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International Public Management Network Symposium on Administrative Philosophies and Management Practice

ABSTRACT: Do administrative philosophies, however defined, lead or trail change in public sector organizations? How may we define administrative philosophy and is useful to distinguish between philosophy, doctrine and justification? To what extent does academic research and theory influence administrative practice? Do academics learn most of what they theorize about from practitioners? These and other questions are addressed in this first IPMN electronic symposium.

At the IPMN Research Conference held in Salem, Oregon in June 1998 it was suggested by a number of participants and that IPMN should convene an electronic symposium on a topic of contemporary relevance to the field of public management. As a topic for this discourse IPMJ Editor Fred Thompson offered what he termed Barzelay's [Michael] conjecture number 1:

“Administrative philosophies trail rather than lead political and practical developments in public administration. Responses? Evidence? Examples? Counter examples?”

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What follows are the responses to this conjecture contributed after it was placed onto the IPMN list server on July 1, 1998 in the order in which they were sent by the voluntary participants to the symposium. Participation in the symposium was open to all IPMN members (approximately 200 individuals at this time). The editors of IPMJ decided to publish the edited symposium for the edification of our readership. The contributions have been edited sparingly for grammar, spelling, syntax, etc. but no substance has been changed or deleted. Some of the responses may appear to be incomplete, but we must remember that this was an e-mail/list server dialogue. Each contribution provides the date of the message and the name of the contributor with institutional affiliation. No concluding analysis of the symposium is provided; the editors believe the dialogue speaks for itself and does not require elaboration.

A DIALOGUE ON THE DEFINITION AND ORIGINS OF ADMINISTRATIVE PHILOSOPHIES

What's an administrative philosophy? If the point is that practitioners often come up with management innovations before academics do, and that real world trial and error is what generates new ideas—I agree, but someone has to spread the word and tell the story—as near as I can tell, that's where we come in.

Steven Cohen
Columbia University
2 July 1998

Sounds reasonable to me, especially as the same could surely be said about economics and political science. One thing that might be a relevant example here is Luther Gulick's *Politics, Administration and the New Deal*. (Gulick, 1948; see also Gulick and Urwick, 1937).

Howard Frant
Haifa University (then at the University of Arizona)
3 July 1998

Not to cavil, but what is an "administrative philosophy"? Do we intend to include only the social constructions of academics? Do "energy in the executive," "scientific management," "neutral competence," "entrepreneurial government", "a government that steers, not rows" all count? New Federalism? PPBS? What are some non-American examples? Corporatism? Managerialism? Dirigisme? Clientelism? Do broader notions like constitutionalism and "rule of law" count? What about "spoils system"? Jacksonian Democracy?

I've probably sailed off the edge here, but, not having been at the IPMN conference, I can imagine that one might be tempted to define an administrative

philosophy in such a way that it follows practical/political developments by definition, and that is presumably not what was discussed.

Larry Lynn
University of Chicago
2 July 1998

I am with Larry Lynn. I can't answer the question, even tentatively, without knowing what administrative philosophy is. And equally important, why do I want to know what it is, what will I have when I have this concept down? I want to use it in some way. As a first pass, I would say, it is a series of interconnected attitudes that we hypothesize lie behind reform efforts, and give them some appearance of consistency, even when they are only incremental. Thus, we assume that various of the national level reforms now being implemented (a) are related and similar (which they are often not); and (b) reflect some kind of public choice or less specific rational choice focus. We assume that there is an underlying anti-government focus, a belief that government has failed, that cheap government is as important as small government, that bureaucrats have to be controlled by self-seeking ministers who are rewarded for keeping the bureaucracy in line and accomplishing particular pre-stated goals, etc. In other words, an administrative philosophy is what academics supply to rationalize (that is make rational seeming) a set of reforms.

Another way of looking at administrative philosophy is to ask practitioners what they believe; here I think you will find that bureaucrats and elected officials may have different "philosophies" which need to be spelled out and may clash or overlap in interesting ways. And you are likely to have different reforms emerging from each of these sets of beliefs or values as they interact with day to day problems. [We will find] out-of-the bureau reforms and out-of-the politician reforms, with some of them the same reforms but understood differently or with different perceived goals.

