

## Call for Papers

### *Journal of Behavioral Public Administration Symposium*

# Behavioral and Experimental Approaches to Government Transparency and Accountability

Guest co-editors:

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Both transparency and accountability are a hallmark for democratic government (Hood 2010; Bauhr and Grimes 2014). The link between these two concepts seems fairly straightforward and relies on a basic principal-agent relationship: when more information about the principal is available, the agent is enabled to better track its behavior. Increased transparency simply improves accountability.

Indeed, at present, theory and practice tend to rely on an assumption that greater transparency will consistently contribute to greater accountability of the processes that govern the provision of public goods and services. This perspective assumes citizens or other actors to be rational consumers of information, that viable mechanisms for account holding exist, and posits that disruptions to the link between transparency and accountability are attributable to issues with the provision of information.

However, in recent years a growing number of studies have come to challenge conventional wisdom, noting that in many instances individuals do not respond to the disclosure of government information in ways that are (ostensibly) rational (e.g., Meijer 2014; Porumbescu et al. 2017). Indeed, various experiments in the behavioral sciences have taught us that information use by either citizens or public officials is biased and only partially rational (Chong et al. 2015; Grimmelikhuijsen et al. 2017; Olsen 2015).

This growing vein of research highlights the importance of complementing the extant institutional focus with a better understanding of the role individual behavior plays in determining the effects of transparency on accountability.

Therefore, this symposium encourages the submission of papers that offer novel insights into the role individuals play (both citizens and public officials) in shaping the relationship between transparency and the accountability of public service provision.

This call for papers encourages submissions that deal with the following topics:

- Experimental work into the relation between transparency and accountability
- Effects of information disclosure on citizen behavior and attitudes
- Effects of information disclosure on civil servant behavior and attitudes
- Moderating factors that shape the link between transparency and accountability
- Psychological theories to better understand the (failing) link between transparency and accountability

Proposals should be no longer than 1200 words (all inclusive) and outline the problem the study intends to address, proposed research design and projected contributions of the study.

#### **Timeline:**

1 October 2018 – Send out call for proposals/extended abstracts;

1 November 2018 – Deadline for proposals;

1 December 2018 – Acceptance/Rejection notification;

1 July 2019 – Full paper submission deadline.

Authors of accepted manuscripts will be encouraged to join a panel proposal organized by the symposium editors for the 6<sup>th</sup> Global Conference on Transparency Research in Rio de Janeiro. Participation in the panel is strictly optional.

Please note that final manuscripts will be submitted by the guest co-editors to JBPA for double-blind peer review with final decisions regarding publication being made by JBPA editors. The submitted papers will need to conform to JBPA's guidelines for paper submissions: <http://www.journal-bpa.org/index.php/jbpa/about/submissions>.

#### **About JBPA:**

*Journal of Behavioral Public Administration* ([www.journal-bpa.org](http://www.journal-bpa.org)) is a peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary open access journal that focuses on behavioral and experimental research in public administration, broadly defined. The journal welcomes behavioral and experimental work that advances theory, applied research about nudge tactics or other practical reforms, replications of previous experimental work, and studies with null findings (provided they are well designed and sufficiently powered). Given its multidisciplinary orientation, *JBPA* welcomes articles from across the behavioral sciences, including economics, public policy, political science, psychology, sociology, law, communication, and even biology -- provided they have relevance for public administration theory or practice.

*JBPA* encourages submissions of both basic scholarly and applied work conducted by academics or practitioners. Likewise, *JBPA's* readership includes not only behavioral scientists with an interest in public administration but also policy-makers and practitioners in the public and nonprofit sectors. Submission types include research articles, research letters, perspectives and practices, and research syntheses.

**Research articles** are up to 4,000 words, excluding appendices.

**Research letters** are up to 2,000 words in length, excluding appendices. They include applied trials (e.g., nudge tactics by government agencies), replications, or other empirical studies that can be presented in a more concise format.

**Perspectives and practices** are submissions that focus on theoretical perspectives on behavioral public administration, or that discuss practical issues involved in applying behavioral science in government or nonprofit settings. These submission are up to *4,000 words* in length.

**Research syntheses** are up to *8,000 words* and include meta-analyses or systematic reviews that seek to integrate and learn from a body of previous empirical work related to behavioral public administration.

## References

Bauhr, M., & Grimes, M. (2014). Indignation or resignation: The implications of transparency for societal accountability. *Governance*, 27(2), 291-320.

Chong, A., Ana L. De La O, Dean Karlan, and Leonard Wantchekon. (2015). Does Corruption Information Inspire the Fight or Quash the Hope? A Field Experiment in Mexico on Voter Turnout, Choice, and Party Identification. *The Journal of Politics*, 77(1), 55-71.

Grimmelikhuijsen, S., Jilke, S., Olsen, A. L., & Tummers, L. (2017). Behavioral public administration: Combining insights from public administration and psychology. *Public Administration Review*, 77(1), 45-56.

Hood, C. (2010). Accountability and transparency: Siamese twins, matching parts, awkward couple?. *West European Politics*, 33(5), 989-1009.

Meijer, A., (2014). Transparency. In: M. Bovens, R.E. Goodin, and T. Schillemans, eds. *The Oxford handbook of public accountability*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 507–521.

Olsen, A. L. (2015). Citizen (dis) satisfaction: An experimental equivalence framing study. *Public Administration Review*, 75(3), 469-478.

Porumbescu, G., Bellé, N., Cucciniello, M., & Nasi, G. (2017). Translating policy transparency into policy understanding and policy support: Evidence from a survey experiment. *Public Administration*, 95(4), 990-1008.