

UMassAmherst

School of Public Policy

## THE BIGGEST BLIND SPOT OF ALL

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## DEVELOPING AN ARGUMENT

*Large Forces: What's Missing in Public Administration* (North Charleston, SC, CreateSpace, 2013).

"The Aims of Public Administration: Reviving the Classical View," *Perspectives on Public Management and Governance* 1, no. 1 (2018): 1–13.

"Strategies for Governing: An Approach to Public Management Research for West and East," *Korean Journal of Policy Studies* 33, no. 1 (2018): 33–56.

*Strategies for Governing: A Macro-Level Approach to Public Administration* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, Forthcoming)



NATIONAL ACADEMY OF  
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION<sup>1</sup>

## Grand Challenges in Public Administration

**What should government do?**

**How should it do it?**

## THE FOUNDERS' BOLD VISION


- High-level view: Renovating the American state
- Concern for domestic and foreign affairs
- Time frame: a long view of past and future
- Realism: turbulence, danger and fragility
- **Normative commitment: Demonstrating viability of liberal democracy**

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LOUIS BROWNLOW,  
Chairman, The President's Committee on Administrative Management.

Now we face again the problem of governmental readjustment, in part as the result of the activities of the Nation during the desperate years of the industrial depression, in part because of the very growth of the Nation, and in part because of the vexing social problems of our times. There is room for vast increase in our national productivity and there is much bitter wrong to set right in neglected ways of human life. **There is need for improvement of our governmental machinery to meet new conditions and to make us ready for the problems just ahead.**

Facing one of the most troubled periods in all the troubled history of mankind, we wish to set our affairs in the very best possible order to make the best use of all of our national resources and to make good our democratic claims. **If America fails, the hopes and dreams of democracy over all the world go down.**



**HIGHLIGHTS:**

**Bill Asserts Justice Due All Humans**

PARIS, Dec. 10 (AP).—Highlights of the 30-article declaration of human rights, adopted Friday by the United Nations General Assembly:

The preamble says "The recognition of the inherent dignity of the equal and inalienable rights of the human family is the foundation of justice and peace in the world."

Article 2 says everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, birth or national or social origin.

## THE PUBLIC MANAGEMENT APPROACH

- "[A] new paradigm ... [that] has effectively supplanted the traditional model of public administration": Owen Hughes, 2003
- **Middle-level analysis:** agencies, programs, networks
- Concern for efficiency and effectiveness
- Preference for quantitative-statistical methods
- A way of thinking and a supporting set of institutions
- All constructed since late 1970s
- Dominated by US-UK-NL-DK

## AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION 77th Annual Meeting September 3-6, 1981

Panel 3. What is Public Management? . . . . . Friday, 1:30 p.m.  
 Chairs: Charles H. Levine and Michael A. Diamond, *University of Maryland*  
 Papers: "What is Public Management?"  
 Charles H. Levine, *University of Maryland*; Robert Backoff, *Ohio State University*;  
 and William J. Siffin, *Indiana University*

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## Public Management: What's New and Different?

E. Sam Overman, University of Colorado at Denver

### What's New and Different?

To paraphrase Waldo's well-known 1961 review of books on organization theory which used the parable of three blind men trying to describe an elephant, "public management, 1980 style, is an amorphous aggregation of synthesizers and restaters."<sup>6</sup> As for the differences, the distinguishing characteristics of public management appear to be:

1. The inclusion of general management functions such as planning, organizing, control, and evaluation in lieu of discussion of social values and conflicts of bureaucracy and democracy;
2. An instrumental orientation favoring criteria of economy and efficiency in lieu of equity, responsiveness, or political salience;
3. A pragmatic focus on mid-level managers in lieu of the perspective of political or policy elites;

## IMPORTANCE OF TIME & PLACE

- "A response to a set of special social conditions" (Hood, 1991)
- Already established by 1970s: state authority, basic capacity
- Problems of advanced welfare states in the late twentieth century:
  - Mounting evidence of implementation failure
  - Growing cost of entitlements and services
  - Taxpayer revolts
- "[T]he belief that governments had become 'overloaded' and that Western states had become unaffordable [and] ineffective" (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2011)

