

Contemporary Issues in Public Management and Policy: Language Accessibility, Voter Participation and Affirmative Action

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The second issue of this, the twelfth volume of the *Journal of Public Management and Social Policy*, brings together a range of contemporary issues, underscored by the decisions our public administrators, elected officials and courts are going to have to make in a continually changing society.

The opening article by Nadia Rubaii-Barrett and Lois Recascino Wise contributes to the ever growing literature on e-government; an area of research that has highlighted the potential for increased efficiency and accountability. However, Rubaii-Barrett and Wise, rightfully focus on the associated digital divide that exist with the expanded use of technologies, such as websites, by government. In particular, Rubaii-Barrett and Wise's article focuses on state government websites and their accessibility to ethnic minorities with limited English language proficiency. They argue that states may soon have a legal responsibility to make their web-based services accessible to non-English speakers. Moreover, they find that the majority of states are doing very little to respond to the needs of language minorities.

Language and government accessibility, are again discussed in the second article by Christine Thurlow Brenner. In this study, the focus is on local governments and Latino populations. In particular, Brenner explores variations among language accessibility across government services and aspects while also considering state policy as a factor in the overall research findings.

The first two articles recognize critical issues in contemporary public management, in particular the relationships between language and government accessibility. The third article by F. Erik Brooks, Nathan W. Pino, and Kyong Hee Chee, takes a look at civic engagement and voter participation, by focusing on voting behavior

among younger African Americans in the 2004 presidential election. Their survey findings suggest distinct characteristic differences among voters and non-voters within the “hip-hop generation.” They conclude that this “generation” has the potential, through attention and support, shape public policy.

The first three articles, through their own area of focus, have recognized the role of social policy as part of the contemporary issues of the public sector. The fourth article, a special contribution to the journal, by Norma Riccucci, reflects on the impact the courts have had on affirmative action cases, while arguing for a recognized need of “numeric goals” within organizations. Riccucci’s article comes at a critical point in the history of affirmative action as the new Supreme Court has recently gathered for session with two new justices and the probability of hearing an affirmative action case high on its agenda.

This issue concludes with a review by Cryshanna A. Jackson of a 2005 book on the ins and outs of landing a federal job. Also in this issue is a new section, Research Resources, which provides a comprehensive listing of literature associated with representative bureaucracy. The bibliography, compiled by Tony Carrizales and Leila Sadeghi, provides, as the section suggest, a resource for both practitioners and scholars of related literature to an important topic. In addition to articles, symposium, book reviews, we also welcome research resource contributions that are readership will benefit from.

We would like to thank again are committed editorial board and journal staff for their continued work, which has allowed us to complete our twelfth volume of the *Journal of Public Management of Social Policy*. We would also like to thank the contributors for this issue, who considered this journal as an outlet for their research.

Contributors

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Christine Thurlow Brenner is an assistant professor of public policy and administration at Rutgers University. Dr. Brenner researches the public administration implications of communities undergoing major demographic change, U.S.-Mexico border issues, and local government use of information communication technology. Dr. Brenner consults for local municipalities on Latino immigrant integration and public finance issues. Email: ctbrenn@camden.rutgers.edu.

F. Erik Brooks is an assistant professor of political science and director of the master of public administration program at Georgia Southern University. His research interests include Civil Rights, Public Policy, American Politics, and Public Administration. His latest book is entitled: *Pursuing a Promise: A History of African Americans at Georgia Southern University* is published by Mercer University Press, 2006.

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Norma Riccucci is professor of public administration at Rutgers University, Newark Campus. Her research and teaching interests lie in the broad area of public management. In 2005, she was inducted into the National Academy of Public Administration. She has been awarded several honors, including ASPA's 2006 Charles H. Levine Award.

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Lois Recascino Wise is a professor in the School of Public & Environmental Affairs at Indiana University. Her research and teaching interests center on the broad area of management policies and practices, with a special focus on the public sector. Her research in the diversity field focuses on the body of knowledge about the consequences of human diversity for work organizations and individual performance. Her work may be found in numerous US and international journals. Email to: wisel@indiana.edu.