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School of Public Policy

Strategies for Governing: Reinventing Public Administration for a Dangerous Century

Alasdair Roberts
www.alasdairroberts.ca
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The problem of representation in scholarship

- The field of public administration as a system for producing and distributing knowledge
 - Professional and scholarly associations
 - Journals
 - Conferences
- Dominated by a handful of unusual countries
 - Wealthy, small (except for US), stable liberal democracies
- A system that sets the research agenda
- But neglects the problems confronting most countries and people in the world
 - Fragility, instability, limited capabilities, corruption, limited and contested freedoms

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What countries are represented in the top ten PA journals?

Country	Total	Percent	Cumulative	Population
USA	1058	32.9%	32.9%	330 million
United Kingdom	381	11.8%	44.7%	67 million
Netherlands	246	7.6%	52.4%	17 million
Germany	219	6.8%	59.2%	83 million
Italy	132	4.1%	63.3%	60 million
Denmark	128	4.0%	67.3%	6 million
Switzerland	100	3.1%	70.4%	9 million
Australia	95	3.0%	73.3%	26 million
China	91	2.8%	76.2%	1.4 billion
Canada	89	2.8%	78.9%	38 million
Belgium	83	2.6%	81.5%	12 million
Sweden	69	2.1%	83.6%	10 million

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What
countries
aren't
represented
in top
journals?

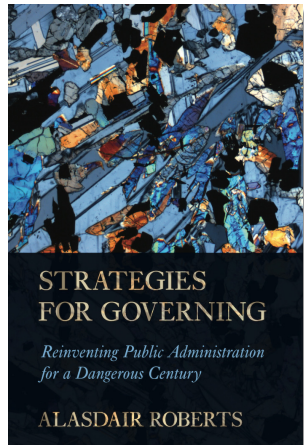
Country	Population	Percent of articles
China	1.4 billion	2.8%
India	1.4 billion	0.1%
United States	333 million	32.9%
Indonesia	271 million	0.1%
Pakistan	225 million	0.2%
Brazil	214 million	0.7%
Nigeria	211 million	0.03%
Bangladesh	172 million	0.03%
Russia	147 million	0.2%
Mexico	126 million	0.3%

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What should we do?

- Organizations that claim a global role should have global representation on their governing bodies
- “Global” journals and conferences should change work methods to improve representation
- “Global” journals and associations should spend money to improve representation
- Everyone should question the research agenda of “top-ranked” journals and conferences
- Policy schools in the Global South should decide their own curricular needs

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Queens' School of Public Policy 11/26/20

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Raise the level of analysis

Take the long view

Fragility is the norm

Institutions are changeable

The US is not exceptional

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Levels of analysis in public administration

Macro-level: Study of the governance strategies that are devised by leaders to advance critical national interests, and the ways in which these strategies influence the overall architecture of the state.

Meso-level: Study of the design, consolidation, administration and reform of specific institutions, networks of institutions, and programs within the public sector.

Micro-level: Study of the attitudes and behavior of citizens, employees and other people within the public sector.

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The “Public Management approach”

- **Scope:**
 - Level of analysis: Agencies, networks, programs
 - Major concern: Agency and program effectiveness
 - "Public managers are responsible for translating the goals and objectives of policymakers into tangible operating results." (Hill and Lynn 2016)
- **Method:**
 - "Rigorous empirical analysis" (Welch and Wong, 1998)
- **Infrastructure:**
 - Associations (PMRA, IRSPM, IPMN, APPAM, AoM)
 - Journals (JPART, PMR, IPMJ, JPAM)
 - Degrees, specializations, courses, textbooks, chairs

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Grand politics of the PM approach

- Approach contains an **implicit theory about politics**
- "A response to a set of special social conditions" (Hood, 1991) in First World democracies
- **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)

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Some defects of the PM approach

- **Inability to articulate and think critically about the premises underlying the approach**
- Not a problem when the underlying premises are generally accepted, “taken for granted”
- But we are not in a period of calm
- For the past twenty years, we have confronted a series of fundamental challenges that have required a readjustment of premises about overall priorities

