



"Farmhouse in Provence"
Vincent van Gogh, 1888

JPNA

JOURNAL OF PUBLIC AND NONPROFIT AFFAIRS

SPRING 2018
VOLUME 4 ISSUE 1

Research Articles

- Start-Up Funding Intentions Among Nascent Nonprofit Entrepreneurs: An Exploratory Investigation
Fredrik O. Andersson
- Nonprofit Economic Development Organizations and the Institutional Arrangement of Local Economic Development
William Hatcher
Augustine Hammond
- Who's Supporting Whom, and is it Helping? Toward a Typology of Nonprofit Infrastructure Organizations and a Framework for Their Assessment
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Survey Articles

- Demons, Spirits, and Elephants: Reflections on the Failure of Public Administration Theory
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- Exorcising Our Demons: Comments on a New Direction for Public Administration Theory
Bruce D. McDonald, III
- Commentary on Demons, Spirits, and Elephants
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Book Reviews

- Nonprofits as Policy Solutions to the Burden of Government by Bryce J. Herrington
Benoy Jacob
- Managing Public and Nonprofit Organizations: Stories of Success and Failure by Charles Coe
David Ryan Miller

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JOURNAL OF PUBLIC AND NONPROFIT AFFAIRS
a journal of the Midwest Public Affairs Conference

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Statement of Purpose

The *Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs (JPNA)* focuses on providing a connection between the practice and research of public affairs. This is accomplished with scholarly research, practical applications of the research, and no fees for publishing or journal access. *JPNA* publishes research from diverse theoretical, methodological, and disciplinary backgrounds that addresses topics related to the affairs and management of public and nonprofit organizations.

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Letter from the Editors

Lindsey M. McDougle – Rutgers University - Newark

Bruce D. McDonald, III – North Carolina State University

With this first issue of volume four we, Lindsey and Bruce, would like to introduce to *JPNA* readers our newest editorial team.

Recently, we transitioned into the role of *JPNA* co-editors; and, we are thankful for the leadership of our predecessor, Robert Eger. Through Robert's vision and guidance *JPNA* has continued to demonstrate theoretical innovations and empirical rigorousness—meeting the highest standards of scholarship in the field.

With our transition into the role of co-editors, there will undoubtedly be big shoes to fill; however, we have appointed a new editorial team that we believe will allow us to continue building the reputation of *JPNA* as a high quality open-source publication outlet for disseminating scholarly and practitioner insights regarding public and nonprofit affairs.

To assist us in the management of the journal, we have appointed three associate editors:

- Dr. Sam Stone of California State University-Fullerton;
- Dr. Myung Jin of Virginia Commonwealth University; and,
- Dr. Mirae Kim of Georgia State University.

In addition to these associate editors, we have three context specific editors:

- Dr. Sarah Larson of the University of Central Florida is the social media editor;
- Dr. Marcus Lam of University of San Diego is the book review editor; and,
- Dr. Marlene Walk of Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis is the current issues in practice editor.

As Editors-in-Chief of the journal, and with this new editorial team in place, we plan to continue providing an outlet for high quality research on public and nonprofit affairs (evaluated on the basis of substance, methodology, originality, and relevance to *JPNA*'s readership). We also plan to continue providing an outlet for practitioner-oriented work that links research with the practice of public and nonprofit affairs.

In this issue, we have three excellent research articles, one comprehensive survey article (with two commentaries), and two book reviews. We extend a heartfelt thank you to:

- All of the authors for their interest in *JPNA*;

- The countless peer reviewers who have assisted us in reviewing manuscript submissions; and,
- All of you who have used using social media and other means for helping *JNPA* to grow in popularity within the field.

We look forward to receiving many more manuscript submissions in 2018!

Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs

Vol. 4, No. 1

Introduction to the Issue

Bruce D. McDonald, III – North Carolina State University

Lindsey M. McDougale – Rutgers University - Newark

The 2018 Midwest Public Affairs Conference (MPAC) is approaching soon. The theme for this year's conference is *Adapting Public Service to an Age of Technological Change*. With this theme, we seek to understand the future of public service—a future that, undoubtedly, will demand new forms of professional competence from its managers. We're certain that the research and discussions at the 2018 MPAC conference will be fruitful; and, we hope that it will help us all to better understand the technological advances and changes taking place within public service organizations (including nonprofits). Indeed, from algorithmic mechanization, to big data, to block chain, and machine learning there is a wide range of innovations taking place in the public sector that will fundamentally reshape society in the years to come.

Whether you plan to attend the MPAC conference or not, we encourage you to submit your best work to *Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs* (JPNA). JPNA provides a rigorous open-source outlet for disseminating high quality research from diverse theoretical, methodological, and disciplinary backgrounds that address topics related to the affairs and management of public and nonprofit organizations.

As a new journal, we have undergone a number of “firsts” in the past several years. With the first issue in volume 4, we are taking another first: the handing of the editorial reigns to a new editorial team (McDougale & McDonald, 2018). In this first issue of the *Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs* under the new editorial reigns, we proud to publish three new pieces of research which focus on nonprofit management. In the first piece, Andersson (2018) explores the start-up funding intentions of nonprofit entrepreneurs. Although securing financial resources is not the only step in establishing a nonprofit organization, it is a critical step. Using a survey of 103 nascence nonprofit entrepreneurs, Andersson shows that funding intentions are dynamic. That is, they draw on multiple sources for the funding but they also alter the funding structure of nonprofits as they age.

Next, Hatcher and Hammond (2018) answer the question of why communities use nonprofits to manage their economic development. To answer this question, they utilize the 2014 economic development survey from the International City/County Management Association. The findings suggest that the decision to rely on a nonprofit is tied to the size of the city such that smaller cities are more likely to utilize them. They also conclude that the decision to use a nonprofit influences the development tools that the community uses. In the last research article of this issue, Prentice and Brudney (2018) reconsider the organizations that support nonprofit activity. This is accomplished by developing a novel typology that offers new insight into their goals and

functions. For the practitioner, the piece provides a series of lessons on the management and leadership of these organizations.

In our “Survey Essays” section, we are pleased to published Dubnick’s (2018) epic, “Demons, Spirits, and Elephants: Reflections on the Failure of Public Administration.” Originally written in 1999, the essay has not been previously published due to its length. Thanks to the digital platform of the journal, we are able to bring this piece to press in its entirety. In conjunction the essays publication, we are happy to publish two commentaries that discuss the relevancy of Dubnick’s piece to the field today. McDonald (2018) provides the second commentary, in which he discusses the future of public administration in context of Dubnick’s criticisms. McDonald’s commentary focuses how a look at the history of the field can help resolve the crisis with which the field struggles. The second is commentary is presented by Feiock (2018). In Feiock’s commentary, he reflects on his experience watching the first presentation of Dubnick’s paper at the annual conference of the American Political Science Association in 1999.

The issue is completed with two book reviews. In the first review, Jacob (2018) reviews Herrington J. Bryce’s book *Nonprofits as Policy Solutions to the Burden of Government*. In the review, Jacob discusses the use of the text as a guidebook for practitioners seeking to develop sustainable nonprofit organizations. In the second review, Miller (2018) provides a review of *Managing Public and Nonprofit Organizations: Stories of Success and Failure* by Charles Coe. In his review, Miller discusses Coe’s use of stories to demonstrate the principles that are the foundation of public administration and the utility of the book in the learning process.

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Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs

Vol. 4, No. 1

Start-Up Funding Intentions Among Nascent Nonprofit Entrepreneurs: An Exploratory Investigation

Fredrik O. Andersson – Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis

This paper explores the start-up funding intentions of nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs, i.e., individuals in the process of creating a new formal nonprofit organization. The main questions being examined are from which sources nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs anticipate to obtain start-up funding from, how much start-up funding nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs anticipate they will need to formally launch their new nonprofit, and if there are any differences in funding intentions among nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs with and without previous start-up experience. The results from a survey of 103 nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs in Kansas City are presented and contrasted with existing research on funding of new nonprofit organizations. The results show an apparent preference for start-up funding from philanthropic grants and private donations, along with personal contributions of the founder(s).

Keywords: Nascent Entrepreneurs, Start-Up Funding, Intentions

The creation of a nonprofit organization is not a random event but the result of a process that includes multiple undertakings, many of which occur before the formal launch of the new organization (during the so-called pre-organization or nascent phase) (Dollhopf & Scheitle, 2016). Although personal commitment, sweat equity, and determining a vision/mission are key features of the pre-organization phase, one of the most important undertakings for nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs is to identify and decide from whom to obtain the financial resources necessary to support the fledgling nonprofit during its first year(s) of operations. As Bryce (2000, p. 3) pointed out, “Without money, no mission can be met or advanced in a market economy no matter how charitable or benevolent the mission may be.”

Strategizing about start-up funding is an important undertaking, not only because nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs have multiple funding options to consider and select from, but also because these early funding strategies are likely to play a significant role in determining whether the start-up attempt will be successful or fail. Some scholars have noted how the inability to obtain start-up financing represents one of the biggest barriers to entry for social venture start-ups (Scarlata, Alemany, & Zacharakis, 2012). Previous studies have typically examined the type and amount of start-up funding obtained by successful nonprofit entrepreneurs i.e., those

actually succeeding in launching a new nonprofit (Van Slyke & Lecy, 2012; Young & Grinsfelder, 2011). However, as noted earlier, start-up funding intentions are formulated *before* the nonprofit is formally established during the nascent organizational stage (Steinberg, 2006; Haugh, 2007). By only targeting successful nonprofit entrepreneurs (in addition to the selection bias resulting from including only start-up efforts that actually resulted in up-and-running nonprofits), these studies are less likely to capture the full spectrum of start-up funding intentions, which is necessary if our goal is (for example) to explain which start-up funding strategies are more or less effective for starting a new nonprofit.

The purpose of this article is to paint a broader picture of start-up funding intentions among nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs. Specifically, this article means to explore the following questions: From whom do nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs plan to acquire initial start-up funding, covering the start-up investments and expenses in year one of the emerging nonprofit (as well as early operational funding for the next coming years)? Which funding sources are seen as the most important for start-up funding among nonprofit entrepreneurs? Are there differences in the start-up-funding preferences and intentions depending on which mission area the emerging nonprofit plans to enter? Are there differences in the start-up funding preferences and intentions between experienced and novice nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs? To investigate these questions, the articles draw from survey answers from 103 nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs, here defined as individuals in the early process of creating a new nonprofit venture, in Kansas City.

The reader will quickly note, however, that this study also has obvious limitations. First, as already mentioned, this is an exploratory study. As such, the objective is neither to test hypotheses nor to claim any findings to be generalizable beyond the discrete group of nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs explored in this study. Rather, it aims to show the importance of including a nascent perspective when examining nonprofit entrepreneurship. Empirical research examining nascent nonprofit activities remains tremendously scarce (see Bess, 1998, for an exception) or looks at the nascent stage in retrospect (Dollhopf & Scheitle, 2016). Hence, this article provides rare insight into the earliest phases of new nonprofit creation and serves as a starting point for future and much needed research on nascent nonprofit entrepreneurship. For example, this article investigates how different contingencies may shape early funding intentions and priorities. A second limitation of the study, also related to its exploratory nature, is its limited scope. The findings presented in this article come from individuals partaking in a free start-up workshop in one city setting. Clearly, not all nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs can or will utilize such a workshop (hence, this study also involves a selection bias issue to be cognizant about). Moreover, the answers received may be influenced by the Kansas City nonprofit community context in which the individuals answering are embedded. However, given the difficulty identifying and collecting data on nascent activity, the author still believes that a sufficiently large and diverse sample was obtained to warrant exploration. Finally, the study relies on cross-sectional data and can therefore not say anything about the consequences of the funding intentions with regard to, for example, start-up success rates. Still, despite lacking a longitudinal dimension, there is an opportunity to compare and contrast the findings of this study to previous studies examining the type of funding received by those succeeding in launching a new nonprofit start-up (Van Slyke & Lecy, 2012).

Literature Review

Nonprofit scholars have long discussed why the nonprofit sector exists and why new nonprofit organizations are being formed (Hansman, 1980; Young, 1983). Attention has also been given to

how new nonprofits, and the nonprofit entrepreneurs creating them, obtain and marshal financial and other resources to make these fledgling nonprofits operational and/or sustainable. Some start-up resources can be produced internally by leveraging and making do with resources already at hand, a practice referred to as bricolage (Baker & Nelson, 2005). For new social ventures, especially those operating in resource poor environments, bricolage has been recognized as a key resource mobilization strategy (Desa & Basu, 2013; Di Domenico, Haugh, & Tracey, 2010). Other resources must be obtained from external sources, and perhaps the most vital resource emanating from external actors is capital. For nonprofit entrepreneurs, there are multiple suppliers of capital, including individuals, foundations, corporations, and government (Chambré & Fatt, 2002; Young & Grinsfelder, 2011).

The requisite to construct a start-up resource base, in combination with the plurality of funding options available, means key considerations, selections, and design choices regarding start-up resources take place during the nascent stage (Haugh, 2007). Furthermore, as noted by Young and Grinsfelder (2011, p. 548), because nonprofit funders and investors only “tend to cover smaller proportions of overall resource needs for shorter periods of time,” nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs must strategize and select which funding sources to target and assess the quantity of resources needed from each of these sources to make the intended nonprofit operational. There is, of course, no guarantee such ex-ante funding assessments are always correct, yet, without having clarity of and confidence in the intended funding strategy, the nascent nonprofit entrepreneur cannot act in a decisive manner. The forming of such funding intentions aligns with Steinberg’s (2006) integrated theory, where potential nonprofit entrepreneurs, before deciding to act and form a new nonprofit, typically consider the costs of entry, agency costs, and resource availability.

The following section will discuss in more detail the various types of possible start-up funding resources accessible to nonprofit entrepreneurs. A key source, long recognized in the business entrepreneurship literature, consists of individuals with near ties to the entrepreneur, e.g., relatives, colleagues, friends, and neighbors (Ando, 1985; Steier, 2003). Such close and informal funders, including family, friends, and board members, have also been highlighted as potent sources of start-up capital for nonprofit entrepreneurs (Arrick, 1988). Andersson (2014) examined young nonprofits in Wisconsin and found that over 80% of organizations indicated they obtained funding directly from their board members. Still, Van Slyke and Lecy (2012), in their study of over 1,100 nonprofit start-ups, found that only one in four organizations received financial contributions from all of its board members during the first two years of operation. However, they also reported private individuals, including family and friends, were among the most important sources for initial investments for young nonprofits.

Arrick (1988) further identifies donations and grants as viable nonprofit start-up options. The centrality and importance of donations are shown in Van Slyke and Lecy’s (2012, p. 17) study “with 70% of nonprofits reporting that their most important source of funding in the first year came from donations.” Young and Grinsfelder (2011) conducted a close reading of cases of successful social enterprises to explore how they approached the task of securing funding for their organizations and found philanthropy to be the most common principal source of sustaining funding for these organizations. Furthermore, according to a report issued by SustainAbility and The Skoll Foundation (2007), many social entrepreneurs also look to foundations for start-up funding. When asked which sources of funding the social entrepreneurs felt offered the best avenues for them to pursue, nearly three out of four answered foundations. Foundation and corporate grants do, albeit to a lesser extent, appear to play a role in the nonprofit start-up funding mix, according to the study conducted by Van Slyke and Lecy (2012). Also, the report from SustainAbility and The Skoll Foundation (2007, p. 22) noted, “[o]ne of

most striking findings was the remarkable collapse in the number of entrepreneurs expecting to be relying completely on grants in five years.” In other words, though foundation grants may be considered a vital source of start-up funding, it is not necessarily seen as a long-term funding option.

Some nonprofit scholars emphasize the critical role of earned income for nonprofit entrepreneurs (e.g., Boschee & McClurg, 2003). The report by SustainAbility and The Skoll Foundation (2007) noted that nearly 60% of social entrepreneurs hoped to draw at least some funding from earned revenue such as fees and/or sales. The report also described how the majority of social entrepreneurs hope to move from donative toward commercial types of revenue as their organizations grow and evolve. Hence, whereas foundation grants appear to be of greater importance during the start-up stage and later phased out, the importance of earned income tends to grow as the organization evolves. Van Slyke and Lecy (2012) also noted capital from earned income played a much more modest role compared with philanthropic sources of funding during the first two years of operations. Still, 26% of the nonprofits in their sample did report obtaining earned revenue during the start-up stage.