## WESTERN CRITICISMS

- "PA has lost sight of the big picture." Christopher Pollitt, 2016
- "Public 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 ... to address the big issues that contemporary political systems have to deal with." Per Laegreid, 2016
- "Big questions about state capacity and legitimacy go largely unaddressed by leading researchers and journals in our field." Brint Milward, 2016
- "It is also impossible to ignore the complaints ... that public management is missing big trends and the potential for big impacts on big questions." Donald Kettl, 2016

## EASTERN CRITICISMS

- Inattention to distinctive *needs* of Asian states
  - Economic development, societal cohesion
- Inattention to distinctive *conditions*
  - Politics, culture, economy, societal divisions, institutional inheritances
- Inconsistency with leaders' *vision*
  - "governing philosophy" of leaders (Im 2017)
  - "vision and judgment of political leadership" (Xue and Zhong 2012)
  - "strategies of governing elites" (Cheung 2002)

## NEGLECT OF FRAGILE STATES

- States in which authority and legitimacy are not well established
- Fragile States Index:
  - 53 of 178 states are stable
  - 125 states are fragile
  - 66 states are on "high warning" or "alert" lists
- Even in "stable" states, concern about:
  - Border integrity
  - Legitimate use of force
  - Factionalization of elites
  - Dysfunctionality of major institutions
  - Division between racial and religious groups, social classes, sections

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

## CONTEST OF SYSTEMS

"What we may be witnessing is . . . the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government." – Francis Fukuyama, 1989

**Has China Discovered a Better Political System Than Democracy?**

**The End of the Anglo-American Order**

**Liberal World Order, R.I.P.**

Donald Trump vindicates those sick of the west's lectures

**The Rise and Rise of Populism?**

**WHAT IS PUTINISM?**

## THREE LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

- *Micro-level (BPA)*: Study of the attitudes and behavior of citizens, employees, or managers within the public sector.
- *Meso-level*: Study of the design and management of specific organizations, networks of organizations, and programs within the public sector.
- *Macro-level*: Study of the overall role of the state, of the architecture of institutions that constitute the state, and of adaptation of these institutions to changing conditions.

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ARGUMENT

## Grand Strategy Isn't Grand Enough

The world's best national security minds know to study every aspect of foreign policy. That's not enough.

BY ALASDAIR ROBERTS | FEBRUARY 20, 2018, 3:38 PM

However, we confront a conceptual problem. If there are two grand strategies — one foreign, one domestic — is either one of them really grand? Moreover, do leaders really think this way? We know the answer to these questions. Leaders do not keep Machiavelli's two fears in separate boxes. They manage both at the same time and search for a coherent approach — a single strategy for governing — that reconciles domestic and foreign pressures at the same time.

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## STRATEGIES FOR GOVERNING

- States have leaders, and leaders have strategies that define
  - national priorities
  - policies to advance those priorities
  - projects of institutional renovation
- Strategy-making is difficult: Goal conflicts, uncertainties, resistance to execution, and changing circumstances
- Strategies are fragile, need revision



## COMPARISON WITHIN ONE COUNTRY



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## COMPARISON AMONG STATES



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## JUDGING STRATEGIES

CAN  
GOVERNMENT  
DO ANYTHING  
RIGHT?

Alasdair MacIntyre

Throughout history, leaders have pursued many other governance strategies as well. We can make moral judgments about each of these strategies. We can also make purely practical judgments about which strategies will hold up in the long run – that is, about the survival prospects of a state that pursues one strategy or another.

## WHY STRATEGY MATTERS

- Constrains choices at the meso-level
  - Institutional construction and renovation driven by strategy
  - eg: neoliberalism and the "reinventing government" movement
- And micro-level interactions
  - Objects, human beings, subjects, citizens (thin and thick), aliens, taxpayers, customers, consumers
  - Clients, civil servants, administrators of the law, advocates, service providers



#### WHAT WE NEED NOW

- Tolerance for experimentation
- Conceptual innovation
- Risk-taking

Let me first ask the question: Is public administration responding at a high level of consciousness and self-consciousness to the fact that we are in a time of revolutions? Despite all I said above about our being deeply involved one way or another—as cause, effect, and process—my own response would be: No.

Dwight Waldo, April 1968