

A new approach to public administration

ALASDAIR ROBERTS
 TRUMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
 UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI

The project

Books


- *Statecrafting: A new approach to public administration*
 - Under contract with Cornell University Press
- *Can government do anything right?*
 - Under contract with Polity Press

Courses

- PA9150 Governance and Public Affairs
- PA8210 Public Service and Democracy

Other activities

- Roundtable at PMRA, June 2016
- Roundtable in *Governance*, July 2016
- Website statecrafting.net



Scholarly enterprises within PA

◦ "Orthodox" Public Administration	◦ Collaborative Governance
◦ Administrative history	◦ Digital Era Governance
◦ Comparative Administration	◦ Public Value Governance
◦ Development Administration	◦ Border regions:
◦ New Public Administration	◦ Development Studies
◦ Public Management	◦ Peacebuilding and Statebuilding
◦ Administrative Constitutionalism	◦ American Political Development
◦ Neo-Weberianism	◦ Neighboring disciplines:
◦ New Public Service	◦ Political science
◦ Public Governance	◦ Law
◦ New Public Governance	◦ Economics

The rise of Public Management

Associations:

- Public Management Research Association
- International Research Society for Public Management
- International Public Management Network
- Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management
- Academy of Management, Public and Nonprofit Division

Journals, such as:

- *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*
- *Public Management Review*
- *International Public Management Journal*
- *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*

Degrees, specializations, courses, textbooks, chairs

Aims of Public Management

"[The] primary purpose [of the field of public management] is to develop a understanding of how public, primarily governmental, organizations may accomplish the missions charged to them." James Perry and Kenneth Kraemer, 1983.

"Public management is about making sure that the resources available are used as effectively as possible to realize state policy goals." Mark Bevir, 2012.

"What is public management? . . . [A]n approach that uses managerial techniques . . . to increase the value for money achieved by public services." Tony Bovaird and Elke Loeffler, 2016.

"Public managers are responsible for translating the goals and objectives of policymakers into tangible operating results. Public management is the process of ensuring that the allocation and use of resources available to government are directed toward the achievement of lawful public policy goals." Carolyn Hill and Laurence Lynn Jr., 2016.

Importance of time and place

Historical contingency:

- An enterprise that emerged as a response to the problems of a certain set of countries at a particular moment in history
- "a response to a set of special social conditions" (Hood, 1991)
- "[The spreading belief that governments had become 'overloaded' and that Western states had become unaffordable [and] ineffective . . . [led to] streamlining, repackaging, marginally modifying, or actually downsizing existing programs": Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2011

Problems of advanced welfare states in the late twentieth century:

- Mounting evidence of implementation failure
- Growing cost of entitlements and services
- Concern about deficits and debts: taxpayer revolts

Implication: If conditions change, ideas may fall "out of sync" with realities

Neglect of big questions and declining relevance

"PA has lost sight of the big picture." Christopher Pollitt, 2016

"[S]uch 'big questions' as the political economy of administrative reform and its evolution over time were a central focus of the field historically. This is no longer the case." Robert Durant and David Rosenbloom, 2016

"[P]ublic administration needs to return to thinking about the 'big picture' rather than the fragments that dominate much of the contemporary work in the discipline." Guy Peters and Jon Pierre, 2016

"There is a need for public administration . . . to address the big issues that contemporary political systems have to deal with." Per Laegreid, 2016

"[B]ig questions about state capacity and legitimacy go largely unaddressed by leading researchers and journals in our field." Brint Milward, 2016

"[I]t is also impossible to ignore the complaints of practitioners and theorists outside the field that public management is missing big trends and the potential for big impacts on big questions." Don Kettl, 2016

Two kinds of myopia

"The study of public administration pays little attention to history. . . . [S]ystematic training in research and methods of administrative history is sorely missing in public administration higher education." Jos Raadschelders, 2010

"[T]he past has been squeezed out of contemporary academic treatments of public management." Christopher Pollitt, 2008

"[P]ublic administration research [is not] taking 'time' anywhere near as seriously as is done by other fields sharing topical interests with public administration." Robert Durant and David Rosenbloom, 2016

"Governance research and teaching run too much behind the facts. It should also be ahead of realities." Geert Bouckaert, forthcoming

Inattention to fragility

Fragile states: those in which fundamental aspects of statehood, such as authority and legitimacy, are not well established

Fragile States Index:

- 53 of 178 states are stable
- 125 of 178 states are fragile
- 66 of 178 states are on "high warning" or "alert" lists
- 9 of 10 most populous states are fragile

And in so-called "stable" states, "big questions" about:

- Border integrity
- Legitimate use of force
- Dysfunctionality of major institutions
- Division between racial and religious groups, social classes, sections

Fragile State Index Rankings	
China	Elevated warning
India	Elevated warning
United States	Very stable
Indonesia	Elevated warning
Brazil	Warning
Pakistan	High alert
Nigeria	High alert
Bangladesh	Alert
Russia	High warning
Mexico	Elevated warning

What a new approach must do

Improve our capacity to address big or "regime-level" questions

Challenge the division between fragile and stable states

Improve our historical understanding and self-awareness

Improve our capacity to anticipate new challenges for government

Elements of a new approach

States must address six **problems**:

- Diplomacy
- External security
- Internal control
- Promotion of human rights
- Financing of activities
- Promotion of economic growth

States develop **strategies** for prioritizing and addressing these problems

- "Liberal statebuilding," the "China model," the "welfare state"

PA is concerned with development of institutions to execute strategies

Challenges of:

- **Design**: given uncertainty, inconsistency, controversy
- **Consolidation**: submission, normative commitment, investment
- **Management**: delegation, monitoring, discipline, coordination

The challenge of adaptation

There are changes in **conditions**:

- External rivals and enemies
- People: characteristics, location, and migration
- Diseases
- Markets
- Technologies
- Weather

And changes in **ideas**:

- about priorities and techniques of addressing problems

That create the challenge of **adaptation**

- Need for capacity to anticipate and recognize changing circumstances
- Need to avoid "over-commitment"
- Invention of new strategies, new institutions
- Deconsolidation: Overcoming "vested interests"

Déjà vu

" [T]he field of administration . . . needs to be related to [theory about] the role of the state in human affairs. **The ends of administration are the ultimate objects of the state itself.**" Leonard White, 1948

"**The idea of the state is the conscience of administration.** Seeing every day new things which the state ought to do, the next thing is to see clearly how to do them." Woodrow Wilson, 1887

"**Administrative developments . . . cannot be understood unless they are related (1) to their own organic past and (2) to the compulsions of the environment in which they exist.**" Luther Gulick, 1948

"The state must always be rediscovered . . . **Almost as soon as its form is stabilized, it needs to be remade.**" John Dewey, 1927



Where we are today

Changes in conditions:

- Effects of market transformation
- Demographic shifts
- Technological advances
- Changed external threats

Changed ideas:

- About the benefits of "open borders"
- About the capacities of federal government

Leads to dissatisfaction with old strategy

- Concern for external security
- Dissatisfaction with economic performance
- Declining legitimacy

And a need for new strategy, adapted institutions