Finally, previous research has highlighted access to credit cards, as well as personal savings, as an important determinant of entrepreneurial activity (e.g., Bennett & Dann, 2000; Chatterji & Seamans, 2012). Andersson (2014) found that nonprofit entrepreneurs frequently utilized their own credit cards as well as tapped into personal savings to capitalize their nonprofits. Interestingly, Van Slyke and Lecy (2012) reported a majority (84%) of young nonprofits did not take on any debt. However, it is unclear if debt in this context also included the use of personal credit cards or referred to bank loans.

In summary, obtaining start-up funding can be a daunting task, and the existing literature illustrates that young nonprofits tend to draw from a variety of funding sources during the start-up phase. The literature also indicates the revenue mix might shift and change as the organization develops. This paper now moves to build upon and expand this literature by studying in more detail the funding intentions among nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs.

Method

This article takes a descriptive quantitative approach to examine, compare, and contrast in some detail nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs’ funding intentions. A short survey was created, first asking the nascent nonprofit entrepreneur to briefly describe the purpose of his or her emerging organization. Second, each respondent was asked to provide an estimate of how much money he or she believes it would take to start and run an emerging venture the first year. Next, the nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs were asked to indicate where he/she/they intend to obtain funding for the first year of operations, choosing from a list of possible funding sources derived from the previous literature reviewed above. The list included eight options: (i) grants from foundations and/or corporations; (ii) government grants; (iii) donations from family/relatives, friends and/or private individuals; (iv) membership fees; (v) sales of goods and/or fees for services; (vi) personal savings and income; (vii) loans and/or personal credit; and, (viii) other (if selecting this option the respondents were asked to specify the funding source). In addition to asking about the type of funding sought, the survey also examined the relative importance of the different funding streams by asking the respondents to estimate how much of the total funding (as a percentage) they expected to obtain from each of the selected sources for the first year. Respondents were asked to repeat the procedure (type and of funding and expected percentage of funding from each source) for year five of operations. The purpose of this question was to

examine to what extent nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs anticipate making changes to their original funding strategy as the new nonprofit venture matures.

Each survey also asked about background variables such as age and gender, including whether the respondent had ever started a nonprofit or for-profit business in the past. This variable was included because previous scholarship suggests entrepreneurs acquire valuable insight from previous entrepreneurial experiences potentially impacting entrepreneurial judgment and evaluation (Cassar, 2014).

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing those researching nascent stage phenomena is sampling. Given the organization of a nascent nonprofit entrepreneur is in gestation, i.e., not yet formally established and registered, it can be difficult to identify who the nascent nonprofit entrepreneur is. To address this issue, researchers have conducted large-scale random telephone surveys attempting to find individuals involved in the creation of a new organization using various screening questions. However, this is a tremendously resource-heavy and time-demanding approach. Instead, the sample for this study consists of participants partaking in a free workshop called “Planning a New Nonprofit: Essential Planning Steps and Legal Requirements” organized by the Midwest Center for Nonprofit Leadership in Kansas City. As this program covers key basic practical procedures and steps to legally become a nonprofit organization, it is directed toward and attracts nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs, i.e., those engaged in activities that are intended to culminate in a viable organization.

Data were collected from participants in seven “Planning a New Nonprofit” workshops taking place from November 2013 to November 2014. At the beginning of each workshop occasion, the facilitators from the Midwest Center for Nonprofit Leadership distributed questionnaires and consent forms before the program started and explained the purpose of the study. A total of 189 individuals participated from November 2013 to November 2014. To identify those who might be considered active, nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs, a screening question was utilized: *Are you alone, or with others, currently trying to start up a new nonprofit organization?* Only those explicitly answering yes to this question were included in the final sample: 111 surveys were returned from the program participants; five questionnaires were only partially filled out and could not be used; and an additional three participants answered no to the above screening question. Hence, the final sample consisted of 103 nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs participating in the program, which represents a response rate of 54.5%.

Results and Discussion

Of the 103 nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs, 61% were women, the average age was 40.06 years (std dev. 12.84; Min 22; Max 76), and 35% indicated they had previously started an organization (of which 63% had started a business venture and 37% a nonprofit). Each respondent was also asked to briefly describe the type and purpose of the nonprofit they intended to create. Because nascent nonprofits are not formally registered, they have no NTEE code. Thus, a judgment call had to be made based on the description provided to determine organizational type: 19 entrepreneurs did not provide an answer, and 13 descriptions were too vague to make any useful classification (e.g., “the goal of my organization is to improve my local community”). Of the classified organizations, most were labeled *human services* (29) reflecting organizations whose primary purpose is to support the personal and social development of individuals and families. This category included ventures focusing on serving the elderly, the unemployed, the poor, and the developmentally disabled. In addition, respondents describing their new nonprofit being focused on food security, housing, and youth development were included in the human services

Table 1. Intended Sources of Start-Up Funding (Year 1) and Operational Funding (Year 5)

Source	Year 1 (%)	Year 5 (%)
Philanthropic Grants	67	71
Donations	57	75
Personal Income	45	4
Sales and Fees	34	44
Government Grants	26	26
Membership	22	32
Loans and Credit	16.5	1
Other		
Angel investor/donor	17	4
Donation from church	11	9
Crowd funding	5	-
Donation from other nonprofit organizations	3	3
Donation from municipality	3	-
Donation from school/educational institution	3	-
Money earned from special start-up event	< 1	-
Money earned from sales of property	< 1	-
Earnings from investments	< 1	-

category. Fifteen new ventures were labeled *arts and culture* organizations, including “a children’s museum,” “performing art space,” and an “independent theatre group.” Fifteen new ventures were labeled *education* organizations, reflecting nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs explicitly seeking to open new schools and/or educational programs. The remaining organizations were labeled *environment* (7), including “an urban agriculture initiative to support a greener city” and a “water preservation action group,” *religion related* (3), and health (2) organizations (ventures promoting the prevention and treatment of illnesses).

In terms of the estimated start-up capital needs for the first year of operation: 9% indicated start-up capital needs of less than \$5,000; 46% indicated start-up capital needs to fall between \$5,000 and \$10,000; 31% indicated start-up capital needs in the \$10,000 to \$20,000 range; 14% estimated start-up capital needs exceeding \$20,000. In their study of over 1,000 successful founders of nonprofits, Van Slyke and Lecy (2012) reported the typical nonprofit start-up costs were approximately \$5,000, and about one in four of new nonprofits reported start-up costs over \$20,000. Also, of the nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs estimating start-up capital needs exceeding \$20,000, approximately 30% were located in the education subsector grouping.

In addition, based on feedback from the program facilitators, nearly all workshop participants reside and plan to operate in the greater Kansas City metropolitan area. The Kansas City MSA currently has more than 7,500 IRS registered charitable nonprofits, and about one-third of these organizations (2,449) report annual revenues of more than \$25,000 (Midwest Center for Nonprofit Leadership, 2015). The Kansas City nonprofit sector is comparable, in terms of size, to those of other similar US metro regions, and human services agencies comprise the largest share of organizations (28%) in the region’s nonprofit sector. Kansas City also has a strong community of over 500 foundations, including one of the biggest community foundations in the United States, and nearly one in four of all Missouri and Kansas foundations are based in the Kansas City metro region. Previous research has also reported that Kansas City-area households make charitable donations that significantly exceed the national average, and that a larger share of charitable giving in Kansas City, compared with the rest of the nation, is directed through foundations (Center of Philanthropy, 2009).

The first question to be examined is from whom nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs plan to acquire funding to cover the start-up investments/expenses of their emerging nonprofit. Table 1 shows all sources mentioned by the respondents, and the percentage of nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs indicating they intend to obtain some level of funding from this particular source. Table 1 also shows from which sources the nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs intend to obtain operational funding in five years from now.

The average number of funding sources in the nascent entrepreneurs' funding portfolio was 3.12 (std. dev. 1.28) for Year 1 and 2.61 (std. dev. 0.88) in Year 5. There are two initial observations to be made from the above results. First, start-up funding intentions of nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs are highly heterogeneous. Although a majority of respondents consider some level of philanthropic grants and donations to be part of the start-up funding mix, nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs are looking to a wide spectrum of potential funding sources to help cover start-up expenses and investments. Moreover, while not explicitly asked to mention any nonmonetary means to support the emerging nonprofit, four of 10 nascent entrepreneurs commented they intended to utilize some type of bootstrapping method such as pro-bono services, borrowing equipment, or operating the new nonprofit from home during the start-up stage. Second, as the new nonprofit transitions from the start-up (year 1) to a more mature stage (year 5), there is a shift away from the personal and alternative to more "traditional" means of funding. These planned alterations in funding structure point to the presence of a start-up mode of funding where, in addition to philanthropic grants and donations, funding emanating from the nascent nonprofit entrepreneur him/herself (e.g., personal savings and credit), and various types of seed funding (e.g., angel donors, various institutional donations, and crowd funding) play a significant role.

However, table 1 gives no indication about the relative importance of the different funding sources. Given the breadth of possible funding options, which are seen as the most important for start-up funding? Philanthropic grants are clearly considered important, as two out of three nascent entrepreneurs seek to utilize such grants to cover a portion of their total start-up funding needs. However, if we group the nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs by their estimated start-up capital needs, a somewhat more diverse picture emerges. For example, among the nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs estimating their start-up capital needs to be less than \$5,000, the most important source(s) of funding is found in the "other" category. In fact, all respondents in this group indicated the intention to obtain funding from "other" sources (in particular from an angel donor or donations from a church) that would cover, on average, nearly 60% of the total start-up capital needs. This can be contrasted with the group estimating start-up capital needs exceeding \$20,000, where only 14% indicated they intended to obtain funding in the "other" category. Instead, the most important funding sources emphasized by the nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs in this group are philanthropic and government grants, and 65% indicated they would rely on personal savings and income to cover, on average, about one-third of the start-up expenses and investments. Finally, among the nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs estimating their start-up capital needs to be fall between \$5,000 to \$20,000, two funding sources stand out as particularly critical: philanthropic grants and individual donations. When combined, we find nearly two-thirds of respondents in this group intend for these two sources to cover a majority of their start-up capital needs. Still, very few intend for these grants and donations to cover all of their start-up capital needs. Close to half of the respondents in this group indicate they would obtain (on average) 20% of the start-up capital from personal savings and income. Furthermore, 44% indicated they would use "other" means, 32% would use money made from sales, and 25% would draw on membership fees.

Table 2. Top Three Intended Sources of Start-Up Funding and Average Funding Expected

Organization Type	Funding Source	Frequency ^a (%)	Mean ^b (%)
Human Service (n=29)	Philanthropic Grants	79	45
	Donations	69	33
	Personal Income	45	25
Arts and Culture (n=15)	Sales and Fees	76	40
	Donations	66	29
	Philanthropic Grants	60	30
Education (n=15)	Government Grants	66	40
	Philanthropic Grants	66	35
	Donations	60	35
Other (n=12)	Philanthropic Grants	58	45
	Government Grants	50	40
	Personal Income	42	20
Unknown (n=32)	Philanthropic Grants	62	45
	Personal Income	56	30
	Donations + Other	56	25/25

^a Percentage of respondents indicating they would seek funding from this source

^b Average share of funding respondents anticipate to obtain from this source to cover total start-up capital needs (numbers have been rounded)

When we separate the nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs into groups based on their estimated overall start-up capital needs, some variation can be observed in terms of what funding sources are considered most important. However, the \$5,000 to \$20,000 group encompasses more than 75% of the nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs in the sample. A different view is presented in table 2, which displays the most frequently mentioned start-up funding sources based on the subsector each nascent nonprofit entrepreneur plans to enter. Table 2 also reports the percentage of funding (on average) the nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs in each group anticipates to obtain from each funding source to help cover their total start-up capital needs.

Looking at the three specified subsector categories (human service, arts, and education), there appears to be some support for the idea that subsector choice matters in shaping the funding intentions of nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs. Respondents in the human services group clearly favor philanthropic start-up funding, whereas earned income plays a major role in the arts and culture group and government funding in the education group. This finding reinforces the basic gist of benefits theory (Young, 2017), which postulates that revenue streams for nonprofits stem from the nature of the services offered by the organization.

Still, table 2 also unequivocally reveals the central role philanthropic funding sources play in the minds of nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs as they prepare to start up their organizations. Philanthropic grants are the most frequently mentioned source for start-up funding in four of the five groups, and individual donations are considered a top-three funding source in four of five groups. The importance nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs place on philanthropic funds, philanthropic grants in particular, is noteworthy for several reasons and raises questions for future research. First, philanthropic funding is unquestionably perceived as a viable source for start-up capital among nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs, but is it really? Both donations and grants have indeed been highlighted as potential sources for nonprofit seed funding (Arrick, 1988). The importance of philanthropy for new nonprofits also has some empirical support. Van Slyke and Lecy (2012) found the most critical source of capital for nonprofits in their first year of operations was, by far, private donations. Thus, nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs appear to

appropriately identify individual donations as crucial and viable funding sources to help cover start-up capital needs. Van Slyke and Lecy's study also asked about philanthropic grants, but, in contrast with individual donations, they found less than a third of new nonprofit start-ups had received some sort of a foundation or corporate grant during year one. Also, only 14% of the nonprofit entrepreneurs in Van Slyke and Lecy's study considered philanthropic grants to be their most important funding source during the start-up phase. So, with regard to foundation and corporate grants, there is an incongruity in terms of the relative importance nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs place on these grants compared with nonprofit entrepreneurs actually having started a new nonprofit.

A second observation is that many of the nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs, irrespective of the mission-orientation of the emerging organization, intend to compete for philanthropic grant dollars they are unlikely to get. Faulk and Andersson (2015) investigated foundation grants made to new nonprofits in Milwaukee between 2003 and 2012 and reported that new nonprofit start-ups receive grants at significantly lower rates than already established nonprofits. According to Faulk and Andersson, these findings lend support to the notion that new nonprofits face a liability of newness, making nonprofit entrepreneurs less likely to secure foundation funding during the start-up phase. It is also feasible to assume that emerging nonprofits will have limited fundraising capacity, which further diminishes their likelihood of securing grants on an already highly competitive market for philanthropic grant dollars. Furthermore, a study by the Center of Philanthropy (2009) reported that the median grant size from Kansas City foundations for all types of recipients was \$2,000. So, even if a new nonprofit is able to obtain a foundation grant, the size of such a grant is likely to be quite modest. So if, as suggested by Steinberg (2006), potential nonprofit entrepreneurs do consider the costs of entry, agency costs, and resource availability before deciding to form a new nonprofit, then why are they opting for a source of funding they are not likely to obtain? One option is that nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs are overconfident and overoptimistic (or just foolish) (Koellinger, Minniti, & Schade, 2007).

Future studies need to examine if nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs are more susceptible to certain cognitive biases leading to erroneous inferences or assumptions. A second option is that nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs believe they can offer something new and innovative, which gives the emerging nonprofit a competitive advantage, thus allowing them to attract hard-to-come-by philanthropic funding. It is worth noting that, when Van Slyke and Lecy (2012) asked the question, "Would you say your nonprofit is innovative?" more than three out of four nonprofit entrepreneurs in their sample answered yes. However, the extent to which new nonprofit entrepreneurs truly introduce new and innovative services remains an understudied subject. A third option is that securing a foundation grant brings legitimacy to the emerging organization. Receiving such a "stamp of approval" from an established funding source thus works as a powerful signal to other funders thinking of investing in the new venture. As noted by Faulk, McGinnis Johnson, and Lecy (2017, p. 263), "[i]n the context of foundation grants, we expect nonprofit organizations' previous funding relationships with other foundations in a market to increase an organization's perceived status and quality. If a nonprofit has received prior grants, it has already been vetted by other foundations and therefore is perceived as more trustworthy or effective."