How to use any of this? Well, one could speculate on the longevity or success of reforms depending on whether they emerge from one location and absolutely clash with the other, or whether they seem to emerge from the overlap between bureaucrats and politicians.

The appearance of one leading and one following stems from the fact that politicians in most democracies are formally more powerful. But many reforms stem from the bureaucracy in my experience, are invented there to meet a need, and survive because they, incidentally, also serve the politicians, or are irrelevant to the politicians—in other words don't clash. Examples here are many budget reforms at the local level in the U.S.

Mayors at the turn of the century in the U.S. began to press for executive budgeting [in municipalities], which spread from there—elected official world

view? But innovations like target based budgeting serve both the bureaucrats and the elected officials, offering each very different things.

Anyway, that is first pass at an answer (for more on municipal budgeting in the U.S. and its reforms, see my new book, *Class, Tax and Power: Municipal Budgeting in the U.S.*, Chatham House Publishers, 1998 (Rubin, 1998).

Irene S. Rubin
Northern Illinois University
3 July 1998

It seems to me that there is no generalization possible. Sometimes 'administrative philosophy' does arrive first. For example, the application of scientific management to government in the early part of the century was an application of pre-existing principle to matters of government. Another example is the development of managerialism or market-based public administration, by whatever name, where principles derived from microeconomics were widely circulated prior to their application to government.

In other instances 'administrative philosophy' was developed after the fact. For example, the writings of Max Weber on bureaucracy did not establish bureaucracy as an entity but rather "philosophized" about what was already largely in existence. In practical matters of management it is often the case that practitioners find solutions to problems and these are then later related to matters of theory by academics, but this is not always the case.

Owen Hughes
Monash University
3 July 1998

Let me offer one perspective. It seems to me that administrative (and other) theories can be an important driver in the initial phases of reforms. It is for example clear that neo-classic economy, public choice and institutional economics have influenced public sector reforms in many OECD countries.

Once started, the reform processes tend to follow their own logic, that are better explained by political, administrative, economic and social dynamics of individual countries than by the theories that originally influenced reforms.

The problem is that the reforms are too often analyzed only in terms of the theories that originally influenced them. This is the case both when these theories are seen as appropriate and when they are seen as too narrow. For example, many basically claim that reforms have not been successful because they are based on too narrow or inappropriate theories.

I think that while these theories have been important, they are indeed too narrow. That, however, is not the issue. The issue from the perspective of a practitioner is to analyze whether the reforms have been successful or not and try to improve understanding about how the modern public sector operates. We need

“new” theories as well as “new” public management. It is in this sense that I feel that administrative theories really trail public sector developments. One factor they have not been able to capture, is the democratic side of the reforms that has been very prominent in some countries (as expressed through decentralization, delegation of authority, transparency, consultation, public access to decision making, citizens focus, etc.).

Sigurdur Helgason
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
3 July 1998

From: Michael Barzelay
To: Sigurdur Helgason et. al.

I didn't realize I had initiated the conjecture that is giving rise to this discussion. But anyway one can find one (inter-)definition of administrative philosophy—defined in relation to the concepts of administrative doctrine, justification, acceptance, etc.—in Christopher Hood and Michael Jackson, *Administrative Argument* (Hood and Jackson, 1991). Chapter 8 of the book examines specifically two administrative philosophies: Late Cameralism and New Public Management. I believe this is the source of the term New Public Management.

I think more can be said about the concept of administrative philosophy than Hood and Jackson bring out there, but it is a fine place to start a discussion.

Michael Barzelay
London School of Economics and Political Science
3 July 1998

From: Sigurdur.Helgason
To: Michael Barzelay et. al.

I understand that administrative philosophy [vs. theory] is a wider concept. However, I am afraid to use such grand words (especially when I am not entirely sure what they mean) but I suspect that my arguments could apply to administrative philosophy as well.

