

Étienne Charbonneau,  
Nicholas Bautista-  
Beauchesne and  
Luc Bernier

## Public servants' appreciation for themes in public administration scholarship

*Abstract:* One of the defining characteristics of Canadian Public Administration is its singular coverage of topics. In this research, we extend Wake Carroll and Kpessa's (2007) work to see if the themes found in *Canadian Public Administration (CPA)* for the 2008-2016 period are in line with the topics published for the 2000-2006 period. We also compare the contemporary topics published in *CPA* to the *Australian Journal of Public Administration (AJPA)*. We then surveyed Canadian public servants about their interests. Our results show that they express more interest towards the themes published in *CPA* in the last decade than during 2001-2006, and more interest than the ones published in *AJPA* in the last decade.

*Sommaire :* Une caractéristique marquante de l'administration publique canadienne consiste dans l'originalité du traitement des sujets. Cette recherche s'inspire de l'œuvre de Wake Carroll et Kpessa (2007), afin d'évaluer dans quelle mesure les thèmes abordés dans *Administration Publique du Canada (APC)* durant la période 2008-2016 vont dans le sens des sujets abordés durant la période de 2000-2006. Nous comparons également les sujets contemporains publiés dans *APC* avec ceux publiés dans *l'Australian Journal of Public Administration (AJPA)*. Nous avons ensuite effectué un sondage de préférences auprès de fonctionnaires canadiens. Nos résultats démontrent que les fonctionnaires canadiens sont plus intéressés par les sujets abordés dans *APC* durant la dernière décennie que pendant la période de 2000-2006, et que par ceux publiés dans *AJPA* durant la dernière décennie.

According to Pollitt (2017: 557), the field of public administration has been historically strongly tied to practitioners and their interests. Dubnick (2018) opined that these ties were so strong as to hold back public administration to blossom as a well-regarded social science discipline. However, for many researchers, the applied nature of public administration, as measured by relevance, is uncontroversial in Canada (Lindquist 2018: 422) and abroad (Nesbit et al. 2011: i15). *Canadian Public Administration*, the journal of the Institute of Public Administration in Canada, has held a longstanding tradition that articles should be of interest to both communities. A debate for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Canadian Public Administration* in 1982 between David M.

Étienne Charbonneau is Canada Research Chair in Comparative Public Management, ENAP, Montreal, Quebec. Nicholas Bautista-Beauchesne is doctoral candidate at ENAP. Luc Bernier is Jarislowsky Chair in Public Sector Management, University of Ottawa. The authors thank Dr. Andrea Migone for letting them survey members of the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC).

Cameron, a professor at Dalhousie University, and Michael Pitfield, Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary of the Cabinet, encapsulates this tension between academia and practice. Pitfield (1982: 495) opined that public administration is an engaged profession and discipline, and which “(r)levance is the key, the test.” Cameron agreed that the profession and the discipline must be linked. However, he argued “that the value of the discipline must be judged not merely by its utility to practitioners but, ultimately, by its contribution to the public good” (Cameron 1982: 496). Remnants of this debate persist: the puzzle of how to accurately investigate the link between scholars and practitioners is unresolved. As we will detail, the tracking of research themes which have animated public administration scholarship has been one option. Inter-journal and inter-jurisdictional comparisons have constituted other avenues. However, the mutually reinforcing relationship between academic work and practitioner readership necessitates some measure of convergence and dialogue, as well as some degree of attention and reflection.

A rich literature engages the complex relationship between public servants and public administration scholars, which fails to reach a consensus. One side contends that public administration scholarship is progressively drifting away from practitioner interest, while the other side contends that academics and practitioners still maintain a privileged proximity, where select scholars hold considerable ideational influence with their publications. Considering these unresolved positions, we ask if Canadian academics are primarily writing for their colleagues and themselves; or are they endeavouring to tackle the current challenges of government identified by practitioners?

The state of scholar-practitioner relations in public administration remains an open question. The bleaker diagnosis, as Pollitt (2016) argues, underlines that the narrow and ever-more rigorous research published by public administration scholars is presently moving away from the interests of practitioners. This argument is echoed by Cepiku (2011: 135), who equally points to the disjunction between practitioner interests and research topics in Italy. The ascertainment that practitioners do not write in academic journals like they used to (Raadschelders and Lee 2011) is another argument for that position.