A third observation is that many nascent entrepreneurs in this study, rather than seeking to start up new organizations in mission areas with few existing agencies, are planning to start new nonprofits in mission niches where a lot of organizations are already in operation, e.g., human services and education (Midwest Center for Nonprofit Leadership, 2015). While it is important to note that several of the nascent nonprofits in this study are in the unknown category, one

Table 3. Differences in Intended Sources of Start-Up Funding and Average Funding Expected Between Experienced and Novice Nonprofit Nascent Entrepreneurs

Funding Source	Previous Start-Up Experience (n=36)		No Previous Start-Up Experience (n=67)	
	Frequency ^a (%)	Mean ^b (%)	Frequency ^a (%)	Mean ^b (%)
Philanthropic Grants	64	21	69	50
Donations	22	31	28	34
Personal Income	53	30	60	34
Sales and Fees	33	22	16	45
Government Grants	53	21	24	32
Membership	72	29	30	24
Loans and Credit	42	20	3	30
Other	64	24	34	39

^a Percentage of respondents indicating they would seek funding from this source

^b Average share of funding respondents anticipate to obtain from this source to cover total start-up capital needs (numbers have been rounded)

could make the argument nascent entrepreneurs ought to start new nonprofits in mission niches with less competitors. Such niches might enjoy greater surplus margins and provide more opportunities for growth. For example, in the study conducted by the Center of Philanthropy (2009), international aid organizations in Kansas City received (on average) the largest grant size, averaging over \$40,000 with a median grant size of \$3,750. Still, no nascent entrepreneurs with an identified mission niche indicated they would start an international aid organization. Clearly, individuals are unlikely to create new nonprofits solely focusing on which mission niche offers the best chances for funding. But if the goal is to create a sustainable new nonprofit, then scanning for viable sources of funding must be part of the start-up funding strategy. The finding that a majority of nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs in this study will enter an already dense population, with significant competition for funds, suggest many are on a path toward failure. Still, to date we know relatively little about nonprofit entrepreneurial failure, and, in order to progress in this area, more research is certainly needed to assess failure rates of nascent nonprofits, and trying to find robust explanations as to why some nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs succeed while others do not.

To better comprehend the funding intentions of nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs, we may also need to pay closer attention to the background and experiences of the nascent nonprofit entrepreneur. As observed by Brush, Greene, and Hart (2001, p. 64), obtaining and marshaling start-up funding is a daunting task, and, because emerging organizations have no history, little accumulated organizational knowledge, or formal reputation to fall back on, nascent “strategic resource decisions are based on judgment using only current information.” One factor scholars have found that affects these judgments are the insights entrepreneurs acquire from previous entrepreneurial experiences (Cassar, 2014). To examine whether prior entrepreneurial experience has any impact on start-up funding intentions, the respondents were separated into two groups: those with and those without previous start-up experience. Nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs with prior start-up experience were somewhat older ($M=43.83$) than those with no previous experience ($M=37.94$) and intended to use more sources of funding ($M=4.00$; std. dev. 1.24) compared with those with no previous start-up experience ($M=2.64$; std. dev. 1.04, $t(101)=5.89$; $p<0.00$). There were no differences between the two groups in terms of how much money they estimated needing to start the emerging nonprofit organization. Table 3 shows the start-up funding intentions for the two groups.

Are there any differences in the start-up funding preferences and intentions between experienced and novice nascent entrepreneurs? Again, we find philanthropic grants play a central role for both groups, although respondents with no previous experience intend for philanthropic grants to cover a much larger share of their total start-up funding capital needs. The most distinct difference is that the experienced group is noticeably more likely to draw from personal savings, income, loans, and credit and also appears to more frequently look to various forms of earned income as a key source of revenue. It is also interesting to note how nearly two of three nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs with previous experience intend to use “other” sources to obtain initial start-up capital compared with only one in three in the less-experienced group. One interpretation of this finding is that experienced nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs are more aware, through learning, of just how difficult it can be to obtain funding from external financiers. Their intentions to utilize personal means, “other” funding sources, and earned income therefore represent a start-up funding tactic based on minimizing the need for external funding that would allow the emerging organization to get going. Another interpretation is the intention to rely less on external funding as a way for the entrepreneur to increase her/his autonomy, i.e., the entrepreneur can deploy these resources more freely without considering demands from external funders. While these findings are preliminary, they do suggest there is reason to believe previous experience could be an important element to consider when researching nonprofit entrepreneurship.

Conclusion

This article has posited that one of the most pivotal questions facing nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs is how and from whom to acquire and marshal the financial resources to start up and create a viable and functional new nonprofit organization. Though securing financial resources is not the only step, it is certainly one of the most critical for nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs wanting to succeed in creating a new organization. The goal of the exploratory study presented has been to examine nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs and their intended early funding strategies.

This study finds funding intentions among nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs to be rather dynamic. Not only do they intend to draw from multiple and varied sources of funding, they also intend to alter and rearrange the funding structure of the organization as it ages. These signs of a start-up mode raise additional questions for future exploration. First, they illuminate that owning and controlling capital assets are a potentially important element of nonprofit entrepreneurship. This research found that the perceived amount of start-up capital needed for most nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs is estimated to fall somewhere between \$5,000 to \$20,000. Many nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs clearly intend for a significant portion of this start-up capital to come from their own pockets. This lifts a critical question: Does being wealthier increase the odds of starting a nonprofit, or alternatively, are individuals kept from forming new nonprofits because they lack adequate capital? However, *access* to start-up capital appears just as important as owning it. For example, of the respondents saying they intend to utilize their personal income and savings as a source of funding year one, only 7% planned to draw half or more of the total funding for year one from their own pockets. Hence, owning capital is important but so is the ability to retrieve start-up capital from external sources, which in turn accentuates the role and relevance of the entrepreneur’s personal networks and social capital as a potentially vital element to comprehend the nonprofit start-up process.

Furthermore, this research also indicates many nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs intend to use non-monetary means to handle the resource needs of the start-up process by, for example,

practicing barter or relying on pro-bono services. This finding reinforces previous research that stresses (social) bricolage as a vital element in the creation phase of social enterprises (Desa & Basu, 2013; Di Domenico et al., 2010). Bricolage is not only a resource mobilization tactic but also a legitimizing practice for fledgling social ventures (Desa & Basu, 2013). Furthermore, bricolage sometimes leads the nonprofit entrepreneur to discover new opportunities and capacities in the social venture process (Di Domenico et al., 2010). Still, social bricolage usage appears to be highly context contingent (Desa & Basu, 2013) and clearly warrants more in-depth examination. For example, future studies need to explore how common social bricolage is among nonprofit entrepreneurs, what specific bricolage tactics/methods they intend to and ultimately utilize, what the balance between pecuniary and non-pecuniary means looks like during the start-up phase, and how it has an impact on the likelihood for formal organizational creation and early development.

This article has provided an early glance into the funding intentions of nascent nonprofit entrepreneurs and argued that the nature of the capital structure (both the level and sources of the capital) are of great relevance to comprehend the success or failure of those ventures. However, as noted in the introduction, it is essential to note that this study also has obvious limitations. Yet, despite these inadequacies, this study has been able to illuminate the importance of paying close attention to the nonprofit nascent stage to get a more complete picture of the nonprofit entrepreneurship process.

Disclosure Statement

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Nonprofit Economic Development Organizations and the Institutional Arrangement of Local Economic Development

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In the United States, local economic development is increasingly being managed by nonprofit organizations. However, the institutional arrangement of local economic development is an understudied topic in the scholarly literature on nonprofit management and leadership. This paper examines why communities select nonprofits to manage economic development and the effect this institutional arrangement has on local development policy. We hypothesize that the form of local government and the population size of a community are variables affecting the likelihood that a community will select a nonprofit organization for economic development. Additionally, we argue that nonprofit organizations manage economic development differently than agencies directly controlled by local governments. Thus, organizational types influence economic development policy outcomes. To examine the paper's hypotheses, we use data from the International City/County Management Association's (ICMA) 2014 economic development survey. The paper's analysis provides evidence that smaller cities, compared with larger communities, are more likely to select nonprofit organizations to manage economic development, and it appears the selection of a nonprofit to manage economic development influences the type of development tools used by communities.

Keywords: Local Economic Development, Nonprofit Economic Development Organizations

The institutional arrangement of local economic development is changing. Compared with the past, nonprofits are more involved in managing the numerous public and private organizations engaging in local economic development. Even with this increased role for nonprofits in local economic development, we know little about the reasons why communities select nonprofits for economic development and the effect that this institutional arrangement has on local policy and outcomes. In the scholarly literature on public administration, nonprofit management, and

economic development, few studies examine the decisions beyond institutional arrangements of local economic development and the effect of these administrative decisions.

Thus, our paper analyzes the institutional arrangement of local economic development in the United States. For the purposes of the research, we view institutional arrangement in local economic development as the type of organization, nonprofit, or public agency empowered to be primarily responsible for local economic development. We are interested in knowing the characteristics of communities (in particular the form of government and the size of the community) that have entrusted nonprofit development corporations to manage economic development and the effect of this institutional arrangement. To examine this research problem, we use data from the International City/County Management Association's (ICMA; 2014) Economic Development Survey. The survey asks city and county officials to report whether a nonprofit or public agency is primarily responsible for local economic development. The findings of this research may inform administrative design of economic development in the future by uncovering factors influencing the decision to select a local government agency or a nonprofit to coordinate economic development and the effect of institutional arrangement on the type of economic development policies used by communities. Given that our topic is understudied in the research, we view our study as an exploratory one. The research may also serve as a foundation for future work in the understudied area of nonprofit management and economic development.

Communities turn to nonprofits to manage economic development in the hopes of removing political interference from economic development. Many local officials also view nonprofits as being more effective in achieving economic development for communities (Krumholz, 1999). Knowing more about why communities empower nonprofits to manage economic development and the effects of this administrative decision will inform both scholarship and practice. Our exploratory research can be used to guide future work in describing and explaining the administrative features of local economic development. Having access to this knowledge will help practitioners of economic development, as they work on creating evidence-based organizations. This is a crucial goal for research because communities are focused on being self-sufficient and sustainable as a result of their economic policies.

Nonprofit Economic Development Corporations (NEDOs)

Nonprofit development corporations are 501(c)(3) organizations created to promote economic development (Stokes, 2017; Sullivan, 2004). The use of nonprofit development corporations to manage economic development, or what is usually referred to as nonprofit economic development organizations (NEDOs) in the literature, has increased in recent decades (Sullivan, 2004). NEDOs are empowered to manage economic development because these organizations bridge the gap between public and private development actors. As described by Sullivan (2004), the NEDOs "use resources from both the public and business sector to promote economic growth in a city or region" (p. 59). Accordingly, NEDOs are often considered public-private partnerships for economic development. The organizations are viewed as being efficient due to fewer regulations compared with pure public agencies, but the organizations are still able to use public resources, such as bonding authority, public buildings, and governmental staff (Sullivan, 2004). The growth of NEDOs is an important trend in the practice of community development and nonprofit management. This trend demonstrates the increasing importance of public-private partnerships to local economic development.

Based on past research, we know several reasons for the growth of NEDOs. First, communities may turn to nonprofit development corporations to isolate economic development from politics (Krumholz, 1999). The organizations may serve as a buffer between economic development and politics. Second, according to Sullivan (2004), the growth in NEDOs may be explained by “entrepreneurial city governments” wanting to build closer relationships with local businesses, thus creating the quasi-entities to help manage economic development. Third, NEDOs are popular administrative designs in housing policy (Goetz, 1992). This is most likely the case because nonprofits are important players in the housing policies of most communities. The increased emphasis by policymakers in offloading housing programs from government to nonprofits has contributed to the growth in NEDOs. Lastly, scholars, such as Stokes (2007), find that local governments use NEDOs and other forms of development corporations to foster collaboration among local organizations and gain a broader approach to local economic development. The scholarly literature has thoroughly explored the factors explaining the growth in NEDOs. Still, no study in the literature examines the characteristics of communities that empower NEDOs to be primarily responsible for local economic development.

Furthermore, few studies explore how the growth in NEDOs has affected development policy outcomes for local communities. The only clear effect is that NEDOs limit public participation. In perhaps the most comprehensive study, research by Sullivan (2004) examining survey data on approximately 500 NEDOs shows the organizations to be thoroughly integrated in the process of local economic development. However, it appears citizens are less likely to participate in the decision-making processes of NEDOs, compared with the levels of public involvement in public agencies.

Citizen and neighborhood organizations do not actively engage NEDOs. The organizations tend to follow the wishes of the local business community. We are interested in extending this literature by learning why communities select NEDOs to manage development and how the choice of using an NEDO to coordinate development influences the type of policy tools used by communities.

The Institutional Arrangement of Local Economic Development

While researchers examining the administrative design of local economic development have not studied why local governments select nonprofits to coordinate local development policies, scholars do know the effect of the institutional arrangement in other policy areas. For instance, work by Feiock and Jang (2009) examines why some cities may incorporate nonprofits into the service delivery of programs for the elderly. The authors found that cities with council–manager systems are more likely than mayor–council systems to contract with nonprofits for the delivery of services to the elderly. Feiock and Jang (2009) presents evidence that council–manager cities were more likely than mayor–council cities to contract out to nonprofits because city managers are more likely than their elected mayor counterparts to view nonprofits as being efficient and effective providers of services. Additionally, local government structure, in general, influences economic development policies (Cox & Mair, 1988; Feiock & Kim, 2001; Hawkins & Andrew, 2011). Based on this past research, we argue that form of government may affect the decision to have a nonprofit manage economic development. As a result, we hypothesize that a community form of local government affects the likelihood that nonprofits are given the task of helping to coordinate local economic development.

The variation in political culture throughout different regions may also influence the selection of nonprofits to manage local economic development. Region is an important variable in the study

of economic issues (Feldman & Florida, 1994). In the United States, there are key regional differences in manufacturing and innovation (Florida, 2014). Thus, regional differences may affect the selection of a nonprofit to coordinate development and, as we discuss later, local development policy. Based on this, we hypothesize that the region in which a community is located affects the likelihood that nonprofits are given the task of help coordinate local economic development.

Urban areas are more likely than rural communities to use nonprofits in the administration of public policy (Feiock & Jang, 2009; Pender, 2015). Urban communities use nonprofits more than nonurban communities due to the observations that urban areas tend to have larger concentrations of professional nonprofits, compared with nonurban areas (Feiock & Jang, 2009), and nonprofits in urban areas are more likely to receive federal grant funding, compared with nonprofits in nonurban areas (Cohen, 2014; Pender, 2015). Therefore, for the purposes of our study, we view metropolitan areas as being more likely to empower NEDOs because they have a larger pool of professional nonprofit organizations, compared with those in medium and small cities. Based on this, we hypothesize that urban areas are more likely to select nonprofits to help coordinate local economic development, compared with nonurban areas.

H₁: A community's form of local government affects the likelihood that economic development is conducted by a nonprofit or local government, controlling for metropolitan area and region.

The decentralized nature of the nation's federal system often encourages competition instead of cooperation. Local governments may not cooperate with one another because of leadership issues, suspicion of other localities, and resource inequalities (Lackey, Freshwater, & Rupasingha, 2002) but are likely to cooperate on policies when they share common goals and are faced with resource constraints (Post, 2002). Communities with more regional cooperation may be more likely to empower nonprofit development corporations to conduct local economic development. Cooperative communities recognize the importance of using the resources of local nonprofits. Uncooperative communities may want to retain control of economic development in a public agency. Furthermore, communities may turn to nonprofit corporations to develop a broader approach to economic development (Stokes, 2007). Thus, the institutional arrangement of local economic development may be influenced by a community's level of intergovernmental cooperation. Based on this, we hypothesize that communities in regions with high levels of cooperation among local governments are more likely to select nonprofit development organizations to help coordinate local economic development, compared with communities in regions with high levels of competition.

Communities following evidence-based practices for economic development, such as having a written plan, may be likely to empower local nonprofits to manage development. The theoretical reason is that communities that plan are more likely to be cooperative. When communities plan, they engage in a process of collaboration. Furthermore, these communities are likely to form private, nonprofit, and public partnerships that serve as the foundation for planning, and, through these integrative processes, the communities may be likely to create NEDOs, which merge private and public features into one development agency. Based on this, we hypothesize that communities with written economic development plans may be more likely to select nonprofit development organizations to help coordinate local economic development, compared with communities without written economic development plans.

H₂: Communities with written economic development plans may be more likely to select nonprofit development organizations to help coordinate local economic

development, compared with communities without written economic development plans.

