The early vision was for articles that focused on internationally comparative research, using the experience of several countries and exchanging policy experiences and assessments. This led to themes that focused on debates that were relevant across many countries, but also articles on specific countries or case studies where debates and developments had wider relevance and implications.

Originally this was seen as approached through the intersection of topical and disciplinary foci (Bennett, 1983, p.1–2):

Topics

1. *Philosophy* (the conceptual framework within which policy is developed).
2. *Policy formation* (the policy process).
3. *Administrative and regulatory actions* (the mechanisms for the implementation of policies).
4. *Information gathering, interpretation, and policy monitoring* (assessment and evaluation to improve future policies).
5. *Legal-constitutional issues* (interrelations between people and government, between levels of government, and relations among states).

Disciplines

- a. Social
- b. *Economic/fiscal*
- c. *Spatial/geographical*
- d. *Historical*
- e. *Political*

This was envisaged as providing a matrix of disciplinary and topical cover, with the core specific disciplines of Geography (economic and political), Economics, Regional Science, Public Administration, Management (public and business management), Political Science and Public Finance. These disciplines, then, clearly became the audience and potential authors for articles in the journal. The same broad span of content has been maintained, but also widened, up to the present (as summarized in Rodríguez-Pose et al., 2011). It is re-framed by the objectives of the current managing editors, Andrew Jordan and Andres Rodríguez-Pose (2008), as continuing to focus on interdisciplinarity, comparative research, and adapting the journal to internationalization of authorship and readership.

At the outset of the journal, its scope was viewed as so large that theme issues (or part issues) of the journal were used as a standard feature in order to help define the journal's content and identify it with readers and authors. Theme articles became a defining characteristic of the journal in its early years, taking up nearly one half of the published pages until 1990. These early theme choices derived from an active editorial board, and responses to external suggestions (A full list of editors since 1983 is given in Bennett, 2008, Table 1). In subsequent developments, themes mainly reflected proposals from potential guest editors and authors. Their numbers have fluctuated between 5 and 15% of articles up to the present (Bennett, 2008, Figure 2). Over the whole period, 1983–2010, the journal has had more than 60 themes containing over 270 articles; a full listing of titles is given on the envplan.com Website.

These themes in part did successfully shape the character of the journal. But the most vital inputs are always those from authors themselves who seek publication because they have identified the journal as the natural outlet for their particular article. Hence, the character of *Government and Policy* has inevitably evolved as a mix of editorial and bottom up processes from its readers and authors. The selection of articles made here seeks to reflect both of these processes, and to identify the major lines of debate that the journal covers.

2. The Overarching Themes of *Environment and Planning C*

The organization of this collection into six broad thematic areas seeks to identify the main lines of debate that have engaged authors, and continue to be the key focuses for likely future development: Decentralization; Environmental

Policy; Environmental Governance; Urban Policies and Regimes; Local Economic Development; and Taxation, Regulation, and Small Firms Policy. In fact, these six themes can be collapsed into a focus on three broader elements of discourse: the tensions between policies at different levels of government (intergovernmental relations); the tensions between state and private sector leadership, which have become framed as the shift from government and governance; and the interactions between the policy world and the constraints and opportunities offered by the physical environment.

The main early emphasis of the journal was on intergovernmental relations (central/federal and regional/state-local), and within that there was a strong sub-emphasis on the underpinning structures of public finance. This was an important field with very active debate in the 1980s, with an important element of comparative study because governments were looking at each other for ideas and practices that would help modernize and restructure state policies, welfare systems, taxation, and modes of governance. ‘Decentralization’ came to be used as a concept to describe both inter-governmental shifts in the locus of decision making, and also shifts from state to markets. The culmination of this period of evolution was the collapse of communism in Europe in the late 1980s, and the removal of the Berlin Wall in 1990. This shifted much social science away from the long-standing, but ultimately sterile debate and clash of ideologies between ‘planned’ and ‘market’ systems, to instead assess different modes of capitalism, different modes of governance, and different balances of central and local state. The themes of decentralization and re-structuring of welfare have been enduring policy concerns in all countries, with added urgency in the wake of the 2007–9 financial crisis. Decentralization is explored in the first set of articles in this collection.

For *Government and Policy*, the shifts of government policies sharpened the focus on practical modes of governance, and assessing relative policy successes. Many of the journal’s editors and authors were part of these changes, and the journal has been fortunate to publish some path-breaking articles, either exploring the future for the countries of central Europe, or reflecting on their reform debates; for example, Regulski (1989), Gibb and Michalak (1993), Bahl and Wallace (1994), Alm and Buckley (1994), Frankland and Cox (1995), and Regulska (1997). Transitions in Southern Europe from former centralized governmental regimes has also been represented in a number of articles, and in an important theme on ‘Regional government and the case of Spain’ (issue 5 (3)), which captured early-stage assessment from leading commentators on the radical development of the Spanish autonomous regions. The evolution of central-local relations in the EU has also been a strong focus; e.g. Moran (1992), Spahn (1992), or Majone (1992). More recently, the tension in the state-led models of China and other newly industrializing countries (NICs) have generated a range of articles assessing how the local and central state relations are unfolding under a different range of challenges. This has led to a selection of articles for this volume that have investigated the fulcrum between the central and local, and between state-led and market-led approaches.