Sigurdur Helgason
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
5 July 1998

I can envisage some “chicken and egg” problems in this [discussion]. The NZ reforms are generally viewed as having relatively high ideological coherence but they seem to be a melange of theory constructed from institutional economics salted with some generic management doctrine. Could we perhaps map the topic onto the interactions between academics and practitioners in public management? Where do practitioners get their ideas? Are they all slaves of defunct theorists?

Obversely, are academics generalizing from the experience of practitioners? (A sociological sub-text might be simply to look at the ways in which academics and practitioners come into contact with each other and maybe where the roles tend to blur over each other).

Rob Laking
Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand
5 July 1998

From: Irene Rubin

To: Rob Laking et. al.

To Rob Laking, I would say, you have the right handle on the issue. But the relationship between academics and practitioners tends to be bifurcated: some academics watch, and try to deduce ideologies or philosophies from what they see, or even ask about them; other academics reason from history, from political philosophy, from mathematical modeling, combined with a certain element of ideology and use the resulting amalgam to suggest reforms and sometimes to describe them.

Some academics become practitioners, taking their amalgamated beliefs with them, or they become advisers—when practitioners see something in their suggestions for reform that they can use and want legitimization for [i.e., they try to apply the advice].

In any case, one needs to track the source of reform ideas in each country: whose idea was this anyhow, and where did he or she get that idea?

Irene S. Rubin
Northern Illinois University
7 July 1998

The phrase “administrative philosophy” seems to be a sticking point in this discussion. This is not a bad thing. Were the members of our network less intellectually honest, they would have simply cut the definition to fit their conclusions. The phrase in question comes from *Administrative Argument* by Christopher Hood and Michael Jackson (Hood and Jackson, 1991), which identifies three elements of administrative argument: doctrines, philosophies, and justifications.

Doctrine denotes specific ideas about what should be done in administration—i.e., doctrines are answers to who, what, and how questions. The number of doctrines is large, but finite.

Justification denotes the reason or reasons given for following a particular doctrine.

Philosophy denotes a constellation of doctrines that is relatively coherent in terms of the justifications offered for them. Coherence means that the doctrines fit together, form a relatively logical structure, and reflect a particular set of values.

Hood and Jackson conclude that there are few fully-fledged administrative philosophies in this sense [12–15]. They also identify the New Public Management as a prototypical administrative philosophy, although they note that NPM can bear more than one interpretation—as a literally descriptive label, as a term deeply tinged with irony, even as a paronym—and that it is debatable whether there is a single NPM, that it might better be “. . . seen as something like a flu virus, continuously mutating and having several different strains at once” [179–180].

My own view is that most administrative doctrines, especially those addressed to how questions, ultimately derive from practice. Empirical research confirms this conclusion with respect to some self-conscious management disciplines such as accounting and marketing and tends to confirm it with respect to finance. It is my hunch that justifications derive in about equal measure from both practitioners and academics, and that philosophies are almost entirely scholarly products. So I guess I come down on the chicken-first side of the argument, but lacking conclusive empirical data I wouldn't insist that chickens always preceded eggs. *Public Management* (Lynn, 1996) by Larry Lynn makes a very plausible case for the notion that both theory and practice are necessary to the elaboration of sound administrative philosophies—like the two blades of a scissors, you need both to cut cloth.

Fred Thompson
Willamette University
8 July 1998

Sounds like shades of the old inductive/deductive reasoning debate, with shades of the approach of formal theorists thrown in for good measure. I'm not sure Moe would agree that most good theory is derived from practice. And I am sure that a lot of academics and practitioners alike wouldn't agree with Moe.

Donald F. Kettl
University of Wisconsin-Madison
8 July 1998

Following this discussion, I would add that things become a bit more complicated in countries where the lines between academia and practice are very blurred, as is the case in most Latin American countries (and I suspect in other developing areas), where most academics are also practitioners working in different fields (i.e., law, medicine, engineering, etc.) and working for certain periods of time in the public sector. In these cases it is impossible to know the direction of the influence between theory and practice. If to this you add another reality, that how a reform mandate gets implemented will depend on who is in charge of the implementation (and what their professional background is), then the question becomes even harder to answer.