The administrative design of local economic development most likely influences policy outcomes. Feiock and Kim (2001) wrote that “[t]he type of agency that plays the lead role in local development may directly and indirectly shape policy choices” (p. 35). Even with such potential effect, the influence of organizational type on local economic development policy receives little attention in the scholarly literature (Sharp, 1991). Past work shows how form of government (Feiock & Kim, 2001) influences development policy, but the literature fails to explain whether the structure of local governments influences the likelihood that a community will select a nonprofit to manage economic development. In the literature on the topic, there is disagreement regarding how institutional arrangement of nonprofits affects economic development policies. Fleischmann, Green, and Kwong (1992) demonstrate how organizational type has an influence on local development policies, but a study by Feiock and Kim (2001) provides evidence of no relationship between organizational type and local development.

When it comes to the influence of organizational type on actual policies, local governments and nonprofits produce different policy outcomes (Feiock & Andrew, 2006). State and local government officials turn to nonprofits to take advantage of their flexibility (Feiock & Andrew, 2006) and the motivations of their workers. Employees in nonprofits tend to be motivated by the desire to effect social change through their organizations (Moore, 2000; Weisbord, 1988). Furthermore, nonprofits may focus on effectiveness, whereas government is concerned with fairness in a policy (Lipsky & Smith, 1989). Empirical research demonstrates that employees of nonprofits are more satisfied with their jobs than employees in government and private firms (Mirvis, 1992), and nonprofit managers highlight the “social purposes” of their organizations (Moore, 2000). These key differences between nonprofits and local governments may cause nonprofits handling local development to utilize different policies and tools than agencies controlled directly by the government.

We know little about the factors driving the use of difference types of policies for economic development. The variation in local development policy is an understudied area of the literature. As Sharp (1991) noted, “little research has been done to account for variation in cities’ economic development policy activities” (p. 129). There is evidence that local governments are more responsive to the public on local economic development issues than are private organizations and quasi-public ones, such as chambers of commerce (Sharp, 1991). Mayor–council systems respond to economic pressures in a more aggressive manner than do other forms of local government. Fleischmann et al. (1992) found that development organizations directly controlled by the government are less likely to seek expansive policies than quasi-governmental agencies and nonprofits. Work by Feiock and Kim (2001) shows no evidence of this link between institutional arrangement of development and the likelihood a community will seek expansive development policies. However, we know little about what influences communities to select one policy alternative over others. We argue how institutional arrangement may be an important factor influencing the types of economic development policies used at the local level. Based on this, we hypothesize that the type of organization (nonprofit or local government) responsible for local development in a community affects the type of economic development tools used by local governments, controlling for metropolitan area and region.

H₃: The type of organization (nonprofit or local government) responsible for local development in a community affects the type of economic development tools used by local governments, controlling for metropolitan area and region.

Table 1. Local Economic Development Tools

Small business
a. Revolving loan fund
b. Small business development center
c. Microenterprise program
d. Matching improvement grants (physical upgrades to business)
e. Vendor/supplier matching
f. Marketing assistance
g. Management training
h. Executive on loan/mentor
Business retention and expansion
i. Surveys of local business
j. Ombudsman program
k. Local business publicity program (community-wide)
l. Replacing imports with locally supplied goods
m. Export development assistance
n. Business clusters/industrial districts
o. Technology Zones
p. Energy Efficiency Programs
q. Business improvement districts
r. Main Street Program
Business Attraction
s. Local government representative calls on prospective companies
t. Promotional and advertising activities (e.g., media, direct mail,
Community development
u. Community development corporation
v. Community development loan fund
w. Environmental sustainability- energy audits/green building
x. Transit to promote commuting
y. High quality physical infrastructure
z. Job training for low skilled workers
aa. Business assistance, loans and grants to support child care
bb. Affordable workforce housing
cc. Investments in high quality of life (good education, recreation)
and arts/culture)
dd. Tourism promotion
ee. Public/private partnerships
ff. Programs to promote age-friendly businesses for seniors

Methodology

The study uses data from the ICMA's (2014) survey on local economic development. The ICMA administered the survey by mailing a paper copy in June 2014 to a nationwide sample of 5,237 municipal and county governments. The survey response rate is 23% with 1,201 local governments completing it. Past studies (Feiock & Kim, 2001; Sharp, 1991) rely on the ICMA data to examine the administrative features of local economic development. Data from the ICMA survey allow for the analysis of our study's main hypotheses. First, the survey asks whether a nonprofit or government agency is primarily responsible for local economic development. The responses to this question allow for the analysis of the factors making certain communities more likely to empower a nonprofit to manage economic development. Additionally, the responses to the question allow for the analysis of the data as an independent

Table 2. Operationalization of Variables

Variables	Operationalization
Economic Development Responsibility	Nonprofit Development Corporation = 0 Local Government = 1
Local Economic Development Tools	Sum score of levels of use of different tools in three general areas (small business, business retention and expansion, and community development)
Form of Government	Mayor-Council and Council-Elected = 0 Council-Manager and Council-Administrator = 1
Metro Status	Large – Urbanized with at least 50,000 people = 0 Small – Urban with at least 10,000 people = 1
Population	Number of people living in the geographic jurisdiction of the local government
Economic Development Plan	No = 0 Yes = 1
Geographic region	Dummy variables created from four US Census Bureau regions: “Northeast”, “North Central”, “South” and “West” with “Northeast region” as the reference group
Level of Cooperation	Weak = 0 Strong = 1

variable to determine the effect of the institutional arrangement of economic development on local development policies.

The ICMA survey also includes questions related to form of government, population, region, and other useful questions to help build regression models exploring why communities select nonprofits to manage economic development. Additionally, the ICMA survey asks respondents to indicate the extent to which their organizations use policies focusing on small business, retention of current businesses, and community development. The questions dealing with economic development tools can be used to analyze the effects that institutional arrangements have on local economic development. As can be seen in table 1, the communities surveyed by the ICMA are using a variety of economic development tools. The categories were developed by the ICMA and included in the survey questions. We used the categories to develop indices of the economic development tools used by communities. With the information from questions dealing with economic development tools, we can build regression models explaining the effect of institutional arrangement on policies used by communities.

Table 2 presents the operational rules for the variables that we included in our models. Descriptions of the variables are provided in table 3. Economic development responsibility was measured by survey question asking communities to describe the entity that has primary responsibility for undertaking economic development activities. The response to the survey question consisted of “the local government has primary responsibility” = 1, “A nonprofit development corporation has primary responsibility” = 2, and “Other (please describe)” = 3. Analysis showed that most of the “other” response options were nonprofit entities and were combined with the “A nonprofit development corporation has primary responsibility.” For purpose of this analysis, economic development responsibility was coded “nonprofit” = 0 and “local government” = 1.

Table 3. Description of Variables

Variable	Frequency (%)	Mean (SD)	Range
Economic Development Responsibility			
Nonprofit Development Corporation	254 (23.9%)		
Local Government	810 (76.1%)		
Form of Government			
Mayor-Council and Council Elected	235 (23.3%)		
Council-Manager and Council-Administrator	774 (76.7%)		
Metro Status			
Large = Urban with at least 50,000 people	749 (82.9%)		
Small = Urban with at least 10,000 people	155 (17.1%)		
Economic Development Plan			
No	397 (43.5%)		
Yes	515 (56.5%)		
Geographic Region			
Northeast	133 (12.5%)		
North Central	330 (31.0%)		
South	353 (33.2%)		
West	248 (23.3%)		
Level of Cooperation			
Weak	244 (31.1%)		
Strong	540 (68.9%)		
Local Economic Development Tools			
Small Business		14.08 (4.46)	3 – 30
Business Retention and Expansion		24.84 (6.68)	3 – 48
Community Development		25.13 (6.44)	4 – 48
Population (2010)		70,854.21 (149,463.01)	808 – 1,951,269

Source: ICMA (2014)

Local economic development tools were measured using 32 four-point scale items relating to communities' evaluation of their levels of use of different tools in three general economic development areas. The three general economic development areas were small business (eight survey items), business retention and expansion (12 survey items), and community development (12 survey items) activities. The response option to the survey questions consisted of “not at all” = 1, “low” = 2, “medium” = 3, and “high” = 4. For the purpose of this analyses, we constructed a composite score for each of the three general economic development areas using the sum of the response to the respective survey items. Accordingly, each of the constructs used to measure economic development tools consisted of the sum of each communities' response across the items used in measuring that particular economic development area. The variables for economic development tools were constructed so that higher scores indicate a higher level of use of the tool.

Other variables for the study were form of government, metro status, population, economic development plan, geographic region, and level of cooperation. Form of government was coded “Mayor-Council and Council-Elected” = 0 and “Council-Manager and Council-Administrator” = 1. Metro status was coded “large” = 0 and “small” = 1 with large comprising communities in urbanized areas with population of at least 50,000 people and small was for communities with at least one urban cluster that has a population of at least 10,000 people.

Population was measured by the total number of people living in the community in 2010. Economic development plan was measured by survey questions asking communities to indicate whether they have a written economic development plan and was coded “No” = 0 and “Yes” = 1. Geographic region was measured by dummy variables created from the four population regions of the U.S. Census Bureau: “northeast,” “north central,” “south,” and “west” with “northeast region” as the reference group. Finally, level of cooperation was measured by survey questions asking communities to indicate their level of cooperation for economic development and tax base among local governments in their region and was coded “Weak” = 0 and “Strong” = 1.

Next, we present the results of our paper’s analyses. We examine the descriptive results and analyze the multivariate results—in particular, two collection of models examining the decision to select nonprofits to manage economic development and the effects of this organizational choice on the development tools used by communities.

Analysis: The Selection of Nonprofits to Manage Economic Development

In most communities, a public agency directly controls local economic development efforts. Seventy-six percent of communities give primary responsibility for economic development to a public agency. Still, a notable percentage of communities (23%) off-load responsibility for coordinating economic development to a nonprofit development corporation. Given the growth in NEDOs since the 1970s (Sullivan, 2004), the small percentage of communities selecting nonprofits to be primarily responsible for economic development is surprising. However, communities are comfortable with involving NEDOs as players in the local development process. The ICMA data shows how 40% of the sampled communities report including economic development corporations in their local development strategies. The other noteworthy finding from the descriptive statistics is that a surprisingly large percentage of local governments (43.5%) in the ICMA data lack a written development plan. It appears that many communities are not utilizing one of the basic economic development tools. Next, we examine the factors influence local governments to empower nonprofit agencies to manage local development policy.

In our analysis, we first examine the characteristics of communities that are more likely to empower nonprofits to manage development, compared with the localities that rely on public agencies. As noted, we hypothesized that form of government will be one of the influences. The ICMA survey asks local governments (cities and counties) to identify their form of government. For the sampled cities, respondents identified one of the following forms: mayor–council, council–manager, commission, town meeting, and representative town meeting. For the sampled counties, respondents identified one of the following forms: commission, council–administrator (council–manager), and council–elected executive. We combine the form of government questions to analyze all local governments. Only 15 cases identified as cities commission (CO) and none for counties commission (C). In effect, the combination of cities and counties for this category results in only 15 cases being removed from the analysis.

We recognize how the ICMA data oversamples council–manager forms of local government. However, researchers use the ICMA to examine a host of administrative issues at the local government level. The data set is a standard one in the public administration literature. For instance, researchers use the data set to explain the selection of nonprofits for social services delivery (Feiock & Jang, 2009) and the influence of nonprofit organization selection on development policy (Feiock & Kim, 2001; Sharp, 1991). These two studies are central to our research.

Table 4. Logistic Regression Analysis of Form of Government and Economic Development Responsibility

Variable	Coef. (S.E.)	Wald	Odds (Exp.(β))
Form of Government	-0.07 (0.25)	0.08	0.93
Metro Status	-1.33 (0.25)	28.20	0.26**
North Central Region	1.16 (0.42)	7.13	3.19**
South Region	0.24 (0.41)	0.34	1.27
West Region	1.27 (0.45)	8.03	3.58**
Level of Cooperation	-0.48 (0.24)	3.83	0.62*
Economic Development Plan	0.34 (0.22)	2.47	1.40
Constant	0.88 (0.44)	3.95	2.40*
Model χ^2	58.00, $p < 0.05$		
Pseudo R^2	0.15		
N	553		

Source: ICMA (2014)

Note: Statistical significance at the 0.01 level and 0.05 level is indicated by ** and *, respectively.

Dependent variable in this analysis is economic development responsibility; coded as 0 for nonprofit and 1 for local government

We employed logistic regression to determine the effect of form of government on the likelihood that a nonprofit development corporation or the local government is primarily responsible for economic development, controlling for metro status, region of the country, level of cooperation among governments in the community's region, and the community having an economic development plan. The analysis produces an overall statistically significant model $\chi^2(1)=58$, $p < 0.05$ and explains 0.15% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance in whether economic development is conducted by a nonprofit or local government and correctly classified 58% of cases. Form of government with council–manager and council–administrator does not have a statistically significant effect on whether a community selects a local government agency or a nonprofit development corporation to be primarily responsible for economic development.

Table 4 presents interesting findings for the literature on economic development and nonprofit organizations. First, larger communities based on population are more likely to use NEDOs, compared with smaller communities. For example, smaller communities (communities with at least one urban cluster that has a population of at least 10,000) were 0.26 times less likely than urban communities (communities with at least one urbanized area that has a population of at least 50,000) to have local government as an entity with primary responsibility for economic development ($\text{Exp}(\beta)=0.26$; $p=0.00$). Second, form of government (council–manager and council–administrator or more political forms) has no significant effect on the selection of a NEDOs to be primarily responsible for economic development ($\text{Exp}(\beta)=0.93$; $p=0.78$).

Third, region has a significant effect on communities selecting NEDOs. The south is less likely than the northeast and the north-central region to have an NEDO primarily responsible for economic development. Lastly, the level of cooperation for economic development in the community's region (measured by self-reporting from the community) affects the decision to give primary responsibility for economic development to an NEDO ($\text{Exp}(\beta)=0.62$; $p=0.05$). In fact, communities that report cooperation with other communities in their region were 0.62 times more likely to turn to an NEDO.

Based on the analysis, metropolitan status, region of the nation, and level of cooperation with neighboring communities are all factors that influence the institutional arrangements of local

economic development. In effect, holding all other independent variables constant, we expect that smaller communities will be using NEDO primarily for economic development than larger communities. Local public agencies in small communities may lack the expertise needed to directly coordinate economic development activities. It appears that small communities turn to nonprofits to help build policy capacity. Chambers of commerce and development authorities may be playing an important role in small cities and communities, compared with agencies directly controlled by government (Rubin, 1986). Research shows that the presence of a development organization in a community produces more economic development activity (Rubin, 1986). Small communities may be turning to nonprofits to help build capacity, incorporated local businesses, and increase economic development activity.

Though the results indicate that, after controlling for the other predictor variables, the odds of using NEDO primarily for economic development by council–manager and council–administrator government is 0.93 times that of mayor–council and council–elected government. This observed difference might have occurred by chance or some random events. A key finding in our research is that form of government does not influence the institutional arrangement of local economic development.

Compared with the northeast, the north central and west regions had higher odds of (3.19 and 3.58 times) of using NEDO primarily for economic development. It appears the south is less likely than other parts of the nation to use NEDOs or nonprofits in local economic development. The region's low levels of political participation may make it less likely that communities form separate nonprofits to coordinate economic development. Future research needs to tease out why the south is less likely to utilize nonprofits, compared with the northeast and other parts of the nation.

The odds of using NEDOs primarily for economic development for communities reporting strong cooperation was 0.62 times that of communities reporting weak cooperation, holding all other independent variables constant. Communities cooperate when citizens share common goals and are in research-constrained environments (Post, 2002). We argue that communities that identify as being in regions with more cooperation among public organizations are more likely to use nonprofits to coordinate development, compared with high-conflict areas. Cooperative communities recognize the importance of multiple types of organizations working together to achieve policy goals. Stokes (2007) found that communities turn to nonprofit corporations to develop a broad approach to economic development. Cooperative communities may be more likely to want a diverse approach to development. We found evidence that cooperative communities are more likely to empower an NEDO to manage development.

Next, we examine the effect of institutional arrangement on the types of economic development tools used by communities.

Effect of Institutional Arrangement on Economic Development Policy

To examine the effect of organizational type on economic development policy outcomes, we use ordinary least square (OLS) regression to explain the institutional arrangement influence on the type of economic development tools employed by communities (see table 1). We used the constructed indices for small business tools, retention and expansion tools, and community development tools. We use these indices as the dependent variables in a series of OLS regression models explaining the influence that organization type has on the type of tools used by communities.