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Coronavirus Pandemic
Terror attacks
Climate Catastrophe
Partisan Polarization
The China Challenge
Financial Crisis
digital populism
Migrant Crisis **post-Brexit**

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Needed: a macro-level framework

- **States, leaders, and general goals**
 - Internal order and legitimacy, external security and legitimacy, prosperity, survival in office, human rights
- **Circumstances:** the "governing environment"
 - Demography, geography, economy, technology, culture and institutions, geopolitics
- Leaders define **strategies for governing** that define priorities and major lines of policy
- The **institutional complex** of the state as the expression of strategy

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CAN GOVERNMENT DO ANYTHING RIGHT?

Alasdair

Government leaders craft strategies to pursue national objectives given the circumstances that confront them at a particular moment. Leaders want to believe that they have crafted an overall strategy that will work forever, a durable way of managing national problems. But leaders are always disappointed. Circumstances change and strategies have to be reconsidered and overhauled. This process of self-scrutiny and adaptation is unpleasant but unavoidable.

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Leaders implement governance strategies by designing, consolidating, administering, and renovating institutions—that is, laws, organizations, programs, and practices. Every state consists of a complex of institutions that expresses a strategy for governing.

From Strategies for Governing, 2019

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FP news | opinion | regions | channels | features | the magazine
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, 2019, 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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Three challenges for leaders

- **Making strategy** -- hard because:
 - Goals conflict with one another
 - Uncertainty about how best to achieve goals
 - Turbulence: conditions change quickly
 - Limits on decision-making capacity
- **Executing strategy**
 - Designing, consolidating, running institutions
- **Adapting strategy**
 - Ideational and institutional deconsolidation and reconstruction
 - Hard because institutions and ideas are "sticky"

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No "one best way" to govern

- **Pressure for conformity:**
 - The "end of history" – Francis Fukuyama, 1989
 - The "Washington consensus" – John Williamson, 1990
 - The "single model for national success" – George W. Bush, 2002
- **We should expect strategies and institutions to vary:**
 - Between countries
 - Within countries over time
- Because conditions vary and judgment is difficult
- Implication: Strategy-making is a **craft not a science**

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Strategies vary between countries and over time

- Strategies should be effective, durable, & normatively defensible
- But strategies don't last forever
 - India: From Nehruism to Modi-ism
 - China: From Maoism to Deng Xiaoping Theory to Xi Jinping Thought
 - United States: From New Dealism to Reaganism to Trumpism
- **"We cannot expect new stable states that will endure even for our own lifetimes. We must learn to understand, guide, influence and manage these transformations." — Donald Schön**

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Taking the long view

- The problem of presentism in contemporary scholarship
 - The last twenty years?
- Need a longer retrospective view to see:
 - Operation of slow-moving forces
 - Precedents for current shocks
 - Evolution of strategies and state structures
 - For example, the neoliberal era
- And a longer prospective view
 - **A license to speculate about future states**

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Recognizing fragility as the norm

- Fragile states: where authority and legitimacy are not well established
- Fragile States Index:
 - 125 of 178 states are fragile
 - 66 states are on high warning/alert list
- Even in “stable” states:
 - Turbulence in the governing environment
 - Concerns about polarization, legitimacy, governability

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Institutions are changeable

- The predisposition to see institutions as “sticky [and] resistant to change”
- Depends on:
 - Temporal frame
 - Assumptions about the “right” speed of adaptation
- Contrast with assumptions in other fields
- And with observed changes in state architectures (and states themselves) in response to new conditions, new governance strategies

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Topics for research

- Describing strategies and patterns of change
- The process of strategy formulation and adaptation
- Institutional support for high-level strategy-making
 - Composition and continuity in leadership
 - Foresight and planning capabilities
 - Support for deliberation
 - Capacity to monitor execution
- Effects of state-level strategy on meso- and micro-levels of administration

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