And I could add a third level of complexity for developing countries: “imposed” or highly recommended administrative philosophies (or their applications) via international lenders and development agencies. Structural adjustment policies in the 80’s and 90’s in Latin America were all clearly associated with, and accompanied by, mandates to reform (to modernize) which were based on administrative philosophies that were developed elsewhere. Not that they are by nature inapplicable, but one has to wonder about the value of importing ideas that will then be used to produce changes that will affect entire populations, without even questioning their validity for the particular geographical and historical context.

It seems to me that the question in the conversation has been posed from the point of view of the Anglo-Saxon university system where the lines between academics and public managers/policy makers are very neat and clear. Maybe we should think of posing another question as part of the conversation: are administrative philosophies and, in general, theories of “public administration” universal?

Sonia Ospina
New York University
9 July 1998

From: Rob Laking

To: Sonia Ospina et. al.

It seems to me to be pretty relevant to the discussion on Fred Thompson’s two scissors blades whether the division between practitioners and academics is in fact that neat and clear in the “Anglo” world. I imagine that there are academics who have who have been in and out of advisory or managerial roles in public service or who have, like myself, retired or resigned from a public service career to work in universities.

There is a more general point to be made also about “reflective practice.” I would like to extend Donald Schon’s original term to cover “serial reflective practice” where practitioners spend periods away from the workplace to think about how their practice might fit into a broader conceptual framework. Certainly that is the approach I am trying to take with the [Master’s in Public Management Programme] at Victoria [University]—that the project of public management improvement in a graduate school is more than the sum of the individual learning projects of the students because of the knowledge of practice they bring into the university to the benefit of their “teachers” and the research agenda. The broader point is, I think, that a discussion here of the relationship between philosophy and “doctrine” (which might also be described as the accreting body of previously successful repertoires) is a way of discussing the relationship between academe and practice.

Perhaps irrelevantly by the way I am reminded (in thinking about the

relationship between philosophy and doctrine) of the story about the frog who would jump on command unless you Scotch-taped its feet to the ground. The conclusion of its proprietor (or principal, I guess) was that if you tape a frog's legs to the ground, it goes deaf. Of course in public management there is always the additional question of how we know when the frog has jumped.

Rob Laking
Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand
10 July 1998

From: Michael Barzelay

To: Rob Laking, Sonia Ospina et.al.

[With respect to the message from Rob Laking to Sonia Ospina, et. al. I wish to respond as follows]:

[R. Laking] It seems to me to be pretty relevant to the discussion on Fred's two scissors blades whether the division between practitioners and academics is in fact that neat and clear in the "Anglo" world. I imagine that there are academics who have who have been in and out of advisory or managerial roles in public service or who have like myself retired or resigned from a public service career to work in universities.

[M. Barzelay] How much does this discussion matter, to the degree that many academics write for practitioners rather than for each other? The problems and advantages of this pattern have been discussed intelligently in the literature, e.g., by Barry Bozeman and Janet Weiss.

[R. Laking] There is a more general point to be made also about "reflective practice". I would like to extend Donald Schon's (1983) original term to cover "serial reflective practice" where practitioners spend periods away from the workplace to think about how their practice might fit into a broader conceptual framework. . . The broader point is I think that a discussion here of the relationship between philosophy and "doctrine" (which might also be described as the accreting body of previously successful repertoires) is a way of discussing the relationship between academe and practice.

[M. Barzelay] What is missing in this discussion is a sense of the task. One very general theoretical framework in terms of which to characterize the task is Lindblom's *Inquiry and Change* (Lindblom, 1990). Schon's discussion of how a professional can be reflective about his or her practice is interesting, but a relatively small point. In any case he doesn't talk about managers, as far as I remember. A specific argument as to the task is Lynn's *Public Management as Art, Science, and Profession* (Lynn, 1996). Perhaps if such works were common points of reference there could be better communication. Fields that are based on disciplines have this advantage built in. We are enfeebled because we don't have this advantage and don't have mechanisms to make up for it.