A most significant subsequent development of the journal has been a major effort to develop environmentally focused articles. The journal had always carried a few articles in this field, but from the mid-1990s the editorial board was restructured to make this one of the journal's key fields. This responded to the way in which the environment was becoming one of the main international fields of policy and comparative research. Two new editors in 1997, Andrew Jordan and Clive Spash, led a very successful development. This has resulted in articles on environmental policy, now forming a substantial part of the journal's output and becoming some of the most widely cited and used. Two of the major elements of this development are covered in the following selection: environmental policy and environmental governance. These highlight overarching themes, but the journal also includes a range of other case study research on individual environmental concerns to which the selection can give only partial recognition.

In addition, the journal has continued to evolve to embrace new themes of policy debate. One of the main elements of developments since 2000 has been a focus on how policy is shaped by changes in economies. There are potentially many aspects of this: globalization, the knowledge economy, innovation policy, education and skills, venture capital, modernization of infrastructure, sustainability, policy for small firms, and many other topics. The final section of this collection thus represents a complex set of articles that have explored the interface between government and markets.

The selection of articles for this volume has followed the same criteria as that for the other volumes; but in addition has sought to emphasise internationality, interdisciplinarity, impact on policy practice, and reflect an increasing emphasis of the journal on contributions from or about Asia and other NICs. Any selection of course is invidious. The output of the journal has been some 1200 articles over its 29 years to 2011. The choices made have sought to reflect the strengths of the journal during its different periods of development, as summarised above, and also the direction of travel – where the journal is aiming in the coming years. At the same time this introduction seeks to highlight some of the other important articles in the journal where influence on policy practice and research discourse can be identified as significant. The history of the journal has been reviewed more fully (Bennett, 2008), whilst the debate about possible future directions has been opened by Jordan and Rodríguez-Pose (2008). The selection of articles has chiefly used those articles that have been most highly cited and/or downloaded. Considerable further discussion is given by Rodríguez-Pose et al. (2011, Table 3) of the citation and download impacts of articles in *Government and Policy*, classifying them into 'splash making', 'wave making' and other levels of impact. The selection here includes all the 'splash making' articles, and almost all the other articles with highest impact; but there have had to be adaptations reflect different fields of policy analysis. Inevitably some rough justice will have been done

and no editor of a collection like this can achieve a perfect solution. However, it is hoped that what has been achieved is an indication of where the journal can offer important insights to specific policy debates and guide readers to the location of some of the significant articles that *Government and Policy* has published.

3. Decentralization

Decentralization was one of the core themes of *Government and Policy* from the outset, and has remained central. The form of the debate has, however, evolved significantly. The first article in this selection reflects this change. Rodríguez-Pose and Gill examine how increased globalization has influenced a growing relevance of regional and local levels of government and governance. Comparing six countries, they examine how changes to devolve more state power has occurred, and its differing forms, legitimacy, and impacts. This is one of a number of important articles in this field by these and other authors. The article selected is one of the ‘splash makers’ among the journal’s articles. It demonstrates the heterogeneity of devolution processes, but questions the validity of the common claim for improved ‘efficiency’ (of decision making better matching preferences and hence improved economic allocation). The article also highlights the regressivity of some changes and cautions on promotion of decentralization per se as a means to improve policy processes. In the light of increased emphasis on ‘localism’ in many countries, this article has provided a strong foundation for comparing different initiatives, which have been taken forward by these and other authors: e.g. by Rodríguez-Pose (1996), Bucek and Smith (2000), Booth (2003), Kohl (2003), and the many articles reviewing transition economies discussed above.

Interrelated with trends in decentralization have been assessments of how to improve current situations, in terms of efficiency, equity, legitimacy, etc. Given its early history, some of the main articles in *Government and Policy* have tended to focus on public finance, especially on taxation and grant systems. The article selected to represent this field, by Bird and Tarasov, is one of the most highly cited more recent contributions, with Bird, one of the world’s leading authorities in this field who has been involved in many reform decisions in a range of countries, and a former editorial board member of the journal. Bird and Tarasov compare eight federal countries in developed economies proposing, and then using, consistent measures of vertical and horizontal fiscal imbalance. Its value and citation impact have derived from its use as a methodological starting point for studies elsewhere, and for its understanding of the evolution of the eight countries covered. Its conclusion is that changes in inter-governmental grants and transfer systems reflect political judgments and economic power, and rarely achieve the policy desires of ‘regional balance’ and

equalization of per capita incomes. This chimes with the Rodríguez-Pose and Gill article which together form a formidable critique of the claims of governments and policy makers that their reforms have generally offered improvements.

The third article on decentralization takes up the specific local government dimension. Wollmann compares Britain, France and Germany using three typologies: legal and administrative structures; institutional architecture; and citizen democratic participation in electoral, administrative, and executive decisions. Wollmann finds considerable challenges to each national structure, but most strongly for citizen participation. This widely cited article is one of a number in the journal focused on the specifics of local government and central local power relations. Other significant articles that take this up have been Dunford and Perrons (1992), Keating (1997), King and Ma (2000), Bryson et al. (2004). Major theme issues on these topics have been 'the political pork barrel' and 'Reagan policies on intergovernmental regulation' (issues 1 (3) and (4)), 'political theory and central-local relations' (issue 3 (2)), 'economics of local government finance' and 'the evaluation of intergovernmental programmes' (issues 4 (2) and (3)), 'centralization and decentralization in West German federalism' (issue 7 (4)), 'developments in public administration in Europe' (issue 15 (2)), 'new structures of local governance' (issue 18 (1)), and 'federalism, decentralization, and the welfare state' (issue 28 (3)).

