Title
A state of The Field: increasing relative ignorance

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A State of "Two Worlds": Increasing Relative Ignorance

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Working Paper 93-18
A State of "The Field": Increasing Relative Ignorance

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Enthusiasm for public management in administering the public's business has burgeoned over the past decade. This emphasis on public management, research, and practitioners has burkeoned over the past decade. This emphasis on public management, research, and practitioners has...

For example, the several National Public Management
Radiological Waste Management, Washington, D.C.

Managing Radiological Wastes: Report of the Task Force on
Board (1993); Partnerships Trust and Confidence: Requirements for
See Department of Energy, Secretary of Energy Advisory

an overview of this research program.

The Symposium organizers are to be commended for their efforts in catalyzing the
countries, it is particularly important duty. The Symposium

...will not be a “pop-off.” It also gives one permission to “sound off.” I hope the

...is used variously to typify or denote:

...is conducted. What follows is emblematic but bears briefer repeating.

connotations -- often mixed or mixed-up in the ways theoretical work
program management/bureaucracy literature has at least three

importantly. First, a note on context. “Theory” as used in the

perhaps improving administratively, exhibits a growing relevance. Perhaps

unsettling news is that, in this current state, “theorizing” with the

struggles to understand phenomena in and of public organizations.

structures to understand phenomena in and of public organizations.
Theorizing is crucial both to understanding and to our
theoretizing development; these provide and add verisimilitude to our
forthcoming paper, “Partly simulated, partly real,” may their
gatherings signal increased activity and possibilities. These symposiums like this bring together researchers from public management
and administration with those in political science. These

As Kettl’s Symposium talk and forthcoming paper nicely summarize, there have been interesting
theoretical developments; these provoke and add verisimilitude to our
struggles to understand phenomena in and of public organizations.

Recent Years: A) our work at recognizing that public or regulated systems of great technical power so intrinsically
hostile to preventing significant failures, b) my current
concerns, a cardinality. They have been intertwined for me in
through thesslided public debate. Accurate? My views are overly

event...
WITTCHI, sometimes referred to as a large, somewhat recent and recent advancing
overproduction, native patronage, part on "controlling a larger"
theory of bureaucratic dynamics much in the spirit of
governmental activity or a frustrated political apparatus. It is a
electric effect of the view of an outsider, e.g., anagini, although, or a disturbed
type, that of an outsider, e.g., in a managed citizen's
tendency, from

Much of the writing on public management is tacitly from

Recall Barnard's "efficiency" (Barnard 1938), on p. 6.

...and human... c. Denhardt (1969), esp. ch. 5. J. Mosca and G. Kass and Carter, eds. (1969), esp. see "...The role of
Harmon (1969), esp. Parts II and III; e.g., Benteon, ed. (1972), esp. Part II. See e.g., Harmon (1969), esp. see "...The role of
so much of the literature was largely missing from the symposium's
Interests, the most intense, sharpest anti-bureaucracy critique of this
Perhaps due to the heterogeneous nature of this

It has been argued that we lack a substantial, and cumulative base
It is necessary to consider the top political leadership, though
possible interpretations. I take the view of agency managers, though
possibilities that we have from sociology, social psychology and economics is fractured, and when joined with concerns
I limit my comments to "theories of the third kind." If used
deductively, it informs: what we expect from organizations, given

Psychology and economics is fractured, and when joined with concerns

Setting surprise.

The basic for descriptive understanding, analytical insight
c. The basic for descriptive understanding, analytical insight

The basic for descriptive understanding, analytical insight

The basic for descriptive understanding, analytical insight

The basic for descriptive understanding, analytical insight

The basic for descriptive understanding, analytical insight

Much of Kettl's symposium paper appears nearly in this
category and this perspective was in evidence at the symposium.
This is a stable
evaluation, for academics and pundits, and for political critics
a guide to normative frameworks for managers and policy
for an intriguing way of conceptualizing these differences.