In opposition, the more positive outlook shows that during much of the 1990 s, practitioners’ issues would have driven much of the research agenda in Canada (Doerr 2007: 521). Others point out that practitioners can equally author sophisticated scholarship (Wettenhall 1997: 191). Many of the practitioners involved at CAPPAs-affiliated schools reported being active researchers (O’Neill and Wilkins 2018). Likewise, authors have argued that the gap between practitioners and academics is small in Canada (Kernaghan 2009; Gow and Wilson 2014), and that prominent Canadian academics are able to

point out the practical repercussions of their studies (Borins 2003). To vouch for public servants' interest for academic research, at the end of his tenure as editor of *Public Administration Review*, James Perry (2017: 157) commented that the articles published in the "Theory to practice" section suggesting usable lessons for practitioners from the empirical research were among the most downloaded in that academic journal.

A mid-way viewpoint signals the existence of a fine line between academics who are revered by practitioners for the relevance of their work, and others who enjoy little impact on decision-makers as well as suffering from a fledgling academic respectability (Kelly and Dodds 2012). Further, to illustrate why some professors do not engage much with public servants, a recent survey of 144 chairs, deans and department heads of NASPAA-accredited Public Administration programs in the United States showed a difference between doctoral-granting institutions and those which focused entirely on their MPA programs. Peer-review articles were more important, and practitioners' outreach was deemed significantly less important in the former than in the latter (Neely and Cogburn 2017: 483).

In the Canadian context, Migone and Brock (2017) analyzed three surveys of 190 public service executives, 374 Public Administration and Public Policy scholars, and 302 university professors in a myriad of fields, to conclude that public administration and public policy scholars, in similar proportions to their colleagues in other fields, never interact with governments. In contrast, a few scholars provide the bulk of formal interactions with government officials. In roughly similar proportions, academics in and outside of public administration and public policy "are relatively unlikely to sit on boards, panels or committees, nor do they attend many workshops or training sessions with public servants. It is also uncommon for them to receive requests for the production of research reports from public service officials (...)" (Migone and Brock 2017: 376). In sum, the picture of the ever-present tango between academic researchers and public servants is blurry.

In this article, we will assess if the contributors of *Canadian Public Administration*, the flagship national public administration journal in Canada, have produced research aligning with the declared interests of Canadian practitioners. To offer empirical evidence, we present first the thematic coding of all articles published in *CPA* between 2008 and 2016. Second, we present the results of a survey of Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC) members done in February of 2018 on these same topics. The present article aims at testing four claims in order to analyse for whom Canadian academics write in public administration. The first claim is that the themes covered in *Canadian Public Administration* in 2008-2016 are different than the ones covered in 2001-2006. The second claim is that contemporary themes are of greatest interest to practitioners than old ones. Using the similarity

of the Australian and Canadian cases, the third claim is that the themes covered in *CPA* are different than the ones covered in the *Australian Journal of Public Administration*. The last claim is that Canadian public servants find the contemporary themes covered in *CPA* more interesting than the themes covered in *AJPA*. By testing these claims, we aim to validate if our distinctive Canadian model of scholarship is of relative interest to Canadian public servants.

### **Contemporary themes studied in public administration research**

Taking stock of the themes studied by public administration scholars has been a mainstay through the years. Notable examples include the topical content analysis of nine English-language journals, including *CPA*, between 1970 and 1976 (Bowman and Hajjar 1978), *PAR* between 1940 and 1991 (Bingham and Bowen 1994), and *AJPA* between 1989 and 1995 (Wettenhall 1997). In countries other than Canada, recent articles examining national trends in public administration research were done in the Philippines (Brillantes and Fernandez 2013), Russia (Gulrajani and Moloney 2012), South Africa (Cameron 2013), and Taiwan (Hung et al. 2012). As a starting point for analyzing the recurrence of themes in the field, we looked at how past scholars have employed different strategies to assess the prevalence of topics and academic epicentres of interest. Starting with Fitzpatrick and colleagues (2011), the authors identified 151 articles addressing comparative public administration, between 2000 and 2009. The most frequent topics were reform, accountability/performance, monitoring/evaluation, New Public Management, ethics/corruption/public sector values, budgeting/public finance, and decentralization. Vogel (2014) compared more than 6,800 articles from top public administration journals and organization studies journals between 2000 and 2010. Over that period, in the eight public administration journals analyzed, the most frequent topics featured were New Public Management, public service motivation, governance networks, public-private partnerships and performance management (Vogel 2014: 391).