The three articles have in common, as well as the topic of decentralization, that they are comparative articles. In each case, they are ambitious either in the number of countries covered or the depth of assessment. They reflect detailed knowledge and extensive study of several systems. These are not easy articles to write, but their impact reflects the value of such articles to the research community and to policy practitioners. Such articles were one of the earliest objectives of the journal. At the highest quality level, such articles are comparatively rare. *Government and Policy* has done well to publish so many quality articles in this field, especially ones that bridge between countries in Europe and other parts of the world. European comparative research has become frequent, and specialist journals with a specifically European focus have grown to meet this demand. Yet, much of this research is unsatisfactory, being too dependent on European Commission programs and exchanges with the result that it is often introspective and difficult to generalize outside the EU domain, and hence, of limited relevance to the growth of critical knowledge within social science on a wider canvas.

4. Environmental Policy

The articles selected on environmental policy cover one of the other core aspects of the journal. The articles cover a wide range of specific policy areas, but have a generic concern with unravelling not only policy impacts, but also how environmental policy is formed and evaluated, and by whom. This has

involved many detailed assessments of different lines of authority and control: supra-national, national, regional and local, as well as the philosophical underpinnings of thought that lead to different types of policy design.

In the first article in the selection, Birner and Wittmer provide a detailed analytical framework for assessing natural resource management policies drawing on the different components of transaction costs at different governmental levels. Overlapping with some of the concerns of the articles on decentralization, Birner and Wittmer demonstrate how policies for conservation management of protected areas can be improved by using their analytical framework. They provide a particularly useful comparison of pure state policies with those of co-management with private businesses, voluntary sector, and local community bodies. This article has had wide impact because its framework has been taken up in a variety of other fields. An article with a similar impact on methodologies for evaluation is that by Kallis et al. The result of an extensive programme of international research team collaboration, this article takes the EU Water Framework Directive as a starting point, using three case studies of Greece, Portugal and Spain as comparative examples. The Water Framework Directive has been an EU-wide policy for planning river basin resources in water-scarce areas across Europe. The article compares different participatory methods. It shows scenario planning and mediated modeling as well suited to early stages of participation, and good at building local participant capacity. But they are less effective at resolving disputes, where social multi-criteria evaluation better aid the process of building a consensus where there are conflicts. However, like other articles in the journal, this article demonstrates the difficulties of fully utilizing participatory methods because of the unwillingness of politicians and other power brokers to cede control to citizens.

The article by Perkins and Neumayer confronts some similar methodological issues. It focuses on the adoption of Eco-Management and Audit Schemes (EMAS) that seek to assess progress towards sustainable goals within the EU-15 countries. It examines how far policy convergence has been achieved. The primary focus is on dimensions of cross-national market integration, national-EU policy integration, and convergence between social/community groups and market forces. Perkins and Neumayer find that there is a wide variety of outcomes, and that whilst some convergence has been achieved, there is also great variety depending on different local and national characteristics. Hence, despite strong pressure to achieve a European uniformity of policies, policy designs and outcomes remain often historically determined and highly uneven. The article is unique in the scale of analysis of this topic and its analytical rigor. It finds that EMAS audits are most highly developed in economies with the lowest levels of policy intervention, suggesting that take-up is best achieved when agents are involved in policy design rather than being levered through enforcement regimes. Society 'pulls down' and improves take up through social mobilization, and firms are most active for environmental policies that

enhance competitiveness. A related article by Bracke and Albrecht (2007) takes the evaluation of EMAS further in another cross-national comparative study, drawing similar conclusions to that of Perkins and Neymayer about uneven take-up.

Going beyond methodological frameworks, the article by Cowell and Owens seeks to assess how far it is possible to implement effective environmental policy using legislation to lever change; they ask whether sustainability can be achieved by statute. Using the example of the reforms by Britain's Labour government in 2001–4, they examine 'modernization', streamlining, and simplification of planning processes, within regional rather than national strategies, focusing on the opportunities for political engagement. Cowell and Owens see the greatest threats to engagement as likely to arise from the policy change to 're-scale' to the regional level, which induces remoteness, and also undermines the direct link of accountability to elected representatives in local government. They also warn that since different weights can be given to social, economic or environmental objectives by planning decision makers, then there is no inevitable advance on the aims on increased sustainability, and indeed any outcome is possible, provided it is 'justifiable'. The article was subsequently revisited and updated in 2010 as a result of it being the most down-loaded article in 2009–10 (Cowell and Owens, 2010).

5. Environmental Governance

It is clear from the discussion of environmental policy that almost all policy debates overlap with the structures of governance: the network of agents involved with government in designing, implementing, and responding to policy. Recognition of the wider concept of governance as a more useful touchstone than government has provided an important opening of research and practice to issues about framing and compliance. The three articles in this section have been among the most heavily cited in the journal. The articles by Jordan and O'Neill have been 'splash making'.