Table 5. OLS Regression Analysis of Small Business Activities

Variables	Coef. (S.E.)	t-Value
Economic Development Responsibility	-0.386 (0.364)	-1.061
Form of Government	-0.197 (0.371)	-0.531
Metro Status	2.082 (0.414)	5.027**
North Central Region	-0.811 (0.726)	-1.116
South Region	0.090 (0.719)	0.125
West Region	-0.552 (0.740)	-0.746
Constant	14.686 (0.769)	19.108**
Model F-test	6.714, $p < 0.05$	
Adjusted R^2	0.038	
N	866	

Source: ICMA (2014)

Note: Statistical significance at the 0.01 level and 0.05 level is indicated by ** and *, respectively.

Dependent variable in this analysis is small business activities; sum of eight small business initiative as index score.

Table 6. OLS Regression Analysis of Business Retention and Expansion

Variables	Coef. (S.E.)	t-Value
Economic Development Responsibility	-0.748 (0.550)	-1.360
Form of Government	0.436 (0.560)	0.778
Metro Status	-0.266 (0.626)	-0.425
North Central Region	-0.512 (1.096)	-0.467
South Region	0.678 (1.085)	0.624
West Region	0.889 (1.117)	0.795
Constant	25.079 (1.160)	21.626**
Model F-test	1.837, $p > 0.05$	
Adjusted R^2	0.006	
N	864	

Source: ICMA (2014)

Note: Statistical significance at the 0.01 level and 0.05 level is indicated by ** and *, respectively.

Dependent variable in this analysis is business retention and expansion activities; sum of 12 business retention and expansion initiative as index score

First, we analyze whether economic development being conducted by a nonprofit or local government influences the small business index, controlling for form of government, and whether metro status and geographic region influences the small business index. Table 5 presents the results of this analysis. The model is statistically significant, $F(6)=6.71$, $p<0.05$ and explains only 3.8% of the variation in small business index. Except for metro status, none of the other variables have a statistically significant effect on small business index. Specifically, small metro areas (urban cluster with a population of at least 10,000) are more likely to be involved in small business initiative than a large metro area (urbanized area with a population of at least 50,000) ($b= 2.08$, $p=0.00$).

Second, table 6 shows no relationship between economic development responsibility and the use of business retention and expansion tools. It appears that communities with nonprofits managing local economic development are just as likely to use business retention and expansion tools, as localities with public agencies directly managing economic development.

Table 7. OLS Regression Analysis of Community Development

Variables	Coef. (S.E.)	t-Value
Economic Development Responsibility	-1.434 (0.527)	-2.724**
Form of Government	-0.192 (0.537)	-0.358
Metro Status	1.038 (0.598)	1.736
North Central Region	-2.602 (1.049)	-2.482*
South Region	-1.783 (1.038)	-1.717
West Region	-2.270 (1.069)	-2.124-
Constant	28.558 (1.110)	25.729**
Model F-test	3.846, $p < 0.05$	
Adjusted R^2	0.019	
N	863	

Source: ICMA (2014)

Note: Statistical significance at the 0.01 level and 0.05 level is indicated by ** and *, respectively.

Dependent variable in this analysis is community development activities; sum of 12 community development initiative as index score

Third, it appears that economic development responsibility affects the type of community development activities being conducted by cities and counties. Based on the analysis presented in table 7, local governments with nonprofits responsible for economic development were more likely to utilize community development tools, compared to local governments with public agencies being the primary organizations leading economic development.

While whether economic development being conducted by a nonprofit or local government appears to influence the small business index, the effect is masked by the presence of control variables. This finding suggests that, regardless if economic development is conducted by nonprofit or local government, it does not affect involvement in small business activities, but the evidence points to metro status affecting involvement in small business initiatives. This is most likely the case because small businesses are often crucial to the local economy in a small community, and owners of small businesses can also exert more influence in local political processes of small cities than they can in large cities. Furthermore, smaller cities are less likely than major urban areas to have large corporations.

Next, we construct an OLS regression model to determine whether using nonprofit or local government as a tool of economic development has an effect on business retention and expansion index, controlling for form of government, metro status, and geographic region. The model is not statistically significant, $F(6)=1.84$, $p>0.05$, and none of the variables have a statistically significant effect on business retention and expansion. This is an interesting finding in that none of our variables were shown to have an effect on business retention and expansion policies, even form of government.

We construct a model to determine whether using nonprofit or local government as a tool for understanding economic development has an effect on community development index, controlling for form of government, metro status, and geographic region. The model is statistically significant ($F(6)=3.85$, $p<0.05$) but only explains 1.9% of the variation in community development index. Communities with economic development being coordinated by a public agency are less likely to be involved in community development activities than economic development by nonprofits ($b=-1.43$, $p=0.01$). Also, compared with the northeast region, the north central and west regions were less likely to be involved in community development activities. The south region was also less likely to be involved in community

Table 8. OLS Regression Analysis of Small Business Activities

Variables	Coef. (S.E.)	t-Value
Economic Development Responsibility	-0.888 (0.330)	-2.688**
Form of Government	-0.263 (0.343)	-0.765
Metro Status	0.000 (0.000)	3.122**
North Central Region	0.203 (0.515)	0.395
South Region	1.090 (0.508)	2.146*
West Region	0.273 (0.529)	0.516
Constant	14.300 (0.584)	24.496**
Model F-test	5.332, $p < 0.05$	
Adjusted R^2	0.025	
N	997	

Source: ICMA (2014)

Note: Statistical significance at the 0.01 level and 0.05 level is indicated by ** and *, respectively.

Dependent variable in this analysis is small business activities; sum of eight small business initiative as index score

Table 9. OLS Regression Analysis of Business Retention and Expansion

Variables	Coef. (S.E.)	t-Value
Economic Development Responsibility	-0.670 (0.489)	-1.370
Form of Government	0.569 (0.508)	1.120
Metro Status	0.000 (0.000)	3.685**
North Central Region	0.129 (0.761)	0.170
South Region	1.118 (0.752)	1.487
West Region	1.214 (0.783)	1.551
Constant	23.830 (0.864)	27596**
Model F-test	4.800, $p < 0.05$	
Adjusted R^2	0.022	
N	995	

Source: ICMA (2014)

Note: Statistical significance at the 0.01 level and 0.05 level is indicated by ** and *, respectively.

Dependent variable in this analysis is business retention and expansion activities; sum of 12 business retention and expansion initiative as index score

development relative to the northeast region, but the difference was not statistically significant ($b=-1.78$, $p=0.09$). The results suggest that organizational type and geographic region affect involvement in community development activities.

To examine the size of a community in greater detail, we substitute the population size of the local government for the dichotomous variable of metro status. The next three OLS tables examine the effect of this change to our models. Table 8 presents the result from analysis of small business activities using population. In the original model for small business activities, the model was statistically significant, and only metro status was statistically significant. When population (instead of metro status) was used, the model remained statistically significant, and the agency responsible for economic development in the south region became statistically significant. Additionally, the proportion of variance in small business activities explained by the independent variables (adjusted R^2) decreased by 1.3% (from 0.04 to 0.03).

Table 10. OLS Regression Analysis of Community Development

Variables	Coef. (S.E.)	t-Value
Economic Development Responsibility	-1.774 (0.468)	-3.788**
Form of Government	-0.450 (0.488)	-0.924
Metro Status	0.000 (0.000)	5.195**
North Central Region	-0.354 (0.731)	-0.484
South Region	0.349 (0.722)	0.484
West Region	-0.236 (0.752)	-0.314
Constant	26.383 (0.828)	31.847**
Model F-test	8.233, $p < 0.05$	
Adjusted R^2	0.042	
N	993	

Source: ICMA (2014)

Note: Statistical significance at the 0.01 level and 0.05 level is indicated by ** and *, respectively.

Dependent variable in this analysis is community development activities; sum of 12 community development initiative as index score

In the original model for community development activities, the model was statistically significant, and the agency responsible for economic development, north central, and west regions was statistically significant. When population (instead of metro status) was used, the model remained statistically significant, and only the agency responsible for economic development and population was statistically significant (see Table 9). Additionally, the proportion of variance in community development activities explained by the independent variables (adjusted R^2) increased by 2.3% (from 0.02 to 0.04).

Table 9 presents the result from analysis of business retention and expansion activities using population. In the original model for business retention and expansion activities, the model was not statistically significant, and none of the independent variables was statistically significant. When population (instead of metro status) was used, the model became statistically significant, and population also became statistically significant. Additionally, the proportion of variance in business retention and expansion activities explained by the independent variables (adjusted R^2) increased by 1.6% (from 0.01 to 0.02).

Table 10 presents the results when using population size as the metro status variable. According to the analysis, communities with nonprofits managing economic development are still more likely to use community development tools, compared to localities with public agencies directly managing economic development. In this model, population is also shown to have an effect with larger communities more likely to use community development tools.

In sum, in all three activities (small business, business retention and expansion, and community development), the model was statistically significant, and adjusted R^2 increased except for small business activities. Also, in all three activities, population had a statistically significant positive effect. The “marginal effect” (regression coefficient or “ b ”) and the corresponding standard error for population are low, which is most likely due to unit of measurement. Additionally, except for business retention and expansion activities, the agency responsible for economic development had a statistically significant effect. Specifically, when local government has primary responsibility for economic development, it is less likely to engage in small business and community development activities.

The low R^2 values in this study demonstrate a limitation of our models and analyses. In effect, our models have low predictive powers and are not reliable for future forecasts (we cannot make good predictions based on the model). Decisions involving the determination of the entity with primary responsibility for undertaking economic development activities and tools to use for economic development activities are complex and might involve many uncontrollable and/or unknown factors that were not accurately captured in our model. A more complex model accounting for the factors affecting political decision-making might help to more accurately capture decisions on the entity with primary economic development responsibility and use of economic development tools. Besides, R^2 is affected by several factors, including the nature of the data, and it is possible that the nature of data used in this study, particularly the lower range of values of the independent variables, contributed to the lower R^2 . This appears to be supported by the changes in R^2 when population, instead of metro status, was used for our analysis of economic development tools. Furthermore, our models do provide information on what variables do or do not predict the likelihood that a community would select a nonprofit or local government agency and then the effectiveness of that institutional choice.

The low variation in our models is one of the reasons why the research should be exploratory in nature. We are starting the process of collecting evidence on the institutional arrangement of local economic development. Future models should explain the effect of politics on factors influence institutional arrangements for development and the effect that these administrative choices have on local economic development. Given that our research is an understudied area of public administration and economic development, we argue that, even with the low variation in our models, our findings contribute to the literature.

Findings and Discussion

In this paper, we analyze why nonprofits are selected to coordinate local development policies and the effect of this decision on economic development. The paper's analysis finds little evidence that form of government influences the decision of local governments to give responsibility for economic development to a nonprofit agency. We did find evidence that place matters when it comes to the institutional arrangements of local economic development. First, smaller cities are less likely to select a public agency to coordinate development policy, compared with larger cities. It appears small communities are relying more on NEDOs and nonprofits to help implement their economic development policies. Feiock and Jang (2009) found a different result. The authors argued that smaller communities have fewer nonprofits; therefore, smaller cities were more likely to turn to a local government agency to manage economic development. We found evidence that the opposite may be occurring. Small communities rely on local nonprofits.

Second, the location of the community, i.e., its region, in the nation affects the institutional arrangement of economic development. Communities in the northeastern part of the United States are more likely to use nonprofits in managing economic development, compared with the rest of the nation. Additionally, as past work shows, citizens are less likely to participate in the decision-making processes of NEDOs (Sullivan, 2004). Due to the lack of research in this area, future work needs to be done to understand the factors leading to communities in the south being more likely to empower local nonprofits to manage economic development.

Third, cooperative communities are more likely to turn to a local public agency to manage economic development, compared with communities where economic developers indicated uncooperative behavior with neighboring communities. This is a useful finding for the literature

in that it goes against the theoretical reasoning that cooperative communities are likely to involve many groups in policymaking so, therefore, will be more likely to empower nonprofits to manage development. Cooperative communities may have leadership characteristics that push them toward the more centralized control of keeping economic development in a public agency. These communities may work best with neighboring jurisdictions because there is not as much decentralization in their leadership and policymaking processes. In other words, being cooperative may be the dependent variable being explained by centralized institutional arrangements—not vice versa.

In addition to form of government's lack of effect on institutional arrangement, another important null finding is how communities with a written plan are just as likely to empower local governments to manage economic development as they are to select nonprofit organizations to be responsible for the policy area. As mentioned, the large percentage of ICMA communities without a written economic development plan is surprising, but the finding follows past research. Jennings and Hall (2012) examined the evidence-based practices of state agencies, and they found economic development to be one of the most politicalized policy areas. Perhaps local economic development agencies are just as likely as their state counterparts to follow politics over evidence and be weary of drafting a plan that may be politically risky. Our study, however, shows that institutional arrangement of development is not related to the presence of a written economic development plan.

Whether economic development is managed by a nonprofit or local government agency only had an effect on community development activities. Nonprofits managing economic development were more likely than local government agencies to utilize community development activities. Our analysis shows that communities with nonprofit organizations coordinating economic development are more likely to utilize policies promoting small businesses and community development.

Accordingly, our analysis differs from the finding of Feiock and Kim (2001) that organizational type does not affect development policy. Nonprofits reported higher usage of tools such as transit to promote community, job training for low-skilled workers, high-quality physical infrastructure, tourism promotion, the formation of community development corporations, and other community-development policies. It appears that communities with nonprofits taking the lead in development are more likely to recognize the importance of community-development-type policies. This finding is not striking because community-development corporations (CDCs) are often involved in community-development work and are organized as nonprofits. Communities more likely to have CDCs are more likely to shift responsibility for economic development from a government agency to a nonprofit. Additionally, it appears that communities with more public–private partnerships are more likely than other localities to have a nonprofit primarily responsible for economic development. Future research is needed to explore the finding regarding nonprofits being more likely to engage in small business promotion and community development, compared with government agencies.

Conclusion

The analysis of the ICMA data shows that organizational type is an important administrative design component affecting local economic development policy. Metro status and geographic region appear to affect the likelihood that economic development is conducted by a nonprofit or local government agency. However, form of government does not affect the selection of nonprofits to manage local development. It appears that smaller cities (with populations below

50,000) are more likely than larger urban areas to invest in their small businesses. On the other hand, the analysis provided no evidence of what drives business retention and expansion activities in the ICMA communities. Lastly, we found that nonprofits managing development were more likely than local governments to use community-development activities, such as creating public-private partnerships, promoting tourism, and developing place-based infrastructure.

Our findings present implications for economic development managers working in local public agencies and nonprofits. First, the limited findings on the factors explaining the selection of nonprofits or public agencies in managing economic development can help inform local practitioners about the institutional arrangements of local development made by similar and different communities—in population size, local region, form of government. We learned how small communities are likely to turn to nonprofit organizations to help with economic development. One practical implication of this finding is that local public managers and public affairs programs need to focus on educating and training nonprofits in the area of economic development. Second, we found evidence supporting the hypothesis that communities with nonprofits managing local economic development are more likely to implement community-development policies. Community-development tools focus on transit, housing, and an overall higher quality of life through education, amenities, and recreation. For policymakers looking to implement these types of policies into their communities, based on our limited findings, we argue they should select a nonprofit to coordinate their local economic development.

Future research should examine the effect of city size on the selection of a nonprofit to coordinate development. What is causing larger cities to rely more on nonprofits in local development than smaller cities? We reasoned that larger cities have more nonprofits that are professional. Empirical research needs to investigate this assertion. A research agenda on development policy outcomes should explore in greater detail why communities with nonprofits coordinating development policy are more likely to focus on small business and community-development policies. We reason that nonprofits are less likely than city agencies to be captured by the local growth machine that wants to focus on business expansion and retention. Future empirical research needs to be conducted to investigate this assertion. Our findings serve as an important step toward developing literature on why local governments select nonprofits to coordinate economic development and what effect this decision has on actual policy outcomes.