The problem of operations or political ideology plays out in a messy pattern with limited cumulative effect. It is only a matter of concern for us if this so. A growing awareness of the importance of theory building about public organizations is significant, and understanding them is important for the safety and lives of citizens and consumers. Public organizations make a significant contribution to the development of government and public policy, and understanding them is important for the safety and lives of citizens and consumers. Public organizations make a significant contribution to the development of government and public policy, and understanding them is important for the safety and lives of citizens and consumers.
Table I.
Summary of Properties of Facing U.S. Public Organizations Imposed by Socio-Economic Environment

Increasing:
A. Heterogeneity of goals and means.
B. Density of networks of relations among public organizations.
C. Technical character of task processes.
D. Demand for services with less tolerance for error.

Decreasing:
E. Resources relative to operational/technical need.
F. Public confidence in capacity of public organizations.

Imposed by Principals upon Agents

Continued:
G. Adversarial executive vs elected official relations.
H. Centralization of budgetary/audit control with more de-centralization of operations to heterogeneous experts.
I. National and agency policy volatility.
J. Proportion of regulatory to line responsibilities.
K. Dependence on third parties (contractors).
L. Centralization of budgetary/audit control with more de-centralization of operations to heterogeneous experts.
M. Technical competence of agency contract overseers.
N. Incentives for professional achievement or career.
O. Effectiveness/autonomy of senior management.

Decreasing:
A. Technical character of task processes.
B. Density of networks of relations among public organizations.
C. Heterogeneity of goals and means.

Developed Spring 1992, near the end of the Reagan/Bush administrations, with students in my graduate seminar (see note 12 for partial list of sources). By 1993, the political rhetoric had softened, though little has changed in the significant properties imposed and inflicted upon U.S. agencies.
In addition, public organizations face a daunting array of "environmental" conditions. (See Table I.) Some are "imposed" by the socio-economic environment, with little possibility that they could be changed rapidly through the efforts of ruling parties or executive action. Others are "inflicted by principals upon agents"; i.e., "inflicted" on public organizations by political regimes and stem from economic and/or administrative ideology. Each condition individually is more or less familiar; in combination they confound and confuse. It is an sobering ensemble within which to attempt flexible and effective operations. These conditions are especially daunting when the functions of public organizations are crucial for the political and social health of our communities.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>++ Demand for services with less tolerance for error (q)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>++ Dependence on third parties (contractors) (k) and resources relative to operational/technical need (e)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-- Density of networks of relations among public organizations (b)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These conditions were derived in part from reviewing Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR) (1989); Bozeman and Slusher (1979); Goodsell (1983); Kettl (1991); Levine (1986); Moe (1987); Moe (1998); Polanski (1990); Rainey (1991); Rourke (1991); Ventriss (1991); Waldo (1987); and Wildavsky (1988). See also Kettl (1993)."
centralization of audit control with more de-centralization of operations to heterogeneous experts (L),
—incentives for professional achievement (N),
—technical competence of agency contract overseers (M), and
++ technical character of task processes (M),
++ technical competence of agency contract overseers (M),
++ incentives for professional achievement (N),
— heterogeneity of goals and means (A),
— public confidence in capacity of public organizations (F),
++ heterogeneity of operations to heterogeneous experts (L),
++ generalization of operational budgets/budgetary control with more centralization (C).

To gain some purchase on these analytical (and design) problems, we could and mostly do retreat to conventional administrative and political wisdom. While this might be tempting, it should not be an early option for seekers after rigorous analysis. As an alternative, we could turn to an increasingly familiar set of middle-range theories to nourish deductive speculations. They are:

- resource dependence and contingency theories;
- network theories of social/organizational relations;
- economic theories of organization and choice;
- (new) institutionalism;
- management and "bureaucratic" theories.

They are: "concepts of choice" (and I do not mean "public choice") and uncertainty about the utility of our theoretical shortcuts, and uncertainty about the utility of our model solutions. In short, we confront a set of research questions for predictions about predictions about predictions about predictions. None of these theories answer the question of where these forecasts of uncertainty and deduction give small comfort. None of these theories are based above the hierarchy, turning to these when the conditions listed above inherently, turning to these when the conditions listed above inherently, turning to these when the conditions listed above inherently, turning to these when the conditions listed above inherently.  