Jordan examines the evolution of the concept of sustainable development, unravels the concept of governance, and takes stock. Jordan argues that there is a need to go beyond grand theories and typologies of governance towards more practical testing of different approaches. He quotes the articles by Perkins and Neumayer selected here, and Bracke and Albrecht (2007), as being particularly significant in exploring the take-up of new policy instruments for environmental management. He also traces a stream of articles in *Government and Policy* that seek to address how far multi-level governance has influenced improved or reduced scope for sustainable policies. Jordan identifies two central features: first, means to improve public participation, which he argues is fundamental to achieving actual sustainable policies by achieving buy-in (see e.g. Smith, 2000; Beierle and Konisky, 2001; Spash, 2001; Yearley, 2006);

and second, methods of improved decision making (see e.g. Ozawa, 1993; Hansjürgens, 1998; Zhang, 2000; Hansen et al., 2002; Osberghaus et al., 2010). Jordan's assessment is that the move from a polarized view of 'growth versus development' that dominated the 1970s has allowed significant progress on practical means to improve sustainable policies since they better work with the grain of human decision making, can graft environmental objectives on to economic or social agendas that have broader appeal, and can bridge the radical-conservative divide. He goes on to develop how the concept of governance has provided scope to bring new solutions to old problems through the coordination potential of networks of relationships. These can found the basis for developing voluntary agreements, environmental trading, and market-related mechanisms as means to encourage behavioral change. This article was the most downloaded in 2008–9 and hence, was subsequently revisited (Jordan, 2009).

Similar tensions are recognized in most contributions to the field of environmental governance, with the article by Gouldson and Bebbington providing a good example of how frames of policy reference influence how environmental risks are assessed. Their article assesses how the factors that have led to the emergence of new ways of governing business activities are also associated with the generation or management of environmental risks. Using the United Nation's Global Compact as an example, they draw on the contrasting perspectives of communicative and strategic action. Gouldson and Bebbington conclude that managerial methods for developing governance regimes that allow practical policy solutions do not adequately resolve the tensions between, on the one hand, the management problems of 'governance at a distance', nor on the other hand, the desired changes in behavior, or 'governance of the self'. Governmentality, however, they argue, offers a better combination of approaches that may lead to exploration and inclusion of broader and more durable policy solutions.

The final article in this section, by O'Neill, opens a more philosophical interrogation, which takes these issues further. He argues that how interests are represented is the core of environmental governance debate. Deepest of all the challenges to deliberative decision making are how the normally disempowered are represented (and by whom), how non-humans are given voice, and how future generations are included. His central conclusion is that any solution will inevitably be imperfect, so that it is critical to provide avenues to contest claims. O'Neill examines several possible solutions. One solution suggests that the only adequate policies are reached by a 'Congress' of the world: but this is seen as impractical since the only milieu to make decisions is the world itself. This theoretical starting point offers a guide as to why all other solutions have imperfections about who or what is represented. O'Neill draws on the lineage of political theory, which serves to enlarge understanding of the tensions, but leaves conclusions hanging. His preferred conclusion to these conundrums seems to lie in what he calls an 'Athenian solution', where

citizens take turns to hold positions of power, so that they rule and are ruled in turn. The circulation of power would check the role of experts and elites, and might ensure all interests are weighed in appropriate ways. A second article by O'Neill (2001) takes some of the arguments further.

There have been many other articles on environmental policy and governance that could have been selected. Among the most significant of these are Jordan (1999), Bulkeley (2000), Niemeyer and Spash (2001), and Lovell et al. (2009), which have all had high impact. Major theme issues have covered 'disaster management – post-Chernobyl perspectives' (issue 6 (3)), EU environmental policy after 25 years' (issue 17 (1)), 'property, rights and fairness' (issue 19 (5)) 'participatory multi-criteria decision making for river basin management' (issue 24 (2)), 'corporations and governance of environmental risks' (issue 25 (1)). The theme on 'participation, representation, and deliberation in environmental policy' (issue 19 (4)) has scored particularly highly in terms of cite rates.

6. Urban Policies and Regimes

The articles in this section also take up and further explore the shift from government to governance. The first by Stoker and Mossberger is the most heavily cited in the journal's history, as a result of its broad agenda-setting focus on regime theory derived from extensive international comparative debates. This leads it to propose assessment of regimes in terms of purpose, participant motivation, and 'quality' of outcomes. Another significantly cited article, by Harding develops some of these themes within the context of regeneration initiatives for the UK, making comparisons of eleven city-based coalitions. These articles very much reflect the turn in debate on local economic development initiatives in the 1990s, away from government doing things to places, towards leveraging partners to work together to negotiate bottom-up strategies, build local capacity, and operate through partnerships. Governance naturally emerges as a focus for such approaches since the relations between formally elected representatives, and more informal leadership from the private and voluntary sectors became critical elements of success.

Of course locally and regionally based initiatives interrelate with more general policies for improving social welfare. Ashford's article confronts this issue head-on, assessing how far locally based welfare services can solve deep-seated structural social problems. This article summarizes research across eight countries, charting how moves away from a 'one-size-fits-all' approach emerged. Ashford sees potential and tensions from a 'discretionary welfare state' with greater local variability. The debate resonates strongly for the 2010s, where renewed 'localism' is being asserted as a means to improve policy effectiveness, reduce welfare costs, and improve local participation and accountability.