Pertaining to keyword analyses, Van Thiel and Bouwman (2017: 526) studied 1,075 articles published over 30 years in the *International Journal of Public Sector Management (IJPSM)*. The authors find that the word “performance” remained frequent in titles and abstracts after 2008, and that performance management articles are the most cited in *IJPSM*. They also mention that “reform,” “change,” “leadership,” “accounting” became more frequent over the last ten years.

Following the same type of analysis, Juliani and De Oliveira (2016) scoured the World of Science Public Administration database and the Scopus Business, Management and Accounting database, in order to identify

respectively 1,148 and 1,706 articles between 2004 and 2014 with terms like public administration, public management public sector or public service in their titles. The most frequent keywords in public administration between 2004 and 2014 featured in the following order: New Public Management, public service motivation, public sector organizations, performance, governance, ethics, local government, job satisfaction, reform and innovation (Juliani and De Oliveira 2016: 1036).

Providing a panorama of topics covered in *Public Management Review* (PMR) over two periods (1999-2002 and 2015-2016), Osborne (2017) contrasted the most popular topics. For the 2015-2016 period in PMR, the most frequent topics were human resources management, performance management and accountability, strategic management and marketing, network and governance, innovation and change, and citizen involvement and co-production (Osborne 2017: 110).

Using the 70 most-cited articles published in the field between 1997 and 2015, St. Clair, Hicks and Isett (2017: 332) identified that fifty-seven out of the seventy articles were related to five themes: performance (16), governance (12), networks (11), collaboration (10), and e-government (8). This exercise has seldom been done for the Canadian strand of public administration scholarship. We explore these in the following section as Canadian public administration scholars also stand to gain from a little introspection.

### **Contemporary themes studied in public administration research in Canada and Australia**

To tackle their investigation on the subjects which interested academics and practitioners in the field of Public Administration, McConkey and Dutil (2006) cross-examined an extensive literature review of 950 articles from forty-eight scholarly journals, with an electronic 29-item survey of 312 IPAC members, to assess practitioners' level of preferences for research topics. The authors note a disconnect between academics and practitioners in so far as scholars pay far more attention to regulation, health policy, organizational culture, environmental policy and democratic dialogue, instead of topics dear to practitioners. However, the authors do note a certain convergence on organizational culture and leadership, which appeared to be a top priority of practitioners at the time like leadership, collaboration within the public sector, information sharing, and accountability.

A year after the publication of McConkey and Dutil's study, Wake Carroll and Kpessa (2007) enquired about the content of CPA on the occasion of its 50-year anniversary. By investigating the topics of every article published in the journal since 1958, the authors drew on previous categorizations to

generate their coding scheme, in order to sort through and classify the different subjects of interest. Their findings point to a slight shift of academic interest towards public policy, as well as the more sector-specific subject of provincial and local administration. However, the authors underline the consistency of *CPA*, in publishing articles which pertain to the *core* of Public Administration, such as administrative theory and political and legal institutions. Interestingly, as the authors compared their findings with those of McConkey and Dutil's (2006), they note that *CPA* had published far fewer articles than other journals that pertained to the first four most recurring topics (i.e., regulation, health policy, organizational culture and environmental policy) (Wake Carroll and Kpessa 2007: 487). Furthermore, this disparity was even more severe with respect to the topics which interested practitioners: day-to-day management remained a top preoccupation of IPAC members but featured proportionately less in *CPA*.

Engaging in a similar endeavour, Althaus's (2015) article examines the topics of published articles within *AJPA* from 1970 to 2015. Drawing on the categorizations of her previous investigations of *AJPA* subject matters (1970 to 1995 and 1996-2015), the author analyzed the published articles according to topics of interest. It is no surprise that the author calls for further collaboration between academics and practitioners (such as engaging on the post-NPM public administration), as failure to do so would incontrovertibly harm *AJPA*'s prospects (Althaus 2015: 236-237). As for the articles' subjects, the author finds a shift of scholarly interest over the 45-year period, as articles on *public management*, *policy-making*, and *accountability* seem to be surging. Inversely, fewer articles are published on the subjects of *administrative and organizational theory*, *personnel and training*, and *institutional and statutory authorities* (Althaus 2015: 234-235).

