Introducing CPAR's Highly Cited Articles

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Since its launch in 2002, the Chinese Public Administration Review (CPAR) has continued to provide readers with high-quality, cutting-edge, and insightful articles related to a plethora of public administration and public policy topics. The journal has established a vibrant academic platform for exchanging ideas, sharing knowledge, and nurturing debate. In this virtual issue, CPAR is pleased to release its highly cited articles (>10 citations in *Google Scholar*) to help readers look back on some of the most fascinating studies published in the past two decades.

To begin with, there are two incisive discussions of several interesting theoretical issues of public administration. One is Huang's research (2002), which serves as an informative guide to deepen our understanding of the nature of public policy. His study tackles the research question from the angle of problem-solving and argues that public policy has not only three positive functions – namely the production, allocation, and exchange of public interests – through which objective differences can be reduced and a solution to public problems can be achieved, but also one negative function, that is, the consumption function, which cannot be thoroughly eliminated but should be restrained to minimize its adverse effects. Another exceptional article comes from Rosenbloom (2017), who focuses on the normative dimension of public administration and claims that efficiency has not always been and need not be the dominant public administrative value. In order to analyze public administrative values in a more organized way, his paper puts forward a framework to distinguish between public administrative values that are intrinsic or ancillary to agencies' core missions and those that are mission extrinsic. By doing so, the author refines the extant frameworks for analyzing public administrative values and moves the analysis of public values forward.

In addition to the scholars' sharp thoughts on theoretical issues, some comparative studies on the recently emerging forms of governance are equally noteworthy. Adopting a comparative perspective, Funkhouser and Pu (2004) examine the origin, evolving definition, underlying values, and organizational structures of performance auditing in the U.S. and China. Their piece emphasizes the important roles played by performance auditing in improving government accountability and public trust and pinpoints the similar opportunities and challenges the two countries face. Using the state of Victoria and the federal government in Australia as case studies, Smith and Teicher (2006) argue that through refocusing the purposes and tools of government, governance and service delivery can be improved under e-government initiatives. The authors also notice that despite the positive effects brought about by e-government, the public sector faces challenges regarding managing e-government setups, such as interagency coordination and the design of services for citizens.

Other similarly strong work focusing on China has also appeared in CPAR. For example, Liu's work (2008) examines an increasingly crucial issue; that is, how to cultivate civic engagement and increase social solidarity in a rapidly transitioning society. By capitalizing on the case of community governance innovation in Shanghai, his article terms citizens' participation in neighborhood governance as "empowered autonomy". The empirical evidence in his paper demonstrates that state-led democratic governance can expand the institutional spaces

and resources for local residents to extend their horizontal networks and thus exert an empowering effect on civic development in China. Similar to the work of Liu (2008), Yang (2002) examines how institutional context impacts the effectiveness of citizen engagement. Based on data collected from interviews and a focus group, his study examines why authentic citizen participation has no root in Danwei society and how the New City Community Building movement promotes city residents' self-governance and enhances their sense of citizenship. With a deep examination of the accompanying challenges and problems of the movement, his findings provide a strong foundation for other researchers to conduct further investigation on the cultivation of civil society and political democratization in China. Moreover, scholars continue to focus on issues regarding public policy innovation in China. By looking into the policy initiation, implementation and diffusion process of Yantai's "Service Promise System" in detail, Foster's article (2005) unveils the forces and mechanisms of public policy innovation and innovation diffusion in contemporary China at large. His argument on how and when innovative policies are generated and transferred to other jurisdictions deepens our understanding of the dynamics of Chinese politics and the functioning of the Chinese administrative system, as well as offers enlightening clues for future research on policy innovation and diffusion. Last but not least, scholars also show a strong continuous interest in the topic of China's administrative reforms. Lan (2002) reviews the trajectory of China's administrative reforms at the local level. By assessing the impacts of China's local government reforms, identifying the deep-seeded problems arising therefrom, and proposing several directions for further changes, his work offers us a broad view of China's administrative reform, from which we can witness the successes and challenges of China's political modernization and reflect on the lessons learnt from this process.

The above retrospection of these highly cited articles is a small sample of CPAR's contributions to the field of public administration (PA) research over the last twenty years. It showcases the breadth of research perspectives, the richness of research themes, and the plurality of research methods the journal encompasses, as well as, broadly speaking, the vitality and dynamism of PA research. Although it cannot exhaust all the outstanding studies appearing in CPAR, this can greatly help readers grasp the research paradigms of some core issues and the topical trend in the field of PA. Emerging scholars can surely benefit from this review and ponder on what they can contribute to further strengthen the link between macro (institutional) and micro (psychological/behavioral) levels of research in the Chinese PA system.

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