This policy balance is also the subject of the other two articles in this section. Wu's study provides valuable historical insights into how housing and businesses have been managed in China, and how this provides considerable challenges for adaptation to a more market-driven economy. The discussion resonates with many of the articles in the journal that chart the tensions and developments of the changes necessary after the fall of the Berlin Wall in Europe. Wu concludes by demonstrating the contradictions in a 'socialist market economy'. The unfolding of how these contradictions are resolved is part of the debate that has come to dominate the 2010s of how China's internal policies influence the rest of the world, particularly how it uses its foreign exchange reserves and controls internal inflation. The article by Kessides is similarly wide ranging, comparing the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa with the rest of the world in how housing, agriculture, economic growth, and spatial policies interrelate. Urbanization is seen as a tool and a threat that requires a full re-casting of policy toward investment and radical changes of attitude within government elites.

All the articles selected relate to the urban level, but the journal has also devoted considerable space to regional policies and governance, as represented especially in the theme issues 'from regional administration to regional government' (issue 15 (4)), which has had high citation rates, and the more recent 'regional competitiveness in the knowledge-based economy: comparative policy perspectives' (issue 27 (2)).

7. Local Economic Development Policy

A recurrent theme of many of the journal's articles has been how policy can enhance economic development. This sparks not only debates about governance (as above), but also leads to assessments of the effectiveness of policies that attempt to achieve development. Malecki's article is one of the most influential on how the 'high road' of policy has moved towards stimulating the knowledge base of local economies, to encourage innovative businesses and a growth-based approach to economic development. He recognizes the shift from policies that have been copied in all cities by providing the necessary infrastructure for growth, toward policies that encourage local differences and enhance local abilities to compete. This leads naturally to an assessment of means to encourage business innovation, entrepreneurship and R&D. Cooke's article takes these arguments into greater depth by comparing bioscience research centers in Europe and North America. This shows the strengths of partnered and focused approaches, adapted to differing local conditions. These articles are both from influential theme issues, respectively on 'local knowledge and innovation policy' (issue 25(5)), and 'innovation geographies and biotechnology' (issue 22 (2)), with Sousa (2002) also highly cited. They represent a considerable number of articles on a policy theme that will continue to grow in the future.

The article by Chien represents a different group of journal contributions that draw the debate about innovation policy back to institutional structures, degree of decentralization, and governance regimes. The article assesses transitions to marketization, globalization, and political-economic decentralization, reflecting differences between state-led (government ‘authorized’) and other initiatives in China. Considerable tensions are recognized in getting the state to adopt ex-ante policies that support local innovation, with success in achieving change in government attitudes often dependent on interrelations between local elites and national political leaders. The case study examined focuses on foreign investment into China’s cities, but the future is testing decentralization on a much broader scale as the management of China’s economy moves away from a command structure. Like Wu’s article this contribution illustrates tensions that have now become of significance for the world stage as much as for individual Chinese cities. Other articles of recent significance on China are Thiers (2002), Wang and Song (2008) and Wei (2010). Reflecting back on the debates about decentralization to markets or institutions, Hebdon and Jalette examine urban services in the USA and Canada, assessing the factors that affect decisions to contract out services. They show that privatization is important in both countries, reflecting pragmatic city management. They conclude that contracting out is most effective when used for situations where contract-monitoring can be most readily managed; as in cases with simple and definable targets.

Local economic development policies have been one of the core themes covered in the journal since its outset so that there are many other articles that reflect on individual case studies, and international comparisons. Two recent themes that take the debate further are ‘challenging issues in local privatization’ (issue 26 (1)), and ‘new perspectives on employability and labor market policy’ (issue 27 (6)). Other themes have highlighted the importance of local policies for economic growth and small businesses (see later section), technology policy (e.g. theme issues 6(4); 7 (2); 22 (2)), innovation initiatives with universities (e.g. theme issues 25 (5); 25 (6)), and the role of local clusters and urban contexts (e.g. theme issues 23(6); 24 (5)).

8. Small Business Policy, Taxation and Regulation

The extent of costs as well as benefits of government policy have been a continuing theme of journal articles. One of the earliest themes of articles to do this were a series of contributions on tax policy. The article chosen to illustrate this theme is by Brennan on public choice approaches to tax reform. This emphasizes the way in which taxation has to balance political objectives for cost sharing as well as traditional economic arguments about economic efficiency. Brennan by no means resolves the dilemmas, and calls for a new balance between the two. This article was part of a theme issue on ‘tax reform’

(issue 6 (1)). The other articles in that issue brought together some of the leading authors of tax reform debates around the world; they discuss reforms in the USA, Australia, New Zealand and Ireland. This theme drew on the stimulus of Russell Mathews, the long serving director of the Australian Centre for Research on Federal Financial Relations, who was also an editorial board member for many years. Mathews' (1988) own article provides a succinct overview of the debates of that time, contrasting the canons of tax design with the demands emerging from 'tax revolt'. The wheel has since turned full circle as many of the debates of the 1980s have strong resonance in 2010s as governments tackle fiscal retrenchment; in the USA the 'tea party' campaigns of 2010–11 offer many parallels with the tax payer revolts of the 1980s.