Michael Barzelay
London School of Economics and Political Science
11 July 1998

Sonia Ospina points out that structural adjustment policies in Latin America (and the rest of developing world, I would add) were all accompanied by mandates to reform (modernize) which were based on administrative philosophies that were developed elsewhere. (To clarify, structural adjustment normally means incentive and regulatory reform, plus a reduction in the role of the state). She raises the question: are they valid for every geographical and historical context?

I think there are some basic administrative characteristics that are valid in most contexts, if one desires sustainable human development (e.g., growth in per capita GDP, literacy, and life expectancy, as proxies for growth with equity). For example, if one seeks this objective, one needs capable organizations that can direct their efforts at creating an enabling environment toward achieving it. Such organizations have a critical mass of public officials recruited and promoted based on merit, and given adequate incentives and information to do their job. Good teamwork and interdepartmental coordination skills are also important.

A second required value to reach this objective are institutional mechanisms to discourage rent-seeking or corruption by politicians and public servants. Creating capable organizations which discourage rent-seeking can be done in many ways, based on the local context. Having such organizations is no guarantee of achieving sustainable human development, but not having them makes it likely that you won't.

Clay Wescott,
United Nations Development Project, Suva, Fiji Islands (On assignment in
Thailand)
16 July 1998

Our first task, as pointed out by Cohen, Lynn, Rubin and others, is to define what we mean by "administrative philosophies." I believe Hood has done this adequately (Hood, 1991; Hood and Jackson, 1991) as pointed out by Fred Thompson. Here is my view. By "administrative philosophy" do we mean sets of rules or theories of cause and effect relationships? If we interpret these words to mean the former, then PPBS, ZBB, MBO, TQM, etc. and other sets of rules, or what I would term administrative methodologies, seem to flow both from practitioners and academics, but practitioners lead more than follow. PPBS, ZBB, MBO, TQM all are sets of methods used by practitioners to achieve specific goals or outcomes. PPBS was supposed to produce more "rational" decision making in DOD [Department of Defense] in the U.S. in the 1960's, and since then this has meant, essentially, to save money through wiser resource planning and allocation, monitoring and control. I could provide accounts of many other methodologies

and goals, but most of us know these already so I won't drag us through further examples.

Practitioners learn about methods from each other and, secondarily, from academics (e.g., local and state governments have learned PPBS, ZBB and other approaches including many NPM-associated "reforms" from national level governments and from what academic critics have written about them in the U.S. and elsewhere). What Wildavsky (1969), and Schick (1966; 1973), wrote in criticism of PPBS undoubtedly influenced some practitioners in the U.S. and abroad as well. How would we classify the work of Deming (1993)? Is it academic? If so, then this is an example of a sort of theory and a set of methods learned from a sort of academic and applied by practitioners to achieve specified goals. If it is not academic, then this is practitioner influencing practitioner. There is no doubt that Japanese managers learned from the American and international academic literature on management, production efficiency and other areas. They applied, with success, management theory from Fayol (1937); Taylor (1911 and 1998); Chester Barnard (1938) through Charles Perrow (1986); James Thompson (1967), Porter (1980), Deming (1993) and "our" favorite, the wizard of management thought, Peter Drucker (1953; Drucker, 1974; Drucker, 1982). Then, American and other academics discovered the "wonders" of Japanese management and made their careers out of this in the 1980s and 1990s, e.g., Chalmers Johnson or William Ouchi. Academics learned from practitioners who learned from academics. Recall that Chester Barnard was a practitioner. And where do we put Hammer and Champy (1993), and the "reengineering revolution"? I think this is academic method influencing practitioner method. There is no theory. As Laking and Thompson noted in this symposium, it is somewhat a question of the chicken and the egg.