## Data and methodology

For our analyses, we rely on two sources of data. First, in order to compare the subjects that have garnered the most scholarly attention in *CPA* and *AJPA*, the descriptive statistics in this article rely on both previous research data (Wake Carroll and Kpessa 2007; Althaus 2015), as well as a compilation of all the articles in *CPA* from 2008 to 2016. Using Wake Carroll and Kpessa's (2007) work to canvass *CPA* articles from 1957 to 2007, a database was constructed to record the subjects of all the articles from 2008 to 2016, in order to pick up where the authors left off. Furthermore, this article also used Althaus's (2015) review to canvass all the articles in *CPA* from 2008 to 2016 in the same way Althaus did for all the articles in *AJPA* from 1970 to 2015. Hence, we coded the compiled *CPA* articles from 2008 to 2016 using Wake Carroll and Kpessa's (2007) coding matrix, as well as Althaus's (2015). Articles were coded twice, that is once per matrix of respectively 12 and 17

codes, for comparison purposes. As such, prior to assigning codes, we identified the aim of the study as formulated in the introduction, and sometimes in the abstract. To illustrate, we shall use the example of the second most cited article in *CPA* since 2011: "*Strengthening the ties that bind? An analysis of aboriginal–municipal inter-governmental agreements in British Columbia*" (Nelles and Alcantara 2011). In the article's abstract, the announced purpose statement is:

This article examines ninety-three such agreements to construct a typology of aboriginal–municipal inter-governmental partnerships in British Columbia (Nelles and Alcantara 2011: 315).

Again, we coded the declared aim of studies (this research does...; we aim at...; in this article, we will...), who were seldom formulated in the abstract. Thus, the article was coded once through Wake Carroll and Kpessa's (2007) matrix, under "*Political and Legal Institutions and Processes*," and once through Althaus's (2015) matrix, under "*Federalism and Inter-Governmental Relations*." Emulating Pollitt (2017: 561) and Althaus (1997: 143), we only registered one code in each matrix. However, unlike Pollitt (2017) and Althaus (1997, 2015) all articles were coded by the first and second authors, and not by a lone coder. This minimises the chances that the coding is idiosyncratic.

In order to assure that codes have internal validity, the first author independently coded 72 of the 236 articles, which were the first two articles of the 36 *CPA* issues. After that first wave of coding, the two coders went over each of the two codes for the 72 articles. They agreed for 93 of the 144 codes, for an inter-coder reliability of 65%. They then discussed their disagreements and corrected the coding in order to reach a 100% agreement level. Later, the first author reviewed all remaining 164 articles and modified only 15 codes from the second author.

Second, we surveyed IPAC members, as McConkey and Dutil (2006) did a decade ago. Respondents were asked to rate their interest for the topics listed by Wake Carroll and Kpessa (2007) for 2001-2006 in *CPA* but also Althaus's (2015) for 2007-2014 in *AJPA*. We consolidated codes from overlapping themes in Wake Carroll and Kpessa (2007) and Althaus (2015). For example, the final merged code to address the legal studies aspect of the field – which included the labels used in Wake Carroll and Kpessa, and Althaus – was the following: *administrative law, legal issues and inter-jurisdictional relations*. This process endeavoured to avoid the pitfalls of over-essentialising specific research areas, all the while seeking to provide a clear codification which encompassed as many research topics without overlap. The Wake Carroll and Kpessa (2007) and Althaus (2015) merged codes totalled at 18 such codes and presented to respondents in order to assess their level of interest. We used a six-point Likert scale to maximize our chances to calibrate

the interest of practitioners, but also to minimize the chances of getting a heavily skewed distribution of answers.

As a reminder, we were investigating the topics that practitioners' deemed most interesting. The survey was sent in the spring of 2018 to 3,311 IPAC members that were not listed as academics. One hundred invitations bounced back as incorrect addresses. That left us with 951 responses out of 3,211, for a contact rate of 29.6%. Six hundred and eighty-five (685) respondents finished the survey, and a bit less than 650 expressed themselves on the different items presented in Table 1. As a comparative benchmark, McConkey and Dutil (2006) achieved 312 respondents out of then IPAC's 2,500 members, for a response rate of about 12.5%, and Gow (1994) achieved a 28.6% response rate for 2,697 IPAC members. That being said, it is next to impossible to gauge how our sample of IPAC members differs from all public servants in Canada. First, there is no "pan-Canadian registry of public servants" in Canada. Second, in some provinces like Quebec, Treasury Board Secretariats do not even know how many public servants are on the payroll. Third, it is fair to say that public servants who joined IPAC are unlike their colleagues who are not members (Gow 1994: 29): they are probably more interested in continual education and academic research than the later. Finally, this tendency is even more acute for IPAC members who decided to complete our survey.

