

From the editors

This issue introduces a new forum for debate and discussion of important ideas in the scholarly study of public policy. Our first ever discussion section is anchored in an essay by Keith Dowding, Andrew Hindmoor, and Aaron Martin entitled “The Comparative Policy Agendas Project: Theory, Measurement and Findings.” The article reviews and critiques the contributions of the American and comparative versions of the Policy Agendas Project, created by Frank Baumgartner, a member of our editorial board, and Bryan Jones. For the purposes of full disclosure, Senior Editor Peter John and I were part of the UK Policy Agendas Project. Dowding, Hindmoor and Martin consider the measurement of attention to policy topics that lies at the heart of the project—what it means and does not mean. They further assess conclusions about stability and change in policy agendas that have been drawn from analyzing Policy Agendas Project data. Specifically, they argue that the notion of punctuated equilibrium is not the most appropriate way of describing the patterns observed.

This provocative essay is accompanied by two exceptional invited commentaries. In the first, James Adams argues that policy positions and policy attention are closely connected, and the latter can be used to measure the former. Bryan Jones, co-creator of the Policy Agendas Project, situates his response within a contribution of his own: the notion of measurement systems. These responses are followed by a brief rejoinder by Dowding, Hindmoor, and Martin.

Collectively, this debate provides an intriguing and important view of the study of policy agendas that I am certain will be of significant interest to our readers and it is a fantastic beginning to this new feature of the *Journal*. My co-editors and I are deeply grateful to the authors of these pieces for their careful work, for their patience, and most of all, for these important ideas.

Anthony Bertelli
Senior Executive Editor