++ heterogeneity of goals and means (A),
++ public confidence in capacity of public organizations (F),
++ national and agency policy volatility (I).

See Scott (1992) for a cogent overview.
Theoretical literatures in providing plausible hypotheses or explanations of organizational processes vary in their approaches to the problem of accountability. We found a starting point for examining the theoretical perspectives and empirical work that have been disassociated from an analytical perspective and private organizations have for some time been distributed and diversified. The integrating context was U.S. public sector decision-making, and the literature that is associated with sustaining or dramatically recovering public trust and confidence in advanced democracies. The initiating context was U.S. radioactivewaste management policy and operations, an area in which the relevant stakeholders have for some time been distrusted and diversified. The integrating context was U.S. public sector decision-making, and the literature that is associated with sustaining or dramatically recovering public trust and confidence in advanced democracies. The initiating context was U.S. radioactivewaste management policy and operations, an area in which the relevant stakeholders have for some time been distrusted and diversified.
Asimilar situation obtains in understanding the webs of relationships that bind and facilitate the work of public organizations. Clearly, agencies are enmeshed within spreading skeins of exchange relationships among a wide variety of private contractors and political groups and, of course, of political executives and legislatures. This trend, so to say, is likely to continue, perhaps accelerate, in an era of "re-invention" and other earnest efforts to "fix government" (e.g., Osborne and Gaebler 1992). Some emphasis on the importance of internal and external networks and the personal networks through which they operate, and the importance of information exchange, has been little systematic work cast in current network thinking. This work remains far less developed than the networks they seek to describe. And there remains a large gap in our understanding of how information exchange and organizational networks might be drawn upon to explain the dynamics of such networks and the role of the public administrators that maintain and control them. Moreover, some emphasis has been given to the importance of exchange relationships among a wide variety of private organizations that bind and facilitate the work of public organizations. Clearly, these are enmeshed within spreading webs of exchange relationships that bind and facilitate the work of public organizations.

Implications for Theoretical Work on Public Management (and Reform)

What implications does this argument have for scholarly agendas? First, it certainly calls for continued work on integrating theories, and rendering what we know in rigorous form with strenuous attempts to put them to the test. If we are to move with greater confidence toward more broadly applicable theorems, tests should be conducted across a wider range of public organizations than is usually the case now. More tests should be conducted across a wider range of public organizations than is usually the case now. If more tests support the notion that network effects are important for public management, then we know in rigorous form what we do not yet know. If the opposite happens, or rather, what could happen, then the notion is that could support the notion of the middle range "should be.developed of analytical, methodological, or theoretical". And if we have not produced enough tests to support the notion, then the middle range could be developed analytically, methodologically, or theoretically. More broadly applicable theorems, tests should be conducted across a wider range of public organizations than is usually the case now.
would become catalysts or organizing principles for systematic investigations of the full range of effects, especially the negative consequences of imposed and inflicted conditions, as these are more serious, when they are taken up in the hope of demonstrating effects without much expectation for actual change. One rarely expected aspect of this work would explore more of the environmental environment than has been the case for agencies and programs in the last half of this century. But these conditions do not confront public organizations equally. Some have to deal with only a few, others with almost the whole set. The more numerous and intense these conditions, the less effective can an agency be, or become, given environmental conditions.

A third implication of this argument is the need to examine the utility (and error proneness) of formulations of policy, management, and leadership theory (or rhetorical arguments that represent or are taken as if they were theory) as bases for the design or reform of new or existing institutions. This is a basis for the design or reform of new or existing institutions that are presented or traded off theory (or rhetorical arguments that are presented or traded off theory).
I end with a first order hunch and a discouraging word: the first about the most fruitful next stages in our theoretical development; the second about resources. A next important theoretical stage would be the development of network theory in combination with resource dependence notions. A most important theoretical stage about the most fruitful next stages in our theoretical development: I end with a first order hunch and a discouraging word: the first about the most fruitful next stages in our theoretical development; the second about resources. A next important theoretical stage would be the development of network theory in combination with resource dependence notions.
Bibliography