Thus, we are able to compare the results of the survey declared interests of Canadian practitioners in 2018 to topics featured in *CPA*—both historically (Wake Carroll and Kpessa 2007) and contemporaneously (our first step)—but also to topics featured in the *AJPA* historically (Althaus 2015) and contemporaneously (again, our first step). Obviously, what appears in *CPA* does not reflect all of the relevant work that Canadian academics contribute to the field, a field with numerous publishing venues. Nevertheless, this research note will compare 238 new articles to 445 previously analyzed articles in two journals, and then weight them according to a survey of close to 650 Canadian public servants.

## Results

The results of the comparison between the themes for *CPA* articles in 2001-2006, as compiled by Wake Carroll and Kpessa, and the themes for *CPA* articles in 2008-2016, which we coded, are presented respectively in the third [B] and fourth [C] columns of Table 2.

The themes covered in *CPA* in 2008-2016 are different than the ones covered in 2001-2006. Since the first half of the 2000 s, there have been a noticeable increase of articles about "Social/economic issues" (+9.9%), "Personnel management/human resources" (+6.8%) but also a shift away from "Administration theory and analysis of literature" (-9.9%), "Organizational



Table 1. Description of IPAC's Members Interest in Wake Carroll and Kpessa, and Althaus's Themes

<i>Theme</i>	<i>List</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
Administration theory, history and analysis of literature	WCK/AL	642	3.42	1.41	1	6
Political and statutory institutions and processes	WCK/AL	644	4.12	1.26	1	6
Finance, budgeting and audit	WCK/AL	644	3.71	1.28	1	6
Personnel management and training/human resources	WCK/AL	642	4.53	1.18	1	6
Ethics	WCK/AL	641	4.76	1.10	1	6
Technology use and management	WCK/AL	645	4.55	1.14	1	6
Local and regional issues and government	WCK	646	4.76	1.10	1	6
Public policy design, making, implementation and analysis	WCK/AL	646	5.00	1.08	1	6
Social/economic issues	WCK/AL	643	5.04	1.01	1	6
Equity and appeals	AL	642	3.98	1.27	1	6
Federalism and inter-governmental relations	AL	646	4.45	1.18	1	6
Commissions of inquiry	AL	643	3.61	1.18	1	6
Gender issues	AL	641	4.25	1.33	1	6
Organizational and policy history	AL	644	4.10	1.29	1	6
Administrative law and legal issues	WCK/AL	643	4.05	1.27	1	6
Accountability	AL	642	4.51	1.17	1	6
Public management	AL	644	4.67	1.15	1	6
Planning	AL	646	4.51	1.18	1	6

Table 2. Comparison of the Temporal Extension of Wake Carroll and Kpessa's 2001-2006 Themes for articles Published in CPA in 2008-2016

Themes	IPAC members' preferences 2018 from 1 (very uninteresting) to 6 (very interesting) [A]	Wake Carroll and Kpessa's analysis CPA in 2001-2006 [B]	Our analysis CPA in 2008-2016 [C]
Social/economic issues	5.04	4.8% (6)	14.7% (35)
Policy design, implementation and analysis	5.00	20.6% (26)	19.8% (47)
Ethics	4.76	5.6% (7)	0.8% (2)
Regional issues	4.76	5.6% (7)	5.5% (13)
Technology use and management	4.57	4.8% (6)	3.4% (8)
Organizational theory and management	4.54	9.5% (12)	4.2% (10)
Personnel management/human resources	4.53	0.8% (1)	7.6% (18)
Political and legal institutions and processes	4.12	23.0% (29)	26.5% (63)
Finance and budgeting	3.71	0.8% (1)	4.6% (11)
Administration theory and analysis of literature	3.42	19.1% (24)	9.2% (22)
Others		5.6% (7)	3.8% (9)
Total		100% (126)	100% (238)
Chi <sup>2</sup> = 37.10 Pr = 0.00			
Total Weighted Interest score		4.35	4.46

Theory and Management" (-5.3%), and "Ethics" (-4.8%). The second column [A] shows the declared interest of IPAC's members for that topic, from most interesting to least interesting. Setting aside "other" topics, by computing different interest levels with the relative mix of topics, we get a relative interest score for each period. As we can see at the bottom of Table 2, CPA between 2008-2016 gets a higher practitioner interest score than CPA from 2001-2006.