Notes

1. Communities refer to the cities and counties in the ICMA dataset.

Disclosure Statement

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest that relate to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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Are You Being Served? Toward a Typology of Nonprofit Infrastructure Organizations and a Framework for Their Assessment

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Nonprofit infrastructure organizations provide multiple functions to the nonprofit sector: strengthening individual and organizational capacities, mobilizing material resources, providing information and intellectual resources, building alliances for mutual support, bridging the research and practice divide, and connecting nonprofits to the other sectors. Although researchers have described a variety of organizations that support nonprofit activity, they have done little to distinguish them or to explain their primary purposes. In this article, we develop a typology to classify these nonprofit infrastructure organizations, which offers new insight into their various objectives and functions. Based on a review of the relevant literature and interviews with stakeholders, we then construct a necessary framework for the assessment of the infrastructure organizations we have identified. The result is a better understanding of not only the types of nonprofit infrastructure organizations but also the appropriate dimensions for their assessment.

Keywords: Assessment, Management Support Organizations, Nonprofit Infrastructure Organizations, Nonprofit Sector

In a chapter published in *The State of Nonprofit America*, Abramson and McCarthy (2012) describe a diverse collection of “infrastructure organizations” intended to strengthen the effectiveness and capacity of nonprofit organizations. According to these authors, nonprofit infrastructure organizations encompass a variety of membership, advocacy, education, research, management assistance, and other types that “promote the health of the nonprofit sector” (Abramson & McCarthy, 2012, p. 423). This article develops a comprehensive framework for the assessment of one type of infrastructure organization: nonprofit academic centers housed in colleges and universities that offer education, research, and technical assistance to the nonprofit community. Although our research began with a request from a university to develop an assessment framework that could be applied to nonprofit academic centers, we find – and show in this article – that our framework has much broader application to the infrastructure organizations (IOs) described by Abramson and McCarthy (2012) and other scholars.

Abramson and McCarthy (2012) ground their chapter on the related concerns that “there has been little systematic analysis of ... IOs” (p. 423). At the same time, “There is some worry that IOs are not serving the sector as effectively as they should. Of special concern are the quality of services that IOs are providing” (p. 424). We find similar circumstances with respect to the nonprofit academic centers that provided the catalyst to our research. The Nonprofit Academic Centers Council (NACC), the lead membership organization for these entities, has not updated its “Indicators of Quality in Nonprofit Academic Centers” (2006) since their formulation and approval more than a decade ago. The performance challenge is heightened for these entities because they are housed in universities and colleges, which are themselves under pressure to demonstrate their worth to the public and, in state-supported schools, to the legislature (Brudney & Russell, 2016; Fowles, 2014).

Of course, nonprofit academic centers are not the only part of the university that may, and should, generate credibility for colleges and universities with the larger community. However, with their explicit focus on “the education of nonprofit leaders and managers, support of nonprofit research by scholars from a variety of academic disciplines, and the provision of technical assistance and support to nonprofit organizations in their communities” (NACC, 2006, p. 2), nonprofit academic centers constitute potentially powerful offices, as well as means, through which colleges and universities might help to establish their value and service to the surrounding community.

In this article, we show that nonprofit academic centers belong to a large, rather amorphous, category of infrastructure organizations intended to serve the nonprofit sector, which has received little systematic attention from researchers. Whereas Abramson and McCarthy (2012) refer to these support organizations as infrastructure organizations (IOs), we think it is more accurate and prefer to use the acronym NIOs (*nonprofit* infrastructure organizations) to describe this segment of the nonprofit landscape. We add “nonprofit” to distinguish these infrastructure organizations from those that provide supporting resources to other major sectors of the economy (Smith, 1997).

This article intends to enrich our understanding of nonprofit infrastructure organizations in two primary ways. First, we develop a typology to identify and distinguish the main types of these organizations that offers new insight into their various purposes and functions. Second, we construct a needed framework for the assessment of the different types of nonprofit infrastructure organizations we have identified. Our framework emanates from a review of the relevant literature, examinations of nonprofit academic centers’ websites, communication with directors of nonprofit academic centers, and extensive interviews with stakeholders of a single nonprofit academic center. We show that the framework has application to nonprofit academic centers as well as the other types of infrastructure organizations included in our typology. The result is a better understanding of not only the different types of infrastructure organizations but also the appropriate dimensions for their assessment.

Distinguishing Nonprofit Infrastructure Organizations

A review of the relevant literature shows that nonprofit infrastructure organizations provide multiple functions to the sector: strengthening individual and organizational capacities, mobilizing material resources, providing information and intellectual resources, building alliances for mutual support, bridging the research and practice divide, and connecting nonprofits to the other sectors (Brown & Kalegaonkar, 2002; Graaf, McBeath, Lwin, Holmes, & Austin, 2016; Smith, 1997). Although researchers have described a variety of organizations that

support nonprofit activity, they have done little to distinguish them or to explain their primary purposes. Given the lack of systematic attention to NIOs (Abramson & McCarthy, 2012), it is not surprising that the responsibilities accorded these various entities differ in the literature as do the variety of names used to denote them, including management support organizations, community support organizations, intermediary organizations, civil society support organizations, nonprofit capacity-building organizations, nonprofit academic centers, etc.

Abramson and McCarthy (2012) maintain that the diverse organizations that provide these support functions fall into one of two categories: organizations that serve the nonprofit sector as a whole, or organizations that serve individual nonprofits and their staffs. In the former category one finds advocacy, public education, and national membership organizations (e.g., Independent Sector, Council on Foundations, North Carolina Center for Nonprofits) as well as organizations and associations that serve the field of nonprofit research (e.g., Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action, Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy at the Urban Institute). The latter category includes management training and support organizations, professional development associations (e.g., Association of Fundraising Professionals), and financial intermediaries (e.g., United Way of America and its local affiliates).

To distinguish and understand the variety of NIOs, we add a third category to complement Abramson and McCarthy's (2012) conceptualization: organizations that serve local communities. Referred to as community or civil society support organizations, these organizations build community capacity by mobilizing resources, connecting community actors across diverse social and economic cleavages, and fostering intra- and inter-sectoral collaborations (Brown & Kalegaonkar, 2002; Connor, Kadel-Taras, & Vinokur-Kaplan, 1999). As an example of a civil society support organization (a term predominantly found in the international development literature), Brown and Kalegaonkar (2002) explain how the Orangi Pilot Project in Pakistan worked with slum dwellers to develop long-needed sanitation infrastructure. In Cleveland, Ohio, the community support organization (typically used by researchers describing organizations in the U.S. context) Neighborhood Progress, Inc. convened residents and government, nonprofit, and for-profit stakeholders to bring attention to and resolve community housing issues (Mendel & Brudney, 2012). Table 1 presents the three-category typology of NIOs that we have developed.

The first category in our typology pertains to organizations whose service focus is the nonprofit sector as a whole. *Sector support organizations* address the macro-environment in which nonprofits operate and seek to strengthen the sector through advocacy, public education, member support, and conceptual research on the nonprofit sector (Abramson and McCarthy, 2012).

The second category in the typology refers to organizations that serve nonprofits and their staffs. *Management support organizations* are local nonprofits with regional service areas spanning multiple jurisdictions that provide support to other nonprofits through training, consultation services, and management guidance (Connor et al., 1999; Wimberley & Rubens, 2002). Typical service topics include leadership, planning, fundraising, marketing, board governance, and human resource development. According to Wimberley and Rubens (2002), management support organizations "have evolved over the last 25 years as the major resource for nonprofit training and consultation in the nation" (p. 131). These direct assistance organizations help nonprofits professionalize their operations through training and implementation of best practices.

Intermediary organizations are nonprofits that form knowledge-sharing systems to bridge research and practice, promote evidence-based management (or evidence-informed practice),

Table 1. Typology of Nonprofit Infrastructure Organizations

Service Focus	Purpose and Primary Activities	Nonprofit Infrastructure Organization Type and Examples
Nonprofit Sector	• Strengthen nonprofit sector - o Advocacy - o Public education - o Member support - o Nonprofit sector research	• Sector Support Organizations - o Independent Sector - o Council on Foundations - o North Carolina Center for Nonprofits - o Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action • Nonprofit Academic Centers - o Arizona State University Lodestar Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Innovation
Nonprofit organizations and their staff	• Build nonprofit capacity and provide professional development - o Trainings - o Consultation services - o Management guidance - o Information dissemination - o Knowledge development and sharing - o Nonprofit management research	• Management Support Organizations - o BoardSource • Intermediary Organizations - o United Way • Nonprofit Academic Centers - o See example above
Local Community	• Build social capital and increase cross-sector collaboration - o Connecting - o Convening - o Bridging	• Community Support Organizations - o Neighborhood Progress, Inc. (Cleveland, OH) • Civil Society Support Organizations - o Orangi Pilot Project (Karachi, Pakistan) • Nonprofit Academic Centers - o See example above

and serve as financial intermediaries. In their role as boundary spanners, intermediary organizations perform three primary functions: first, they create a network to link researchers and practitioners with the goal of facilitating information-sharing. Second, they serve as knowledge brokers that interpret research findings for practicing managers and communicate practitioner needs to scholars. Third, in their role as financial intermediaries, these organizations raise and allocate funds to support local nonprofit organizations.

The final category in table 1 consists of nonprofit support organizations that serve the community. Similar to intermediary organizations, *community and civil society support organizations* are nonprofits that seek to form networks to connect actors and facilitate communication. Whereas intermediary organizations link researchers to practitioners with the purpose of improving dialogue and promoting evidence-based management, community and civil society support organizations cast a wider net and have broader goals. Community support organizations use their interest and capability in convening to persuade key actors (individuals and organizations) from all three sectors (for-profit, government, nonprofit) to enter into synergistic collaborations that improve the local community by building social capital, trust in the nonprofit sector, and volunteerism.

Nonprofit Academic Centers

As one category of nonprofit infrastructure organizations, nonprofit academic centers help illustrate the usefulness of the typology. As shown in table 1 nonprofit academic centers have adopted all three of the service foci performed by NIOs -- the nonprofit sector as a whole, nonprofit organizations and their staff, and the local community -- and, therefore, fall into the three categories of our typology. They serve the nonprofit sector as a whole by convening nonprofit scholars and incubating and disseminating conceptual research that educates the public on the benefits and impacts of the third sector, as well as the challenges confronting it. Nonprofit academic centers serve nonprofit organizations and their staff by offering trainings, workshops, and consultation services, and by acting as intermediary knowledge brokers. Finally, they serve the local community by connecting key actors to build social capital and increase cross-sector collaboration.

In the nascent days of nonprofit academic centers in the 1990s (NACC began in 1991), Smith (1997) may have been correct in arguing that these entities emulated their university hosts by providing traditional services, such as credit-bearing instruction, theory-based research, and community service. With the passage of time and the changing demands of their stakeholders, however, nonprofit academic centers have incorporated additional functions once provided by other types of NIOs. Nonprofit academic centers increasingly aim to function as all-encompassing “one-stop-shopping” infrastructure organizations.

Our review of the extant literature suggests that NIOs share similar features, although their particular emphases should not be overlooked. With this background we turn to the development of a framework for the assessment of one type of NIO: nonprofit academic centers. Because nonprofit academic centers perform all of the activities of the broad family of NIOs, we feel that with some attention to the differences across the various types, our framework can be applied fruitfully to them. Based on our typology presented in table 1, the discussion section of the article elucidates the application of our framework to the different categories of NIOs.

Literature Review

Two streams of scholarship underlie the development of our assessment framework: first, research that explores the opportunities, challenges, and tensions emanating from the multiple accountabilities of nonprofit organizations; and second, research on building individual, nonprofit, and community capacity.

Nonprofit Accountability

Nonprofit academic centers are accountable to multiple stakeholders with similar yet divergent interests: upward to their funders, downward to their clients, and internally to themselves and their mission (Ebrahim, 2010). First, they are accountable to external funders, such as those for whom they perform work to meet grant or contract requirements. These funders are organized and operate to meet various needs and serve diverse populations. As such, grants must be strategically structured and programs purposefully designed to increase the degree of overlap between funders’ priorities and decrease the likelihood that the nonprofit academic centers will be held responsible for conducting activities that fall beyond their mission.

Second, nonprofit academic centers are accountable to the nonprofit organizations and the communities they serve. Their programs and activities must be targeted and responsive to the diverse needs of these organizational constituents (Frumkin, 2002). Third, nonprofit academic centers are accountable to the host university, its mission, and the faculty and administrators with an interest or oversight authority regarding them. They must balance demands of external stakeholders with the academic mission of the university and, consequently, strategically plan, seek and earn external funding, and execute programs that align with the university's mission and goals. As with other nonprofits that must balance stakeholders' expectations (Bryson, 2011, 2016), the challenge before NIOs is to manage the demands of external funders and serve constituent groups in the community in a way that will also contribute to the academic mission of the university.

Considerations of accountability include not only accountability to whom but also for what (Carver, 1997; Renz, 2010). Nonprofit academic centers are accountable to stakeholders for three broad categories: finances, governance, and performance. First, they are expected to engage in sound financial practices, including budgeting, financial planning, developing/following policies for the use of funds, disclosing financial transactions, providing transparency in the use of funds, and ensuring grant compliance, among other fundamental best practices. Second, they must ensure sound governance practice that meets legal and ethical standards. Officers and others with governance authority share the responsibility to ensure that financial and programmatic decisions, oversight, and stewardship of resources and personnel are based on sound evidence, are in the best interest of relevant stakeholders, and are in accordance with university policies and procedures. Finally, nonprofit academic centers are accountable for demonstrating performance toward goals. Performance-based accountability requires that they demonstrate programmatic results, which we elaborate in our assessment framework.

Nonprofit academic centers have two primary methods for demonstrating their accountability to relevant stakeholders: tools and processes (Ebrahim, 2005). Tools include disclosures and reports that typically require an entity to convey numerical metrics (e.g., counts) related to inputs (i.e., resources received or committed) and activities (i.e., programs). Although tools may require some level of performance assessment, evaluation is typically performed at intervals with data limited to short-term outputs. Thus, the tools themselves lack the introspective and performance components that facilitate organizational learning and results.

Whereas tools are employed predominantly for compliance (i.e., to satisfy funders and others with oversight authority), processes are strategic. Process-based accountability involves participation by a range of stakeholders, is long-term in nature, and provides adaptive learning via a feedback loop. Multidimensional outcome assessment is performed to generate data that can be used to facilitate learning and lead to changes in programming, thereby improving performance and mission fulfillment.

Nonprofit Capacity Building

The second literature stream underlying our assessment framework is the scholarship on nonprofit capacity building. In its widely referenced 2001 report, the Urban Institute defines capacity building as "strengthening nonprofits so they can better achieve their mission" (Backer, 2001, p. 38). Elegant in its minimalism, this definition leaves space for practitioners to articulate what it means to strengthen nonprofits and determine how to build the requisite capacity. The Urban Institute's definition may seem straightforward, but it belies the complexity of capacity building.

Capacity building requires a multifaceted approach (Despard, 2016). For many practitioners, nonprofit capacity is narrowly construed to consist of organizational structures, financial resources, and human capital. However, this limited conceptualization fails to acknowledge the purpose for which nonprofits exist and the environment in which nonprofits operate. That is, nonprofit capacity building approaches are useful insofar as they also address the need to build community capacity. Therefore, capacity building is studied at three levels: individual, organizational, and communal, i.e., community-based (Bryan & Brown, 2015).

Individual Capacity. Individual level capacity comprises the human capital of a nonprofit. Human capital is the stock of resources individually and collectively possessed by the people associated with a nonprofit, including its employees and volunteers. These resources can add value and return a social and/or financial benefit to the organization. Examples of individual capacity include number of staff and volunteers, quality of staff and volunteers, and knowledge, skills, abilities, and other attributes of these paid and volunteer personnel (Brown, Andersson, & Jo, 2016; Minzer, Klerman, Markovitz, & Fink, 2014). Also included is the commitment of staff and volunteers to the organization, its mission, and its clients.

Organizational Capacity. Organizational capacity includes the financial, physical, and social capital of the organization, as well as its structures and systems of operation. Organizational capital represents the stock of resources owned by the nonprofit that have an economic value. Assessing and investing in this capital can add value and generate a social and/or financial return to the organization. Examples of organizational capital include financial capital (cash, investments, assets, and endowment; revenue portfolio, trends, and forecasts); physical capital (facilities and equipment; information technology); and social capital (strength of internal relationships and culture; number and strength of external linkages; attitudes of stakeholders, i.e., reputation and legitimacy) (Brown et al., 2016).