If on the other hand, we define administrative philosophy as only that based on carefully reasoned and empirically tested theory, this work is done by academics and not practitioners. We are hard-pressed to find such theory. However, both practitioners and academics report that NPM-oriented reforms in New Zealand were driven by public choice theory and the body of thought that has evolved from the theory of the firm and industrial economics often referred to presently as the new institutional economics (NIE). If what is reported about NZ is accurate, and most accounts say essentially the same thing, then some academic work has had a profound impact on both the goals sought and the methods applied by practitioners. In attempting to apply approaches used in New Zealand, national, state, regional and local governments throughout the world have been influenced by public choice and new institutional economics theory, either directly where practitioners read the academic work, or indirectly in attempting to apply what they understand to be methods that purportedly have "worked well" in New Zealand, or in Lakewood, California (circa 1976), Sunnyvale, California, Phoenix, Arizona or Tilburg, The Netherlands.

If we accept that practitioners have led with methods in many if not most circumstances, but that public choice, NIE and management theory about the private sector developed by academics has influenced practitioner methods substantially in more recent times, what does this leave us to wonder about? What about the application of the theories from the field of public administration? There are about as many theories in public administration as there are theorists. As an academic sub-discipline, public administration has not contributed much if any useful theory in my view, and it has resisted attempts by public choice advocates to apply their theories in public administration, e.g., rejection of agency theory is perhaps the best example. In stating this I will even go so far as to reject W. Wilson's separation of politics and administration as a satisfactory administrative philosophy. When and where have politics and administration been separate? Get real! Everything in administration, internal to agencies or external with legislative bodies and citizens, is politics. I acknowledge that public administration has influenced practitioners, from its narrow institutional perspective, by observing governments and advising them on how to improve their methods, but little if any of this criticism on the margins can be viewed as based in empirically validated theory. It is of a practical nature, the "here's how you can do PPBS, personal management, budgeting, etc. better than the way you do it now" sort of advice. There is much more to argue here, but in another time and place.

What can those of us who identify ourselves as working in the emerging sub-discipline of public management learn from the failure of public administration to influence practitioners, except through marginal advice on improving methods? As academics, if we want to lead we must search out interesting examples of management innovation, reform, change or whatever we call it. We must then attempt to identify the objectives and methodologies employed. We must understand the intended inputs, service production approaches, outputs and outcomes. Then we must observe what actually happens both within government (inputs, production, outputs) and the outcomes (both short and longer-term) for citizens and consumers of public services and goods. We need to compare intended effects with actual outcomes. We need to do all this using quantitative data to test qualitative, "slippery" observations obtained from government officials, citizen-consumers and others. However, this is still not enough. We have to explain results relative to the social, cultural, economic and other contextual variables to ascertain what has succeeded or failed in which contexts and why. From this we may construct theory—maybe. Obviously, much of this theory will be of the contingent variety, well-developed in the private sector management literature. Will we find some universal principles? Probably. Will we be able to construct satisfactory theory? If so, of what variety? Descriptive theory is fine. . . as long as you don't want to use it to do anything analytical. Positive theory? Meta-theory? Mid-range theory, etc.? I recall what Aaron Wildavsky often observed about attempts to develop theory in the social sciences—to try to

do so is in vain; you will waste your time and fail in the attempt. But Aaron, what about the influence of public choice and NIE on New Zealand?