The results of the comparison between the themes for AJPA articles in 2007-2014, as compiled by Althaus, and the themes for CPA articles in

2008-2016, which we coded, are presented respectively in the third [D] and fourth [C'] columns of Table 2. The 238 articles from the last column of Table 3 are the same 238 articles from the last column in Table 2. As we mentioned in the methods section, every article in *CPA* between 2008 and 2016 were coded twice, once with Wake Carroll and Kpessa's matrix, and once with Althaus's.

The themes covered in *CPA* are different than the ones covered in the *AJPA*. Compared from the themes covered in *AJPA*, the articles in *CPA* tend to be more often about "Institutional and statutory authority studies" (+6%) and "Administrative law and legal issues" (+4.7%), and less often about "Public policy making" (-7.7%), and "Administrative history" (-5%). With the same simple formula as in Table 2, we can see at the bottom of Table 3 that *CPA* between 2008-2016 gets a higher practitioner interest score from IPAC members than *AJPA* from 2007-2014.

## Discussion and conclusion

Striking a balance between research that practitioners find relevant and that is relevant for practitioners is difficult. Such is the task for a journal like *CPA*. In this research, we did not use Cameron's (1982) test of relevance, reverberated later by Bozeman and Feeney (2011: 80) that "(...) the demand for reform and innovation, and scholars' understandable desire to seem relevant, often prove the enemy of careful knowledge development." Indeed, connecting with the preoccupations of practitioners does not mean "engaging uncritically with temporary 'fads' within the public sector" (Scott and Wanna 2005: 21) like deliverology (Behn 2017) or periodically reemerging failed policies like pay-for-performance in the public sector (Park and Berry 2014).

In the last decade, *CPA* passed Pitfield's (1982) relevance test of practitioners' demand. Our results show that the topics of articles published in *CPA* in the last decade are more appealing to Canadian practitioners than the topics published in that same journal from the first half of the 2000 s. Additionally, these same Canadian public servants expressed in the survey more interests for the topics studied in *CPA* than in *AJPA* for the same time period. This shows that over the past ten years, *CPA* has filled its purpose as a practitioner/academic journal: it has not solely become an academic journal like the *Canadian Journal of Political Science* or the *Canadian Journal of Economics*, as Kernaghan feared (2007: 511). "Practitioner-oriented research is not 'dumbed down' academic research" (Pollitt 2017: 7), it can be a practical theory, which is neither "theoretical and explanatory academic studies" nor "practical, prescriptive reports from practitioners" (Thomas 2007: 514). Scholars who want to interconnect with practitioners could consider working on the topics that most interest practitioners. Improvements can be made. After the turmoil of the sponsorship scandal and the increasingly

Table 3. *Comparison of the Journal Extension of Althaus's 2007-2014 Themes for articles Published in CPA in 2008-2016*

<i>Themes</i>	<i>IPAC members' preferences 2018 from 1 (very uninteresting) to 6 (very interesting) [A']</i>	<i>Althaus's analysis AJPA in 2007-2014 [D]</i>	<i>Our analysis CPA in 2008-2016 [C']</i>
Public policy making	5.00	16.9% (54)	9.2% (22)
Ethics	4.76	3.1% (10)	1.3% (3)
Local and regional government	4.76	8.2% (26)	8.0% (19)
Public management	4.67	22.3% (71)	19.3% (46)
Personnel and training	4.53	2.8% (9)	5.5% (13)
Accountability	4.51	8.8% (28)	5.5% (13)
Planning	4.51	1.6% (5)	1.7% (4)
Federalism and inter-governmental relations	4.45	7.2% (23)	8.4% (20)
Gender issues	4.25	2.8% (9)	2.9% (7)
Institutional and statutory authority studies	4.12	2.8% (9)	8.8% (21)
Administrative law and legal Issues	4.05	1.6% (5)	6.3% (15)
Equity and appeals	3.98	0.3% (1)	2.5% (6)
Budgeting and audit	3.71	4.1% (13)	3.8% (9)
Commissions of inquiry	3.61	0.9% (3)	1.3% (3)
Administrative and organizational theory	3.42	7.8% (25)	6.3% (15)
Administrative history	3.42	6.3% (20)	1.3% (3)
Chronicles	3.42	0.0% (0)	1.7% (4)
Other		2.5% (8)	6.3% (15)
Total		100% (319)	100% (238)
Chi <sup>2</sup> = 55.14 Pr = 0.00			
Total Weighted Interest Score		4.36	4.46