How organizations structure, facilitate, build, and leverage available capital (individual and organizational) affects the achievement of organizational outcomes. Hence, organizational capacity also comprises institutional structures and systems of operation. Examples include organizational structures (mission, vision, goals, and values; bylaws; policies; job descriptions for staff and volunteers; strategic plan) and systems of operation, i.e., processes by which work is performed (action plans, performance management system).

Communal Capacity. Communities provide resources that support nonprofit operations, and, as with nonprofit organizations, they have a potential capacity that can be nurtured and built. A community's carrying capacity is the degree to which nonprofit organizations can be supported by the social, economic, and political conditions of the area (Anheier, 2014). Building nonprofit capacity entails increasing communal carrying capacity. Examples of community capacity relevant to nonprofit capacity building include social capital, trust in the nonprofit sector, extent of volunteerism, and amount of philanthropy (individual, corporate, foundation, government).

Methodology

Given the exploratory nature of this project, along with the lack of systematic research on nonprofit infrastructure organizations, we cast a wide net and drew on multiple sources of information to develop our framework for the assessment of nonprofit academic centers and nonprofit infrastructure organizations more generally. Our exploratory qualitative approach involved three phases.

Table 2. Dimensions and Sub-Dimensions of the Assessment Framework

Dimension 1: Administration	Dimension 2: Academic Support	Dimension 3: Research	Dimension 4: Education and Management Support	Dimension 5: Community Engagement
• Operations • Structure • Human Capital	• Students • Faculty • Academic Units	• Center produced • Faculty supported and promoted	• Credit-bearing instruction • Non-credit-bearing instruction • Consultation services	• Knowledge Broker • Connector and Advocate

First, we conducted reviews of 24 nonprofit academic centers' websites to identify common activities and glean best practices. To identify the nonprofit academic centers used in our analysis, we combined, then sorted, lists maintained by the Nonprofit Academic Centers Council (NACC, 2013) and the International Society for Third Sector Research (ISTR). The initial sample of NACC members and ISTR-recognized academic centers contained 157 entities. We restricted our analysis to U.S. entities and then discarded entities not identified as nonprofit academic centers or institutes (e.g., nonprofit degree programs, public affairs departments, and university-based community initiatives). After sorting the lists, 24 U.S. nonprofit academic centers and institutes remained.

For the second phase of our data collection effort, we posted a request to the ARNOVA-L listserv¹ to solicit information and input from the nonprofit academic and practitioner community. The email solicitation culminated in gathering relevant information from three directors of nonprofit academic centers via phone and/or email communication, including their center's strategic plan, self-studies, and assessment tools.

For the third and final phase, we conducted semistructured, open-ended interviews with nine stakeholders of a single nonprofit academic center, including the director of the center, faculty and administrators with an interest in and oversight authority over the center, and nonprofit funders. The stakeholder interviews ranged from 45 to 90 minutes in duration. Extensive handwritten notes taken during the interviews were later analyzed to identify commonly noted themes. Based on our literature review and our methods, we developed an assessment framework (below) for nonprofit academic centers that offers a multidimensional depiction of the many activities centers may pursue. We emphasize that the assessment framework emanates from our data collection methods and reading of the literature and represents what we consider is a useful next step to organize and advance the study of nonprofit infrastructure organizations.

The Assessment Framework

Our assessment framework comprises five dimensions: administration, academic support, research, education and management support, and community engagement. For each of the five dimensions we propose related subdimensions that collectively represent the multifaceted dimensions (as shown in table 2). In the following sections, we introduce and elaborate upon the dimensions and subdimensions along with suggested activities and sample metrics for application and use. For illustrative purposes, some of the metrics have accompanying

performance indicators that can be used to track progress and report to stakeholders.

Given the broad and comprehensive nature of the framework, it is unlikely that any nonprofit academic center, unless sufficiently resourced and staffed, could operationalize, implement, and track all of the proposed activities. Therefore, center leadership with stakeholder input may prioritize the proposed dimensions and choose to pursue those activities that meet the following criteria, among others:

- Does the activity align with the academic center's mission, strategic plan, and goals?
- Does the academic center have sufficient resources to engage the activity?
- Does the activity satisfy multiple stakeholders?
- Does the activity offer a high return on investment?

Metrics

Over the last two decades funders of nonprofit organizations have increasingly chosen to focus on the outcomes of their monetary "investments." For example, United Way organizations no longer fund favored nonprofits but prefer to support programs that achieve outcomes intended to create positive community impact. Additionally, philanthropic foundations provide targeted grants and attempt to quantify outcomes using complex formulas with the goal of attaining the highest return on their investment.

Although this movement commands a large following among funders, outcomes are complex, long-term, and often difficult to quantify and measure (Despard, 2016). Furthermore, it is tenuous to credit a single event/stimulus (e.g., grant, change in management) with producing an observed outcome. Therefore, some experts advocate targeting key organizational resource attributes and management functions that are "likely to contribute to fulfilling performance objectives" (Brown et al., 2016, p. 2892). Accordingly, the proposed framework provides a selection of metrics from which managers may choose, including input, process, and output level metrics that research and best practices suggest may reasonably lead to the desired outcomes. We now turn to the explication of the dimensions.

Dimension 1: Administration

The administration dimension encompasses the structure, operations, and human capital necessary to operate a nonprofit academic center. We offer suggestions of metrics that arose through our review of the literature and interviews/discussions, but they should not be viewed as exhaustive. Rather, the proposed metrics serve to define and illustrate the subdimensions. Managers may use the proposed metrics to develop relevant and timely performance indicators based on conditions at the time of assessment and reporting. For example, if university or other funders articulate a preferred level of state support versus non-state support, academic center leadership may calculate the level of support in percentages and demonstrate academic center progress toward the goal. The suggested metrics follow.

Structure

- Mission, vision, goals, values
- Policies (e.g., conflict of interest, whistleblower, code of ethics, financial)
- Organizational chart with clear reporting lines (internally and externally)
- Job descriptions for staff, contractors (e.g., consultants, trainers), and interns
- Strategic plan
- Evaluation systems

Operations

- Revenues: state support, non-state support, contract revenue, program service revenue, grant revenue, grants applied for and rates of success
- Expenses: operating expenses (i.e., overhead costs), resource seeking costs (i.e., staff's time, with associated cost, allocated to grant writing and reporting), program expenses (i.e., costs related to program delivery)

Human capital (i.e., personnel and professional development)

- Qualifications of staff, faculty, contractors, interns (example metrics: knowledge, skills, abilities, other attributes)
- Professional development completed (example metrics: hours, skills, certifications)
- Continuing education obtained (example metrics: hours, skills, certifications)

Dimension 2: Academic Support

The second dimension views nonprofit academic centers in their role as support entities serving the academic mission of the host college or university. This dimension captures the intentional and facilitative work performed to assist students and faculty. For example, centers can match students with certain majors/coursework to opportunities with nonprofit organizations that help build skills or extend knowledge.

Students

- Center support of experiential/applied learning (example metrics: number of applied learning projects arranged/hosted, number of internships hosted at center and cumulative hours, number of internship placements in the community and cumulative hours, number and dollar amount of center funded applied learning and/or research opportunities).
- Center support of student learning outcomes: increased learning (example metric: number of student learning outcomes achieved), change in student skills (example metric: number and quality of marketable skills gained in budgeting, event planning, grant writing, volunteer management, etc.).

Faculty

- Breadth, depth, and diversity of academically centered faculty connections (example metrics: number and listing of faculty with whom the academic center works, frequency of communication, number and listing of academic projects/requests facilitated).

Academic units

- Breadth, depth, and diversity of departmental connections (example metrics: number and listing of partner departments, frequency of communication, number and listing of projects/requests facilitated).

Dimension 3: Research

As part of an institution of higher learning, nonprofit academic centers should contribute to the research mission of the college or university. The research dimension comprises the extent to which academic center staff and faculty: author, publish, and disseminate original research relating to the nonprofit sector; support research-based grants for the study of issues relevant to the nonprofit sector; and promote faculty research on the nonprofit sector.

Center produced research

- Center produced research and its presentation and publication by faculty/staff (example metrics: number and listing of conference presentations, number of research articles, book chapters, trade journal articles, and technical reports).

Faculty supported and promoted research

- Range of activities and extent to which center supports and promotes faculty research pertinent to the nonprofit sector (example metrics: number and dollar amount of external research-based grants academic center applied for and received to support faculty research, number of projects in which academic center assisted in facilitating community-engaged research, number of faculty research presentations hosted by the academic center, number of faculty/staff attendees at research presentations, number of student attendees at research presentations, number of community attendees at research presentations).

Dimension 4: Education and Management Support

Nonprofit academic centers perform an important function by providing instruction on campus as well as off campus. The education and management support dimension has three subdimensions: credit-bearing instruction, non-credit-bearing instruction, and consultation services. The first subdimension pertains to the extent to which the center is involved in the strategy, development, and provision of the nonprofit curriculum for the college or university. The second subdimension captures the extent to which the center offers academically based training, workshops, and other non-credit-bearing courses in nonprofit studies that are responsive to community needs and interests. The third subdimension relates to the consultation services offered by the center.

Credit-bearing instruction

- Center created and/or supported academic programs/courses with content relevant to the nonprofit sector (example metrics: listing and description of programs, e.g., Master of Public Administration, Master of Nonprofit Management, Minor in Nonprofit Management and Leadership, Certificate in Nonprofit Management, number of undergraduate and graduate students formally advised for degree programs, list and description of undergraduate and graduate courses pertaining to the nonprofit sector, frequency with which curricula supported by the academic center is reviewed and updated).

Non-credit-bearing instruction

- Curricula responsive to needs of targeted market ascertained through systematic market analysis (updated every two to three years).
- Frequency with which training modules are updated and by whom. Schedule for updates may vary by subject, depending on the extent to which research, best practices, and legal landscape change. For example: annual updates for program evaluation, board governance, leadership, and biannual updates for law, financial management, human resources.
- Frequency with which center training personnel are evaluated by participants and faculty with subject matter expertise.
- Variety of training/workshops (e.g., topic areas) and levels of sophistication (e.g., entry level, intermediate, advanced).
- Number and frequency of academically based (evidence-based) training/workshops by subject area, e.g., financial management, governance,

volunteer management, advocacy/lobbying, marketing (example metrics: number offered by faculty, number offered by practitioners, number of attendees for each training/workshop).

- Demonstrable outputs and short-term outcomes of training/workshops observed in attendees (example metrics: knowledge and skills gained by attendees, e.g., able to read financial statements, knowledge of board fiduciary duties; confidence and leadership ability improved, e.g., feeling of self-efficacy, increased emotional intelligence).
- Demonstrable organizational short-term outcomes of training/workshops (example metrics: mission statement updated, strategic plan adopted, job and volunteer job descriptions updated, board committees created, external audit obtained, increased number of clients served, increased revenues and diversification, new funding obtained, higher percentage of grant applications funded, client outcome data tracked, client feedback data obtained [Minzer et al., 2014]).
- Demonstrable organizational midterm and long-term outcomes of training/workshops (example metrics: nonprofit delivers better/more services for its clients, and nonprofits achieve improved outcomes [Minzer et al., 2014, p. 551]).

Consultation services

- Direct management support offered through consultation services (example metrics: number of hours, number of clients, demonstrable individual and organizational outputs and outcomes achieved).

Dimension 5: Community Engagement

Community engagement underlies many of the activities and metrics presented in the academics, research, and education and management support dimensions. Nevertheless, nonprofit academic centers engage and serve their community in other ways, and community engagement constitutes a dimension for assessment unto itself. Nonprofit academic centers play a linkage and interpretive role in collecting and disseminating useful knowledge to the community regarding the nonprofit sector. This dimension has two subdimensions: knowledge broker and community connector and advocate.

Nonprofit academic centers can provide a bridge between academics and practitioners and serve a mutually beneficial function. Centers can interpret academic research for practitioner audiences and facilitate the use of evidence-based management (EBM) practices in nonprofit operations. EBM is the concept that scientifically derived knowledge is the appropriate basis for making organizational decisions (Rousseau, 2006). From this point of view, managers should rely on the best available scientific evidence, which is proven reliable and valid (i.e., repeatable over time and generalizable across situations), to pursue desired outcomes.

Knowledge broker

- Reliable source of expert, up-to-date information on issues relating to the nonprofit sector in the community (example metrics: number of information requests, number of referrals).
- Development of readable syntheses or summaries of academic research (example metrics: number of published summaries, range of summaries across substantive management areas).
- Monitoring and reporting policy and legislative developments important to

nonprofit organizations (example metric: number of policy or legislative reports).

Connector and advocate

- Profile of faculty skills and construction of database to better understand/track faculty expertise and to facilitate connections when center receives nonprofit request (example metric: number of community-initiated connections facilitated).
- Profile of nonprofit community and construction of database to provide bridge to nonprofit organizations and community when faculty submit request to center (example metric: number of faculty-initiated connections facilitated).
- Map of state-wide nonprofit community and build database to support teaching, research, and job-related goals.²
- Support (or opposition) of issues and policies relevant to nonprofit organizations and community development (example metric: number of op-ed articles authored by academic center personnel).
- Creation of social capital (bonding and bridging) and trust in the nonprofit sector (see Putnam, 2000).
- Increased level of volunteerism (example metric: annually assess the number and amount of time individuals volunteer) and amount of giving (example metric: annually assess the amount of individual, corporate, foundation, and government giving to nonprofits).

Discussion

Based on the nonprofit accountability and capacity-building literatures, our review of nonprofit academic centers' websites, discussions with knowledgeable directors of nonprofit academic centers, and interviews with stakeholders of a center, we developed an assessment framework comprising five dimensions: administration, academic support, research, education and management support, and community engagement. In the preceding sections of this article, we confined our discussion regarding the utility and application of the proposed framework to one type of nonprofit infrastructure organization, nonprofit academic centers housed in colleges and universities. That focus struck as appropriate not only because we were responding to a specific charge from our university but also because the colleges and universities that host these centers face the challenge of demonstrating their standing and contribution in the community as well as their effectiveness and value to key stakeholders. Scholars of higher education have noted that "performance-based accountability regimes have become increasingly prevalent throughout government. One area where this has received considerable attention in recent years is higher education, where many states have adopted funding policies that seek to tie institutional funding to objective measures of performance" (Rabovsky, 2012, p. 675). In publicly supported as well as private colleges and universities, leaders are called upon to show relevance as well as results. In our view, with their emphasis on performing research, teaching, and public service that strengthens nonprofit/nongovernmental organizations, philanthropy, and voluntary action "critical to building healthy, successful communities" (NACC, 2013), nonprofit academic centers can assist their college and university hosts in meeting this crucial challenge.

As we discussed at the outset of this article, nonprofit academic centers constitute but one type of nonprofit infrastructure organization. Our detailed examination of NIOs revealed similarities and differences across them, as summarized in table 1, so that, with suitable modifications, we can extend our framework to the assessment of this larger family of organizations. The assessment framework is applicable and useful for a range of organizations that coordinate and

Table 3. Relevant Assessment Dimensions for Nonprofit Infrastructure Organizations

Type of Infrastructure Organization	Admin.	Academic Support	Research	Edu. & Mgmt. Support	Community Engagement	
					Knowledge Broker	Connector & Advocate
Nonprofit Academic Centers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sector Support Organizations			✓		✓	✓
Management Support Organizations				✓	✓	
Intermediary Organizations			✓		✓	
Community and Civil Society Support Organizations						✓

deliver essential services that enable nonprofit organizations to operate effectively and more successfully (Smith, 1997, p. 89-90). Table 3 illustrates the alignment between the dimensions in our framework and the main types of nonprofit infrastructure organizations that we have identified and distinguished (see table 1).

With their macro-service focus on the nonprofit sector as a whole, sector support organizations publish and sponsor research that illustrates major trends and developments for nonprofit organizations and translates the findings into implications for practice. Further, they monitor the legislative and policy environment as well as general trends with respect to need for the various services of the nonprofit sector. Accordingly, the most relevant dimensions of our assessment framework for sector support organizations are research (Dimension 3) and community engagement (Dimension 5), including both the knowledge broker and community advocate subdimensions.