I am satisfied to start with the observations and advice such as that provided by some of the best works in our field. Read for example Larry Lynn's, *Public Management as Art, Science, and Profession* (Lynn, 1996) or others (see, for example Barzelay, 1992; Hood, 1983; Hood, 1991; Hood and Jackson, 1991; Williamson, 1996; Williamson, 1999; Miller, 1992; Behn, 1995; Behn, 1996; Kettl, 1993; Wilson, 1989; Boston et al., 1996; DiIulio, Garvey, Kettl, 1993; Laking 1995; Schedler 1995; Shand 1996, Boston, Pallot et. al., 1996; Thompson, 1993; Thompson, 1994; Thompson, 1997; and Thompson and Jones, 1982; Thompson and Jones, 1986; Thompson and Jones, 1994; Jones and Thompson, 1999). I apologize in advance for those whose work I have omitted here. Come up to speed on the public choice [and other] literature[s] and develop your own application of agency theory, or whatever approach you chose. The point is: read the contributions in the field, and what has led to the emergence of public management as a distinct sub-discipline. Read our (Jones and Schedler) edited "green book" *International Perspectives on the New Public Management* (Jones and Schedler, 1997) that resulted from our first IPMN St. Gallen conference. The individual citations by chapter in this book provide a great bibliography from which to begin to understand our evolving, applied sub-field of public management. Even read Mintzberg (1994; Mintzberg, 1996), a wonderful man and a distinguished academic, to find out what is terribly wrong with his understanding of our field and what is taking place presently in the public sector. NPM isn't about taking away welfare benefits from the poor and disadvantaged in the name of efficiency. Poor Henry is a cheap shot artist, but he gets much attention from his efforts. His work in my view is advice to move backward and in the wrong direction simultaneously. Does anyone really want to argue for government inefficiency? At any rate, after doing the reading, take action. Find your subject and begin your work. Work long and carefully; write it up well. Share it with colleagues, e.g., through IPMN and other networks. Respond to criticism and publish.

Public management and especially NPM presently are subject to much criticism from a wide variety of sources. This is the most sincere form of flattery. We have their attention. It appears that we in public management now "have the ball." How far can we run with it? Can we score? What can we achieve through development of an administrative philosophy based in empirically tested and validated theory? What would it achieve if we developed our contingent examples, lessons and theory and were able to influence practitioners? Better government and governance for the same or less money? We would hope so.

I will end with a second "Pogo Principle" attributable without doubt by some to Yogi Berra (sorry for this glib and obscure reference to non-U.S. readers and non-baseball fans). Remember the first Pogo Principle used by Wildavsky? It is,

“We have met the enemy, and he is us.” The second Pogo Principle is, “The future will be like the past, only different.” Who can tell who will influence whom in the future?

Larry Jones
Naval Postgraduate School
17 July 1998

Larry—this deserves a longer reply but I couldn’t resist adding the third Pogo Principle—“We have been confronted by insurmountable opportunities.”

Rob Laking
Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand
20 July 1998

IPMN Colleagues:

Is the purpose of the current symposium to identify and probe issues and questions, or is it to reach consensus on doctrine and methods? Some contributions seem motivated by the desire to sharpen the debate and the argument; others seem to suggest modes of thought and practice that will harmonize our disparate pursuits. Both have their value but are different.

Perhaps we agree that public management theory and practice interact in complex ways mediated by layered (local, regional, international) contexts—political, legal, cultural—that are constantly changing. Perhaps we agree, too, that developments in economies, societies, commerce, and diplomacy create the phenomena that must be managed and the contexts within which state building occurs and administrative methods and philosophies emerge, endure, and are transformed. The industrial revolution, rising standards of living, universal suffrage, the emergence of socialist alternatives to capitalism, global wars and a global depression, a Cold War and its end, the collection of socio-economic developments labeled “post-industrialism,” the globalization of capital markets, developments in science, production and communication technologies, and human aspirations (e.g., to emancipate women, to protect the natural world, to universalize human rights, to equalize human capital, to further the rule of law and an international legal order). Sometimes theory helps us organize our (context-dependent) institutional and administrative responses and practices, sometimes practices provide the material basis for theory development, and sometimes theory and practice are pretty much independent. An exceedingly complex process generates administrative philosophies, myths, and ideologies, as well as structures and customs, that, at any given time and place, comprise the field (s) of public administration.

Perhaps we disagree (or might if we probed our own thinking) on the nature of these generative processes, on how they are similar or dissimilar across nations and cultures, and on the importance and implications of similarities and differences to public management practice.

In an American context, our most influential thinkers concerning the intellectual content of public administration and management, it seems to me, have been Adam Smith, the Federalist authors, Max Weber, Chester Barnard, and (hold your breath—or nose) Tom Peters. In all cases they have helped a wide audience understand structural changes that were already well underway (Weber followed Bismarck, Barnard followed Sloan, Peters followed IBM and Osborne followed Peters). They bequeathed to us the ideas of markets, of democratic accountability, of bureaucracy, of the executive function, and of innovation, adaptation, and excellence. Within these larger, stronger currents of societal transformation are more local movements and their derivative ideas: scientific management, efficiency, and neutral competence, Theory Y and human relations, performance planning and budgeting, organizational cultures, institutionalism, and quasi-markets. And there are still more particularized, technocratic currents and cross currents: the executive budget, policy analysis and program evaluation, quality management, MBO and PBOs.