Tax policy has remained an important focus of the journal over the early years. Other key articles were by McLure (1984), former Treasury Secretary in the USA, and theme issues on 'fiscal incidence' and 'tax policy' (issues 2 (2) and (3)), 'economics of local government finance' (issues 4(2)), 'local business taxes' (issue 5(1)), 'taxation and economic development' (issue 12 (3)), and 'fiscal federalism in fragmented states' (issue 19 (2)). These articles overlap with the debates about decentralization discussed above. But they have also led to a suite of articles that take the evaluation of the costs and benefits of public policy a stage further, with some path-breaking articles on assessment of regulatory burden. The article in this volume by Poutziouris et al. (1999) was the first in a line of articles associated with Chittenden that have made significant contributions not only to academic debate, but have also had strong influences on government policy to reduce 'red tape' and bureaucratic burdens. An important aspect of these articles has been the ability to take the debate away from polemics and assertions, based on faint hopes and ideology, to be grounded in detailed assessment of actual outcomes using detailed assessments of each element of regulatory compliance. Another article by Hansford et al. (2003) provides a case study of value added tax compliance burdens. One of the most important spin-offs has been the use of the Poutziouris and Chittenden modeling methodology directly in policy debates; e.g. the 'business barometer' developed by Ambler et al. (2010), which had significant critical leverage on the Labor government in Britain over 1997–2010.

Small business policy has become a major component of the journal, reflecting the growing recognition in all countries of the contribution of small firms to innovation, employment, and growth of economic output. Small firms form over 95% of all firms in almost all countries, and are usually the most innovative and rapidly growing, providing the main source of new employment and hence of major concern to government policies to cope with unemployment and wealth creation. Most of the twentieth century saw small firms neglected as a policy focus. The father of most country's economic policies in the mid-twentieth century, Keynes, held the view that policy for small businesses could not be developed; their behavior was too 'animal', and emphasis

should be on the sector and the ‘commanding heights of the economy’. Similarly, Marxists inexplicably saw small firms as forms of self-exploitation. Large firms, state planning, state-sanctioned combines, and nationalized industries were the hallmarks of planning of many twentieth century economies. To facilitate the journal’s contribution to the emerging economies of the twenty first century, the journal has forged an important connection with the Institute of Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ISBE).¹ This is one of the main forums for debates on small business policy and entrepreneurship, a focus for exchange between European and wider international experience, and between researchers and practitioners. It was a natural partner for *Government and Policy*. Hotlinks between the journal and ISBE Websites (www.isbe.org.uk) have provided mutual benefits.

There have been ten theme issues of the journal on policy for small firms up to 2011, and a number of free-standing articles. This is thus a natural focus for part of the selection below. The article by Bennett in this volume that has been selected is among the most highly cited and downloaded of these. It is significant because it provides a wide review of the evolution of policy in Britain, covering several periods of experiment, and drawing on large scale survey evidence of over 2000 small firms, thus providing a more credible evidence base than previous contributions. Its comparisons offer important internationally relevant lessons, particularly with how advice services to small firms should be developed: first, that the quality of advice is significantly higher where advice is offered by market suppliers; and second, that intensive support through intensive government-supported consultancy has proved largely a failure, risks ‘moral hazard’ and dependency, and is extremely costly, thus contributing to the overall deadweight of policy outcomes. Other articles in the journal provide further elaboration. In one of the most significant, Mole et al. (2008) show that intensive consultancy support can be effective when focused on a small number of carefully selected businesses. However, the benefits of increased employment in aided-firms never offset the very high administrative costs, and the effect on increased business turnover (sales volume) are very small or insignificant. Other important articles on advisory support to small firms have been Marshall et al. (1993), Priest (1999), Mole (2002), Hannon and Chaplin (2003), Ram and Jones (2008), Mole et al. (2008), and Xiao and Ritchie (2009). Policy to firms has also linked to wider themes explored in other articles in the journal on tax policy, regulation and de-regulation.

9. The Future

Government and Policy is a well-established journal that has satisfied the original aims of its editors and publishers of being international, interdisciplinary, eclectic and flexible, allowing an organic evolution of the fields of articles

published whilst maintaining appropriate peer reviewed quality. It has continued to combine contributions from academic research and practitioners. It has produced some outstanding individual articles and theme issues, only a few of which can be fully represented here. It has also sought to encourage outstanding articles by authors at the early stages of their careers, and whilst the increase in volume of material submitted has made life busier for editors and referees, *Government and Policy* retains an aspiration to provide assistance to younger authors to help them develop articles through positive feedbacks.

In their view of the future, Jordan and Rodríguez-Pose (2008), the current managing editors, state that their aims are to continue modernizing the journal to adapt it to new trends: particularly internationalization of authorship and readership; the growing role of electronic access and use; responding to growing positive (and negative) effects of bibliometric measures; and constrained library budgets. They have embarked on a number of initiatives to pursue these changes; a notable aspect of this has been the listing of most downloaded article and the opportunity for authors to revisit them. In Rodríguez-Pose et al. (2011), the editors have taken their views forward by analyzing the origin of articles by discipline and geographical area, the impact of articles, and who reads them. This is path-breaking among journals for its frankness, and it aims to open up a debate between authors and readers on how the future of *Government and Policy* should be shaped. There is explicit recognition that internationalization means just that; to expand the dominant themes of academic discourse of the journal's first 30 years which have often had a North American and European (especially a UK) center. This has already begun to change, and in the future the rise of Asia, other NICs, and especially the BRIC countries, will introduce new policy debates and different approaches to existing debates, as well as re-shaping global power and economic development.