poor reputation of politicians, ethics and accountability rank logically high for civil servants but are not much studied. We also asked IPAC members about topics frequently found in other journals in the field (Osborne 2017; Fitzpatrick et al. 2011). From the most interesting topic, here is our respondents' top five: "Innovation and change," "Public policy," "Public service motivation," "Socio/economic issues," and "Governance." Three of the five topics seen as more interesting by IPAC members were not topics included in Wake Carroll and Kpessa (2007) nor Althaus (2015). At the beginning of the Thatcher government, it was considered that too much attention was given to policy advice and not enough was given to management and service delivery (see Metcalfe and Richards 1990). Public policy and broad socioeconomic trends are again prime topics for practitioners. The New Public Management revolution did not have a resilient impact in this regard. Who said revolutions start in religion and end in bureaucracy?

## References

- Althaus, Catherine. 1997. "What do we talk about? Publications in AJPA 1970–95." *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 56 (1): 141-146.
- . 2015. "What do we talk about now? Reflecting on publications in AJPA 1970–2015." *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 74 (2): 227-238.
- Behn, Robert D. 2017. "How scientific is "the science of delivery"?" *Canadian Public Administration* 60 (1): 89-110.
- Bingham, Richard D., and Bowen, William M. 1994. "'Mainstream' public administration over time: A topical content analysis of public administration review." *Public Administration Review* 54 (2): 204-208.
- Borins, Sandford. 2003. "From research to practice: A survey of public administration scholars in Canada." *Canadian Public Administration* 46 (2): 243-256.
- Bowman, James S., and Hajjar, Sami G. 1978. "English-language journals in public administration: An analysis." *Public Administration* 56 (2): 203-226.
- Bozeman, Barry, and Feeney, Mary K. 2011. *Rules and Red Tape: A Prism for Public Administration Theory and Research*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Brillantes, Alex B. Jr, and Fernandez, Maricel T. 2013. "Theory and practice of public administration in the Philippines: Concerns for an identity crisis." *Asian Journal of Political Science* 21 (1): 80-101.
- Cameron, David M. 1982. "The discipline and the profession of public administration: An academic's perspective." *Canadian Public Administration* 25 (4): 496-506.
- Cameron, Robert. 2013. "The state of public administration as an academic field in South Africa." *Politikon* 40 (3): 565-583.
- Cepiku, Denita. 2011. "Two ships passing in the night? Practice and academia in public management." *Public Money & Management* 31 (2): 131-138.
- Doerr, Audrey. 2007. "Comments by an Associate Editor." *Canadian Public Administration* 50 (4): 521-523.
- Dubnick, Melvin J. 2018. "Demons, spirits, and elephants: Reflections on the failure of public administration theory." *Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs* 4 (1): 59-115.
- Dufour, Caroline. 2012. *L'institutionnalisation du management public au Québec*. Québec, QC: Presses de l'Université du Québec.