All of this adds up to an accumulating complexity. The increasing endogeneity of means, of ends, and of resources makes the idea of administration and of administrative reform all that much more complicated—and intellectually exciting.

How wide and deep is the intellectual sea in which we wish to swim, i.e., think, write, teach, and conduct research on public management?

The best thinkers in American public administration, I think, have been, among others, Frank Goodnow, Leonard White, Luther Gulick, John Gaus, Marshall Dimock, Dwight Waldo, Herbert Simon, and James Q. Wilson. Their treatises and essays are still wonderful to read, are a distinctive intellectual legacy reflecting a deep wisdom. In a contemporary context, Paul Light writes about *Thickening Government* (1997), James Morone about *The Democratic Wish*, Harvey Mansfield (1989) about *Taming the Prince*, Bernard Silberman (1993) about *Cages of Reason*, Michel Crozier (1964) about *Actors and Systems*, James Q. Wilson (1989) about *Bureaucracy*, David Weimer (1992) about *Institutional Design*, Geoffrey Vickers (1995) about *The Art of Judgment*, Charles Lindblom (1990) about *Inquiry and Change*, Mark Moore (1995) about *Creating Value*, and Gary Miller (1992) about *Managerial Dilemmas*. Social scientists of a more modern and rigorous stripe theorize about and study concepts basic to management, e.g., authority, delegation, and discretion; accountability; information asymmetry and opportunism; embeddedness; social construction; risk aversion; constrained optimization; cognitive dissonance; etc. Their insightful application can help us, in our attempts to grasp the existential and practical problems of public management practice, go to the heart of the matter. These types of probing inquiry go well beyond variable listing and classification. Taken together, these are works that challenge us intellectually, that invite us to engage in fundamental inquiry into how (and why) to understand and direct collective effort.

The potential inherent in IPMN is to help us to understand, through careful

conceptualization and empirical study, both the wider sea changes and the more specific currents in putative relationship to each other across time and space, thus reducing our personal cultural and intellectual particularism and ethnocentricity and producing, at our best moments, wisdom.

Kuno Schedler once offered some provocative ideas on the [IPMN] list server in an exchange with me. He said: "I agree. . .that NPM must not become a purely technocratic reform 'on free market ideology'. However, there lies also a danger in making a comparison between developing countries and their particular problems and, say, European countries with a long tradition of the 'Rechtsstaat' (legal state) and an over-exaggeration of law in every-day life of the administration. While for the former, an increase in legal power seems to be the right way to go, it could be [the] reverse for the latter. What we want is a combination of a) political target setting and control, and b) 'technical' implementation." Then he spoke of the need to establish, at least in Europe, "the new rules of the game". Another of our colleagues once drafted a little gem of an essay on aspects of the German state that were antithetical to the New Public Management, one that made me wish for a similar essay for the other countries represented in IPMN so that we could better understand each other on how context shapes thought and practice.

These provocative and important intellectual contributions and challenges were never taken up so far as I can remember. Too bad. I hope they will be in the future. In public management, what is the difference (and what is similar) between "Germany" and "Europe", between contemporary New Zealand [and] the English parliamentary tradition, between the United States (and France) and everyone else, between developing countries and Europe, between Japan, China, and the rest of Asia? (One dimension of difference: in the relationship between academics and practitioners. Is this an important issue?) How should the emerging critique of quasi-markets (and the fate of PBOs during the Clinton administration) influence our thinking about NPM? How does an U.S. institution like GAO shape thinking and practice about public management and should the newly emerging democracies have one? And whatever happened to the New Public Administration?

If these are the wrong questions, what are the right ones?

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