This editorial chapter began by noting the sterility of the academic discourse between the ideologies of 'planned' and 'market' systems, which was essentially a North American and European-centric debate of the twentieth century. The natural consequence of the end of this particular period of history is that policy analysis has to respond to the evolution of policy within different capitalist systems. For this, the models evolving in the BRIC and other NICs will come to be increasing influences on the wider international agenda. Most American and European authors have not yet fully woken up to the change in this policy framing; but the leverage of these countries will not be restricted to that on international investment and sovereign debt after the financial crises of 2007–9; it will also be intellectual leverage. The editors of *Government and Policy* are thus not only wise to intensify the journal's relevance in these economies, but are also in the forefront of recognizing that many of the most exciting policy debates of the future will be from, in, or about these economies. A journal with the objectives of *Government and Policy*, of focusing on

internationally comparative and interdisciplinary research, must therefore, inevitably respond to these changes.

At the same time as economic-political change is shifting the intellectual agenda, so is environmental-political change. It is equally important to recognize that the BRIC and NICs response to environmental challenges will differ from those that have dominated North America and Europe. This was first made obvious at the Copenhagen 'Climate Change Summit' in 2009, but the policy debacle there was only one manifestation of a shift in global power that has been underway for some time. 'Sustainability', one of the core themes of *Government and Policy*, has very different scope for those countries engaged in rapid economic growth that need to bring enhanced economic welfare to their citizens than the interpretations of the dominant US or European paradigms. The future is unlikely to derive from the previous policy frames but instead will evolve new approaches in keeping with the locations where the majority of the world's population live. It may also be that the search for harmonized environmental policy solutions will be superseded by more varied approaches. This is a natural consequence of recognizing decentralization and different modes of capitalism. It is being increasingly recognized that attempts by the UN and other supra-national bodies to seek one-size-fits-all, or even a limited range, of environmental policy templates need to be replaced by more flexible approaches. The articles in the journal on environmental policy and governance already lead to conclusions about the need for bottom-up ownership and empowerment if policy is to be more than empty words. Indeed, across many of the articles in the journal, if there is one meta-conclusion to be drawn, it is that political claims need to be treated with circumspection, and that policy effectiveness is only achieved through ownership by people and localities. For the future, it will remain important for the journal to continue to encourage authors to investigate these challenges.

Note

1. Formerly known as Institute for Small Business Affairs (ISBA).

References

- Alm, J. and Buckley, R. M. (1994) Decentralization, privatization, and the solvency of local governments in reforming economies: The case of Budapest, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 12, 333–346.
- Ambler, T., Chittenden, F. and Miccini, A. (2010) *Is Regulation Really Good for Us?*, British Chambers of Commerce, London.
- Bahl, R. and Wallace, S. (1994) Revenue sharing in Russia, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 12, 293–307.
- Beierle, T. C. and Konisky, D. M. (2001) What are we gaining from stakeholder involvement? Observations from environmental planning in the Great Lakes, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 19, 515–528.

- Bennett, R. J. (1983) Editorial: Government and Policy, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 1, 1–3.
- Bennett, R. J. (2008) Reflecting on editorial and challenges: *Government and Policy*; the first 25 years, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 26, 1–16.
- Booth, A. (2003) Decentralisation and poverty alleviation in Indonesia, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 21(2), 181–202.
- Bracke, R. and Albrecht, J. (2007) Competing environmental management standards: How ISO 14001 outnumbered EMAS in Germany, the UK, France, and Sweden, *Environment and Planning C: Government & Policy*, 25, 611–627.
- Bryson, P. J., Cornia G. C. and Wheeler, G. E. (2004) Fiscal decentralisation in the Czech and Slovak Republics: A comparative study of moral hazard, *Environment and Planning C: Government & Policy*, 22, 103–113.
- Bucek, J. and Smith, B. (2000) New approaches to local democracy: Direct democracy, participation and the ‘third sector’, *Environment and Planning C: Government & Policy*, 18, 3–16.
- Bulkeley, H. (2000) Discourse coalitions and the Australian climate change policy network, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 18, 727–748.
- Cowell, R. and Owens, S. (2010) Revisiting ... Governing Space: Planning reform and the politics of sustainability, *Environment and Planning C: Government & Policy*, 28, 952–957.
- Dunford, M. and Perrons, D. (1992) Strategies of modernisation: The market and the state, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 10, 387–405.
- Frankland, E. G. and Cox, R. H. (1995) The legitimisation problems of new democracies: Postcommunist dilemmas in Czechoslovakia and Hungary, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 13, 141–158.
- Gibb, R. A. and Michalak, W. Z. (1993) Foreign debt in the new East-Central Europe: A threat to European integration?, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 11, 69–85.
- Hannon, P. D. and Chaplin, P. (2003) Are incubators good for business? Understanding incubation practice – the challenges for policy, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 21, 861–881.
- Hansford, A., Hasseldine, T. and Haworth, C. (2003) Factors affecting the costs of UK VAT compliance for small and medium-size enterprises, *Environment and Planning C: Government & Policy*, 21, 479–492.
- Hansen, K., Johnassen, K. S. and Larsen, A. (2002) Recommendations for negotiated agreements, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 20, 19–37.
- Hansjürgens, B. (1998) The sulfur dioxide allowance-trading program in the USA: Recent developments and lessons to be learnt, *Environment and Planning C: Government & Policy*, 16, 341–361.
- Jordan, A. (1999) The construction of a multilevel environmental governance system, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 17, 1–17.
- Jordan, A. (2009) Revisiting ... The governance of sustainable development: Taking stock and looking forwards, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 27, 762–765.
- Jordan, A. and Rodríguez-Pose, A. (2008) Environment and Planning C ... The next 25 years, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 26, 477–480.
- Keating, M. (1997) The invention of regions: Political restructuring and territorial government in Western Europe, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 15(4), 383–398.
- King, D. N. and Ma, Y. (2000) Local authority size in theory and practice, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 18, 255–270.
- Kohl, B. (2003) Nongovernmental organizations as intermediaries for decentralization in Bolivia, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 21, 317–331.