- Fitzpatrick, Jody, Goggin, Malcolm, Heikkila, Tanya, Klingner, Donald, Machado, Jason, and Martell, Christine. 2011. "A new look at comparative public administration: Trends in research and an agenda for the future." *Public Administration Review* 71 (6): 821-830.
- Gow, James Ian. 1994. *Learning from Others: Administrative Innovations among Canadian Governments*. Toronto, ON: Institute for Public Administration of Canada.
- Gow, James Ian, and Wilson, V. Seymour. 2014. "Speaking what truth to whom? The uneasy relationship between practitioner and academic knowledge in public administration." *Canadian Public Administration* 57 (1): 118-137.
- Gulrajani, Nilima, and Kim Moloney. 2012. "Globalizing public administration: Today's research and tomorrow's agenda." *Public Administration Review* 72 (1): 78-86.
- Hung, Ling-Chun, Yu, Chilik, Lin, Min-Wei, and Su, Yu-Chang. 2012. "Assessing public policy research in Taiwan: An analysis of journal publications, 1996-2007." *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis* 14 (5): 431-448.
- Juliani, Fernando, and de Oliveira, Otávio José. 2016. "State of research on public service management: Identifying scientific gaps from a bibliometric study." *International Journal of Information Management* 36 (6): 1033-1041.
- Kelly, Josie, and Dodds, Anneliese. 2012. "Public administration in an age of austerity: The future of the discipline." *Public Policy and Administration* 27 (3): 199-2011.
- Kernaghan, Kenneth. 2007. "Reflections and prescriptions." *Canadian Public Administration* 50 (4): 511-513.
- . 2009. "Speaking truth to academics: The wisdom of the practitioners." *Canadian Public Administration* 52 (4): 503-524.
- Lindquist, Evert A. 2018. "From an uncomfortable conversation to a productive strategic dialogue." *Canadian Public Administration* 61 (3): 420-424.
- McConkey, Michael, and Dutil, Patrice. 2006. *The Top Ten Topics in Public Administration Scholarship: An International Perspective*. Toronto, ON: New Directions. Institute of Public Administration of Canada.
- Metcalfe, Les, and Richards, Sue. 1990. *Improving Public Management*. London: Sage.
- Migone, Andrea R., and Brock, Kathy L. 2017. "Academic research and engagement with the Canadian public service: Insights from three surveys." *Canadian Public Administration* 60 (3): 369-396.
- Neely, Stephen R., and Coggburn, Jerrell D. 2017. "Incentives for sharing knowledge: A survey of scholarly practices in public affairs and administration." *Political Science & Politics* 50 (2): 480-486.
- Nelles, Jen, and Alcantara, Christopher. 2011. "Strengthening the ties that bind? An analysis of Aboriginal-municipal inter-governmental agreements in British Columbia." *Canadian Public Administration* 54 (3): 315-334.
- Nesbit, Rebecca, Moulton, Stephanie, Robinson, Scott, Smith, Craig, DeHart-Davis, Leisha, Feeney, Mary K., and Beth Gazley, Hou Yilin. 2011. "Wrestling with intellectual diversity in public administration: Avoiding disconnectedness and fragmentation while seeking rigor, depth, and relevance." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 21 (suppl 1): i13-i28.
- O'Neill, Michael A., and John K. Wilkins. 2018. "Twinned careers: Public sector practitioners in public administration teaching and research." *Canadian Public Administration* 61 (3): 443-461.
- Osborne, Stephen P. 2017. "Public management research over the decades: What are we writing about?" *Public Management Review* 19 (2): 109-113.
- Park, Seejeen, and Berry, Frances S. 2014. "Successful diffusion of a failed policy: The case of pay-for-performance in the US federal government." *Public Management Review* 16 (6): 763-781.
- Perry, James L. 2017. "Amplifying the voices of practitioners in PAR." *Public Administration Review* 77 (2): 157-158.

- Pitfield, Michael. 1982. "The discipline and the profession of public administration: A practitioner's perspective." *Canadian Public Administration* 25 (4): 484-495.
- Pollitt, Christopher. 2016. *Losing the Big Picture, and Influence Too*. Statecrafting: Comment on the Art of Public Administration. Roberts, Alisdair (Ed.). April 28th.
- . 2017. "Public administration research since 1980: Slipping away from the real world?" *International Journal of Public Sector Management* 30 (6-7): 555-565.
- Raadschelders, Jos C. N., & Kwang-Hoon Lee. 2011. "Trends in the study of public administration: empirical and qualitative observations from *Public Administration Review*, 2000–2009." *Public Administration Review* 71 (1), 19-33.
- Scott, Joanne, and Wanna, John. 2005. "Trajectories of public administration and administrative history in Australia: Rectifying 'a curious bight'?" *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 64 (1): 11-24.
- St. Clair, Rebekah, Hicks, Diana, and Isett, Kimberley R. 2017. "An investigation into the characteristics of papers method." *Review of Public Personnel Administration* 37 (3): 323-350.
- Thomas, Paul G. 2007. "Reflections and prescriptions." *Canadian Public Administration* 50 (4): 513-516.
- van Thiel, Sandra, and Bouwman, Robin. 2017. "30 Years of IJPSM publications: An analysis." *International Journal of Public Sector Management* 30 (6/7): 524-531.
- Vogel, Rick. 2014. "What happened to the public organization? A bibliometric analysis of public administration and organization studies." *American Review of Public Administration* 44 (4): 383-408.
- Wake Carroll, Barbara, and Kpessa, M. W. 2007. "Enduring, ephemeral and emerging issues in public administration in Canada: Trends in Canadian Public Administration over Fifty Years (1958–2007)." *Canadian Public Administration* 50 (4): 477-491.
- Wettenhall, Roger. 1997. "Reflections on AJPA and other public administration journals." *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 56 (1): 189-198.