Editor's Note

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Statistics, Politics and Policy, Volume 2/2025

https://doi.org/10.1515/spp-2025-2002
Published online August 19, 2025

In recent years, the disciplines of political science and public policy have undergone an affective turn. No longer confined to the study of cognition, reason, and rational calculation, scholars are now increasingly attentive to the role emotions play in shaping political attitudes, decisions, and policy outcomes. This second issue of the 2025 volume of *Statistics, Politics and Policy* contains the first paper of a special issue on *Emotional dynamics of politics and policymaking* initiated by a call for papers curated by Guest Editor and Editorial Board Member Georg Wenzelburger (University of Saarland). We are grateful to Georg Wenzelburger for curating this timely and intellectually rich call for papers. In the next issue of the SPP (3/2025), the remaining articles will be published. The issue furthermore contains three other empirical articles that emphasize the importance of context, structure, and perception in explaining political and economic behavior. What unites these contributions is a shared commitment to understanding how individuals and institutions respond to complex stimuli – be they affective, spatial, regulatory, or fiscal – and how such responses shape public policy.

The first contribution, authored by Katja Stempel (2025) titled *A State of the Art on Emotions in the Context of Public Policymaking*, serves as a conceptual and empirical anchor for the special issue's next contributions to be included in issue 3/2025. It offers a critical review of the burgeoning literature on emotions in political science, with a particular focus on public policy research. While the role of emotion has been extensively studied in psychology and, more recently, political behavior (especially voting and populist appeals), the policy process itself has long remained the domain of rationalist assumptions. Stempel's review disrupts this convention by offering a systematic and narrative account of how emotions are linked to policymaking contexts. She identifies a clear research gap: while theoretical frameworks such as Affective Intelligence Theory and Appraisal Theory are increasingly invoked, their integration into policy studies remains partial and unsystematic. Through a detailed discussion of empirical studies – including those related to COVID-19,

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populist rhetoric, and affective heuristics – Stempel shows how emotional dynamics influence both elite and citizen behavior, calling for a more coherent, theory-driven agenda that treats emotion not as an epiphenomenon but as a constitutive force in public policy.

The second article *Estimating Crowd: Electoral Adjustment and Spatial Effects of Turnout during Covid-19 Pandemic*, by Arya Budi (2025), investigates voter turnout during the 2020 mayoral election in Surabaya, Indonesia. Unpacking a counterintuitive empirical puzzle – turnout increased during the pandemic – Budi combines spatial econometrics and institutional analysis to show that two factors mattered most: the spatial proximity of COVID-19 cases and administrative efforts to reduce polling station overcrowding. He finds that turnout was shaped not only by perceived risk but also by behavioral contagion (or "turnout diffusion") across neighboring districts. The article contributes to both the empirical study of crisis voting and the theoretical literature on social imitation, suggesting that emotions like fear can be offset by institutional design and local social dynamics. The policy lesson is clear: administrative simplicity and spatial awareness can reduce perceived costs of participation, even in the face of existential threats.

The third article, by Nanang Susyanto, Restu Ananda Putra, M. Haikal Sedayo, and Edwar Edwar, addresses the regulatory dimensions of asset management in Indonesia's insurance sector. In *Investment Optimization in Insurance Portfolios: A Quantitative Analysis of Financial Services Authority of Indonesia Regulations*, the authors examine how the Financial Services Authority's (OJK) Regulation No. 5 of 2023 impacts asset allocation, investment limits, and risk management practices (Susyanto et al. 2025). Using financial modeling and statistical analysis, the research evaluates changes to allowable assets, allocation caps, corporate bond and medium-term note requirements, and affiliated party investment rules. Notably, the study is one of the first to apply a CVaR-based optimization approach. The paper demonstrates that regulatory design can have immediate, quantifiable effects on financial strategy and market behavior.

The fourth and final contribution turns to fiscal policy and labor markets. In *The Effect of Military Spending on Unemployment in South Africa: Evidence from Total, Gender, Race and Province Unemployment Data*, Damian Chidozie Uzoma-Nwosu, Isiaka Akande Raifu, and Nantap Rejoice Ditep offer an ambitious analysis of how changes in military expenditure affect employment across demographic and regional lines (Raifu et al. 2025). Using ARDL, DARDL, and KRLS models, the study reveals that increased military spending is associated with reduced unemployment for certain groups, but with higher unemployment for others. These findings highlight the heterogeneous consequences of national spending decisions and caution against one-size-fits-all interpretations.

This issue signals the journal's continued commitment to bridging disciplinary boundaries, to promoting methodological pluralism, and to highlighting the global dimensions of public policy – from Indonesia to South Africa, from insurance regulation to electoral engineering. As we look ahead, we invite scholars to further explore the affective dimensions of policy design, implementation, and reception.

It is with great pleasure and academic recognition that the Statistics, Politics and Policy editorial board and the issue editors of SPP award the Emil Julius Gumbel Prize 2025 to Bruno Arpino (University of Padua) and Ryohei Mogi (University of Southern Denmark Odense) for their outstanding article "Is intending to have children rightist? A Research Note on Political ideology and fertility intentions" (Arpino and Mogi 2024), featured in our issue 2/2024. The prize is endowed with €500 and honors the best paper published in the journal in the past year.

In their paper, Arpino and Mogi analyze data from two rounds of the European Social Survey (ESS) to examine how political ideology influences fertility intentions. The authors find that individuals who place themselves on the extreme right are more likely to intend to have children (Kurz and Wagschal 2024). This association remains significant even when socio-demographic, economic, and attitudinal factors are controlled for. Arpino and Mogi offer both theoretical refinement and empirical clarity. Their research is timely and exemplary in its methodological rigor. We congratulate the authors on this well-deserved recognition.

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