- Lovell H., Bulkeley, H. and Owens, S. (2009) Converging agendas? Energy and climate change policies in the UK, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 27, 90–109.
- Majone, G. (1992) Regulatory federalism in the European Community, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 10, 299–316.
- Marshall, J.N., Alderman, N., Wong, C. and Thwaites, W. (1993) The impact of government-assisted management training and development on small and medium-sized enterprises in Britain, *Environment and Planning C: Government & Policy*, 11, 331–348.
- Mathews, R. L. (1988) Tax reform in English-speaking countries, *Environment and Planning C: Government & Policy*, 6, 1–6.
- McLure, C. E. (1984) The evolution of tax advice and the taxation of capital income in the USA, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 2, 251–269.
- Mole, K. (2002) Street-level technocracy in UK small business support: Business Links, personal business advisers, and the Small Business Service, *Environment and Planning C: Government & Policy*, 20, 179–194.
- Mole, K., Hart, M., Roper, S. and Saal, D. (2008) Differential gains from Business Link support and advice: A treatment effect approach, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 26, 315–334.
- Moran, M. (1992) The health-care state in Europe: Convergence or divergence?, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 10, 77–90.
- Niemeyer, S. and Spash, C. L. (2001) Environmental valuation analysis, public deliberation, and their pragmatic synthesis: A critical approach, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 19, 567–586.
- O'Neill, J. (2001) Property, care, and environment, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 19, 695–711.
- Osberghaus, D., Dannenberg, A., Mennel, T. and Sturm, B. (2010) The role of government in adaptation to climate change, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 28, 834–850.
- Ozawa, C. P. (1993) Improving citizen participation in environmental decisionmaking: The use of transformative mediator techniques, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 11, 103–117.
- Priest, S. J. (1999) Business Link services to small and medium-sized enterprises: Targeting, innovation and charging, *Environment and Planning C: Government & Policy*, 17, 177–194.
- Ram, M. and Jones, T. (2008) Ethnic-minority businesses in the UK: A review of research and policy developments, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 26, 352–374.
- Regulska, J. (1997) Decentralization or (re)centralization: Struggle for political power in Poland, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 15, 187–207.
- Regulski, J. (1989) Polish local government in transition, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 7, 423–444.
- Rodríguez-Pose, A. (1996) Growth and institutional change: The influence of the Spanish regionalisation process on economic performance, *Environment and Planning C: Government & Policy*, 14, 71–87.
- Rodríguez-Pose, A., Jordan, A. and Nudd, K. (2011) Knowing our authors, knowing our impact, knowing our audience: The future of Environment and Planning C, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 29(3), 381–396.
- Smith, A. (2000) Policy networks and advocacy coalitions: Explaining policy change and stability in UK industrial pollution policy? *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 18, 95–114.
- Sousa, D. J. (2002) Converging on competitiveness: Garbage cans and the new global economy, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 20, 1–18.
- Spahn, P. B. (1992) Taxation and grants policy in multilevel government: Options for the European community, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 10, 37–50.

- Spash, C. L. (2001) Broadening democracy in environmental policy processes, *Environment and Planning C: Government & Policy*, 19, 475–481.
- Thiers, P. (2002) From grassroots movement to state-coordinated market strategy: The transformation of organic agriculture in China, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 20, 357–373.
- Wang, E. and Song, J. (2008) The political economy of retail change in Chinese cities, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 26, 1197–1226.
- Wei, Y. H. D. (2010) Beyond new regionalism, beyond global production networks: Remaking the Sunan model, China, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 28, 72–96.
- Xiao, L. and Bob Ritchie, B. (2009) Access to finance for high-tech SMEs: Regional differences in China, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 27, 246–262.
- Yearley, S. (2006) Bridging the science-policy divide in urban air-quality management: Evaluating ways to make models more robust through public engagement, *Environment and Planning C: Government & Policy*, 24, 701–714.
- Zhang, Z. (2000) The design and implementation of an international trading scheme for greenhouse gas emissions, *Environment and Planning C: Government & Policy*, 18, 321–337.