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Editor's Introduction

Representative Bureaucracy, Recidivism, Education, Public Trust, and Citizen Evaluation of Government

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The *Journal of Public Management and Social Policy* concludes its twenty-third volume with articles that examine issues pertaining to representative bureaucracy, recidivism, education, public trust, and citizen evaluation of government. The volume begins with exploration of the subject of representative bureaucracy and concludes with citizen evaluation of government in an emergent democracy. The seven articles assembled in the volume reflect the reach of topics that are particularly important to, and are welcomed by *JPMSP*.

The first article, “Representative Bureaucracy, Street-level Bureaucrats and Bureaucracy Discretion in Federal Disaster Assistance,” by Jason Rivera explores the role of representative bureaucracy and bureaucratic discretion in the allocation of federal disaster assistance to Hurricane survivors. Using focus groups and informant interviews, the study finds that, while FEMA’s home inspectors are diverse with reference to places of origin in the United States, they are not diverse in reference to race and gender. While the role that race and gender play in resource allocation was unclear, inspectors’ regions of origin are associated with allocation of aid to Hurricane survivors. Accordingly, the article concludes with an argument that the concept of representative bureaucracy should not be restricted squarely to issues of race and gender, but to other potentially crucial identifiers.

In the second article, “How Promising is the Second Chance Act in Reducing Recidivism among Male Ex-offenders in Alabama, Georgia, and Mississippi,” Jonny Amasa-Amang and Gina Scutelnicu deploy multivariate analysis to evaluate the factors that explicate recidivism, and assess the effect of the Second Chance Act (SCA) on recidivism among young adult males in the three states surveyed. Overall, the study’s findings show that race and ethnicity, as well as socioeconomic status, are significant variables in predicting reduction in recidivism in Georgia and Mississippi during the three-year period covered by the study, following implementation of the SCA.

The third article—“The Economic Impact of Changing Water Levels: A Regional Economic Analysis of Lake Thurmond,” by Robert Carey, Lori Dickes, and Elizabeth Crouch—uses regression analysis in conjunction with an input-output model to estimate the median monthly economic effect of increases in lake level on employment, output, disposable

income, and net local government revenue on the six counties bordering the lake. The study concludes that the Thurmond Lake elevations have statistically significant effects on regional economic activity but the direction of impact depends on various factors such as size and diversity of each county's economic activity as well as its nearness to commercial centers.

Barbara Patrick and Aaron Rollins in the fourth article titled "Shifting the Blame in Public Education: Are there Parallels between Opinion and Policy?" assess several assumptions regarding citizens' confidence on the accountability of educational outcomes and funding sanctions on underperforming schools. The study results suggest that citizens feel that parents and students, not educators, should be held more accountable for educational outcomes. Furthermore, the study notes that since targeted groups were less likely to support funding sanctions for underperforming schools, their inclusion in the public policy process may help in achieving performance reforms that align well with the wishes of the citizens.

Robert Maranto, Sarah Moore, and Gary Ritter, in the fifth article, "Does KIPP Grow Advanced? Analyzing KIPP Campuses over Time," deploy the Common Core data to examine demographic changes in 81 Knowledge Is Power Program schools that operated between 1995 and 2011. The study finds that KIPP schools on average serve poor minority students than their comparable counterparts in the host traditional public school districts, and there is no empirical evidence that these students are getting more advantaged over time. Given the lack of quantitative evidence, the authors suggest that policymakers supporting these types of programs should work more toward their expansion to other similar charter organizations.

In the sixth article, "Explaining Political Trust among African Americans," Maruice Mangum uses data from the 1996 National Black Election Study and ordered probit to examine four explanations of African American political trust. The results show that social location, economic evaluations, and orientation to race affect African American political trust, while government beneficence does not. Mangum concludes that group-centric perceptions of African Americans' conditions play a crucial role in explaining their political trust because these orientations are rooted in the racial experiences of the people of African descent.

In the seventh article, "Citizen Evaluation of Government and Confidence in Public Institutions in Emergent Islamic Democracies: Evidence from Afghanistan," Nicholas Alozie and Andrew Ewoh utilize the 2008 national survey data of the Afghan people to explore citizen evaluation of government and confidence in public institutions. The study finds that, while the prevailing theories offer viable explanations, the effect of each factor varies according to both the level of government and the public institution within its jurisdiction. Alozie and Ewoh conclude that the prospects of democracy in Afghanistan will depend on democracy's ability to deliver both its stated ideals and expected dividends.

In sum, I will like to thank all the authors and *JPMSP*'s dedicated reviewers for making this edition and volume of the Journal a success. I appreciate Marc Fudge, our Managing Editor, for his efforts in facilitating our review process up to the publication stage. The ideas and thought provoking questions raised in the articles presented in this volume will help our readers to, as always, deepen their understanding of issues pertaining to representative bureaucracy, reduction of recidivism, public education, public trust, and the crucial role citizens play in evaluating their government especially in emerging democracies.