Given their service focus on nonprofit organizations and their staff, management support organizations are concerned with building nonprofit capacity and professional development. Thus, the relevant dimension of the assessment framework consists of education and management support (Dimension 4), specifically the measures concerning non-credit-bearing instruction and consultation services. In addition, management support organizations provide the knowledge broker function of community engagement (Dimension 5). Another type of NIO, intermediary organizations, aims to provide activities that promote research to community partners, host or facilitate research presentations, and otherwise share and broker information and knowledge. Accordingly, the pertinent dimensions for their assessment comprise research (Dimension 3) and the knowledge broker criterion of community engagement (Dimension 5). The service focus of community support organizations and civil society organizations is the local community, where these entities strive to build social capital and facilitate cross-sector collaboration. Hence, the most relevant dimension for assessment is community engagement (Dimension 5) with an emphasis on community connector and advocate, i.e., the framework can be most useful in assessing the community engagement work of these NIOs.

Conclusion

This research provides a new typology to comprehend the variety of nonprofit infrastructure organizations as well as a framework to guide their assessment that the field has heretofore lacked. To develop our framework we began with nonprofit academic centers. We determined that these entities are prominent members of a larger family of nonprofit infrastructure organizations, whose responsibilities, functions, and even nomenclature are amorphous and confusing. To address this complexity we developed a typology that we feel brings greater insight and understanding to this category of NIOs. Based on the typology, we show how our

framework might be productively applied not only to nonprofit academic centers but also to the different types of NIOs. As we stated earlier, the assessment framework represents our effort to advance study and practice in this field.

Our analysis suggests lessons for the management and leadership of nonprofit infrastructure organizations. The assessment framework identifies five assessment dimensions, strategies for measurement, and various sample activities and metrics. Given the extended number of possible activities and indicators that the different NIOs might pursue, the assessment framework is no substitute for management: Organizational leadership must determine and prioritize the dimensions, subdimensions, and measures that have greatest applicability and importance to them. Second and related, such a crucial determination of prioritization cannot, and should not, take place apart from stakeholders: NIO leadership must identify key stakeholders, solicit their views and preferences, and ensure that their assessment activities balance the demands and goals of this diverse collection. Stakeholder analysis constitutes a key managerial function (Bryson, 2016).

Our recommendations for NIOs mirror the commentary and advice bestowed on the nonprofit field more generally in regard to stakeholder analysis. NIOs must first determine credible and/or influential stakeholders (Renz & Herman, 2016, p. 279) and then collect and ascertain from them pertinent assessments. Nevertheless, NIO leadership must bear in mind that, as some acknowledge (e.g., Renz & Herman, 2016), evaluation is not an objective practice, and effectiveness in nonprofits and the organizations that serve them is a social construction. Leadership must still determine ways and methods to balance diverse stakeholder interests (Tschirhart, 1996). Renz and Herman assert that “effectiveness is whatever significant stakeholders think it is, and there is no single objective reality ‘out there’ waiting to be assessed” (p. 279). With “no commonly agreed basis for judging... effectiveness, much less a single, objectively ‘real’ measure” (p. 279), NIO leaders must solicit stakeholder input when choosing the appropriate metrics and performance indicators.

A third implication for management and leadership of nonprofit infrastructure organizations points to both a strength and limitation of our analysis. Abramson and McCarthy (2012) maintain that nonprofit infrastructure organizations are not serving the sector as effectively as they might with respect to providing quality services and addressing critical challenges. Our assessment framework can alert the leadership of different types of NIOs to the respective dimensions in which they might justifiably undertake activities and for which they might be held accountable. In addition, we have counseled NIO leaders both to concentrate on the most pertinent dimensions for their organizations and to examine and balance their activities to meet stakeholder preferences. Yet, our framework and related recommendations constitute only the “data” step to addressing the concerns expressed by Abramson and McCarthy (2012). Although collecting these data would represent a significant advance for many NIOs, a more basic question is whether these entities are making a positive difference for the dimensions and the constituencies they prioritize.

To begin to answer this question, NIO leadership will need to build on the data step to progress to the “evaluation” step, i.e., to conduct analysis of the data assembled to ascertain whether or not (and, if so, to what extent) their organization is having the desired effect (“moving the needle”) on the selected dimensions. Implementing the analysis step will likely present a challenge to many of the nonprofit infrastructure organizations that are the subject of our inquiry but no less so for the nonprofit sector more broadly, which often finds itself short of financial and human resources. Meeting it would likely prove helpful, if not crucial, for obtaining and/or continuing the support for nonprofit organizations of their funders and other

key stakeholders. If nonprofit infrastructure organizations are committed to strengthening nonprofit effectiveness and capacity to “promote the health of the nonprofit sector” (Abramson & McCarthy, 2012, p. 423), they might well develop and extend their evaluation skills both to model this expertise and to aid other nonprofit organizations that could benefit from their assistance.

Notes

1. “The ARNOVA-L listserv was established in 1991 and has been in continuous service since that time. It is one of the oldest and most successful email discussion lists in the social sciences. The list enables us to facilitate the rapid sharing of concerns, interests, problems and solutions among interested researchers, teachers, practitioners and students. Participants come from nearly 40 countries; although the majority are from North America. They represent a broad cross-section of researchers, teachers, students and practitioners interested in nonprofit organizations, voluntary action and philanthropy” (ARNOVA-L, n.d.).
2. See the Indiana Nonprofits Project (n.d.).

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Demons, Spirits, and Elephants: Reflections on the Failure of Public Administration Theory¹

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For the past half-century, those defining the field of Public Administration in their role as its leading “theorists” have been preoccupied with defending the enterprise against the evils of value-neutral logical positivism. This polemical review of that period focuses on the Simon-Waldo debate that ultimately leads the field to adopt a “professional” identity rather than seek disciplinary status among the social sciences. A survey of recent works by the field’s intellectual leaders and “gatekeepers” demonstrates that the anti-positivist obsession continues, oblivious to significant developments in the social sciences. The paper ends with a call for Public Administrationists to engage in the political and paradigmatic upheavals required to shift the field toward a disciplinary stance.

Keywords: Disciplinary Communities, Public Administration Theory, Simon-Waldo Debate

Author’s Note: This paper was originally written and presented in 1999 as both a critical reflection on Public Administration’s ongoing “identity crisis” and a rather (often too harsh) assessment of several recently published works that seemed exemplary of the problem being highlighted. Although some aspects of the argument made in the paper did find an outlet (see Dubnick, 2000), its length and contentious tone meant it was unlikely to find a mainstream outlet for publication. Nevertheless, it did circulate among colleagues and generated some collegial and published reaction (see Bogason et al., 2000). Eventually relegated to a location at the author’s website, it continued to circulate via intermittent downloads, with notable increases in “hits” at the beginning of each academic term. It seems that over the years it became required reading in a number of doctoral seminars at various institutions, and as some graduates of those programs have taken up positions at other institutions, the paper’s life and influence (for good or bad) has been sustained.

With the advent of online journals such as the Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs (JPNA), it became logistically possible to consider publishing a lengthy piece such as “Demons...,” and I was pleasantly surprised when the editors approached me about revisiting the paper for

possible publication. As flattering as the suggestion seemed, the prospect of undertaking what might be regarded as the longest “revise and resubmit” in history was daunting, not merely due to the length and complexity of the paper and its thesis, but also because my views of the field and works (and “gatekeepers”) I critiqued have modified and mellowed somewhat. What we did agree on was to have JPNA publish the original paper (with a few very minor tweaks) along with some external commentary. The result is that what you are about to read has not been “updated” as to facts, and especially as to opinion; moreover, you will not find a reference in the bibliography more recent than 1999. That said, I hope some of the arguments offered can still prove valuable to those who, like me, are committed to the future of our field.

The Ongoing Identity Crisis

Those of us engaged in the study of Public Administration² have grown accustomed to the idea that we have an identity problem. Metaphorically, an optimistic view of this “identity crisis” would stress the idea that such conditions arise during periods of adolescence — thus holding out the promise of a productive future once such youthful anxieties are overcome. But our identity problem has proven more resistant and enduring. Following the metaphor of developmental psychology, our youthful identity crisis has matured into a full-blown mid-life crisis (see King, 1999) — without the relief from some of the emotions and anxieties that normally might accompany the intervening years.

“Identity crisis” has been one of several labels used to characterize the field’s problems. I could just as conveniently have called it an “intellectual crisis” (Ostrom, 1974), a “paradigmatic quandary” (Henry, 1987), or a “shifting” among “competing visions” (Stillman, 1991). There is a danger inherent in such diagnostic commentary, especially when applied haphazardly — as former President Carter found out after declaring that the American nation was suffering from a “malaise.” So at the outset of this essay, I want to be clear that my focus is on those academics who (1) define their primary scholarly interests as the activities, tasks, and functions of those engaged directly or indirectly in the administration of government programs and policies, and (2) perceive themselves as part of a distinct sub-*community* within academe known as Public Administration.³

The idea of “community” is significant in this context. It is a word often tossed out without discussing the implications of its use. Obviously, the use of the term is metaphorical; any community of students and scholars lacks the boundaries and the degree of social interaction among its members found in “real world” communities. Nevertheless, such communities do exist and have consequences for their members and neighbors. In that respect, they are similar — although clearly nowhere equivalent — to what Benedict Anderson terms “imagined communities” in his now classic discussion of nationalism. A nation, according to Anderson, is “*imagined*” because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.” It is “imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (Anderson, 1991, p. 6-7). In the case of nations, an imagined community is something its members would support by putting their lives on the line. In the case of a “self-aware” group of scholars, it is a community around which they are willing to build their professional lives.⁴

One implication of this approach is that I base the following remarks on the assumption that a self-aware community of scholars and students already exists. Thus, the community of Public

Administration precedes, suffers from, and attempts to deal with the identity crisis. There are times in its past (and perhaps in its future) when such crises and quandaries help to define the field. However, I presume that its existence as a community does not depend upon or await resolutions of the debates that characterize the field.

A second implication is that Public Administrationists are not unique in having to face such difficulties. There are lessons to be learned from the experience of other imagined communities in the hard sciences (Polyani, 1964) as well as the professions (see Sullivan, 1995). All have gone through (and many are still going through) similar crises, and have emerged from the experience significantly altered, if not transformed.⁵

It must be stressed as well that this paper is about the identity crisis among those who *explicitly regard themselves as members* of the Public Administration community. There are scholars who conduct studies of public administration and bureaucracy (thereby meeting our first criterion) who do not regard themselves as members of the Public Administration academic community. Instead, they might identify themselves as political scientists, sociologists, social psychologists, administrative scientists, or as members of any of the other imagined communities found in the broader academic community. While others may characterize these individuals as “public administration scholars” based on the subject matter of their work, they take their professional cues and standards from their respective academic fields rather than from Public Administrationists. In this paper, I am concerned with those who associate themselves clearly with the field of Public Administration.

This paper is more specifically about a prominent group among the field’s self-identifiers who have acted as the intellectual agenda-setters and “gatekeepers”⁶ and whose recent work represents efforts to deal with the identity issue through action (in the form of published research), reflection and theory. I use the term “theorists” for this group, although some would deny the appropriateness of the label to what they do. My use of the term is not limited to individuals who explicitly engage in the articulation of philosophical frameworks and empirical models related to public administrative behavior. Rather, I cast a wider conceptual net to capture those who have addressed issues related to the nature of the field and its activities. My focus is on the failure of these *theorists* – in their role as the field’s agenda-setters and gatekeepers – to provide the Public Administration community with a *consensus* upon which to construct a *disciplinary* identity as a social science.

The two major premises of this paper – that Public Administration requires a consensus, and that such a consensus should focus on the field’s status as a social science discipline – are necessarily risky assumptions, and therefore beg for clarification at the outset. They are “risky” in two respects. First, they imply a pre-judgment of both the present condition of the field as well as a normative position regarding its future direction. My prejudice in this regard is clearly *against* the current ambivalence among Public Administrationists regarding their identity, and *for* the acceptance of disciplinary status in the social sciences. Second, these assumptions also imply a historicist approach to questions about the nature of the field. That is, I accept the idea that academic fields are subject to developmental patterns generated by historical and institutional forces. Given the critical purpose of this paper, however, the risks associated with both assumptions seem justifiable.

The Need for Consensus

The building of and striving for consensus is central to understanding the history of contemporary academic disciplines. This is especially true for Public Administration, for the

lack of a formidable consensus within the field generates the anxieties that we call its identity crisis.

The emergence of academic fields (see Ross, 1979) often starts with little more than a sense of common concerns among a group of scholars who initially identify with other disciplines. Building on this self-awareness, the group reaches a point where they seek to articulate an explicit identity differentiating themselves from other scholars. Roger Smith notes that scientific fields often achieve this with the establishment of an “origin myth”: “Origin myths create a sense of identity, and this is as true for a scientific as for any other community. A group which struggles to establish itself, whether an oppressed nationality or a science with little institutional standing, may particularly emphasize a moment of birth and a founding father” (Smith, 1997, p. 492). For psychology, the myth was constructed around German philosopher Wilhelm Wundt’s creation of a laboratory for experimental studies of the mind. American political scientists cite historian Francis Lieber’s efforts to foster public instruction in government during the 1850s. And most Public Administrationists in the United States note the 1887 publication of political scientist Woodrow Wilson’s “The Study of Administration” as the watershed event upon which common identity is built.⁷

The developing field also adopts a “canon” – that is, a body of “exemplary texts” providing intellectual standards for the community of scholars to focus on as they build their relationships and literature (see Schaffer, 1996). For psychology, the canon ranges from the writings of behaviorist John B. Watson to the works of Sigmund Freud. In political science, the works of writers such as John W. Burgess, Woodrow Wilson, W. W. Willoughby, and Frank J. Goodnow formed the early canon. For Public Administration, by the early 1930s the emerging Canon included not only the writings of Goodnow and textbooks by Leonard D. White and W. F. Willoughby, but commission reports and government documents as well. Wallace S. Sayre acknowledged the canonical nature of that material, noting that they “not only provided the first effective teaching instruments for the new field of study; they also codified the premises, the concepts, and the data for the new public administration” (Sayre, 1958, p. 175).

Building on these intellectual and social foundations, the consensus eventually takes organizational form. Disciplinary associations, such as the American Psychological Association and the American Political Science Association, are more than manifestations of disciplinary consensus. In the United States, most were formed between 1890 and 1905 (Ross, 1979). They become part of a now institutionalized consensus that sustains the field despite internal differences that characterized it at the time of the organization’s founding, or those that might emerge in the future. Although no substitute for intellectual agreements or shared canon in the long-term, associations can serve as common ground even in the midst of paradigmatic revolutions.

The founding of the American Society for Public Administration was somewhat uncharacteristic in two respects. First, it was formed some 40 years after the creation of most major social science associations. Second, the energy and initiative for creating ASPA came primarily from practitioners and researchers not affiliated with academic institutions. Although the formal record indicates that academics played a significant role in the organization’s founding,⁸ a detailed narrative by one of its founders indicates a more complex history involving leaders from public and private government research bureaus as well as administrative officials from all levels of government.⁹ For those practitioners and professional researchers, the new Society represented a forum where those wishing to share in the development of a “science” of public administration could meet regardless of their applied specialties in budgeting or personnel management or public works engineering. Among the academics were a number who believed it

was time (in Dwight Waldo's phrase) to "loosen public administration from the restraints of political science..." (quoted in Henry, 1987, pp. 44). But the prominent role of non-academics indicates that the founding of ASPA was not focused on creating or legitimizing a distinct social science discipline. A higher priority was given to forging "closer links between the academy and the public authorities who were the primary consumers of the academy's research and training activities" (Egger, 1975, p. 74).¹⁰

Another organizational manifestation of a field's striving for consensus – or at least an indicator of its success or failure in this regard – is the creation of autonomous academic units devoted to the subject. With rare exceptions, psychology, political science, economics and other social science fields became common components of academic structures in most higher education institutions by the 1930s. Here as well, Public Administration's early development provides mixed signals about the strength of the emerging consensus. A handful of autonomous academic units devoted to the field existed in the early 1930s, although there were about three dozen or more degree programs and training curricula offered by political science and engineering faculties, and even by some research institutes and bureaus. By the 1970s there were over a hundred programs identifying themselves with the field of Public Administration, with about 50 reporting some distinct identity within their institutions, and 20 of those existing as truly autonomous academic units (Stone & Stone, 1975). Today [1999] there are at least 245 academic units belonging to the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, and perhaps several dozen more that would consider themselves associated with the field of Public Administration (see NASPAA, 1999). Despite this growth, however, the mixed organizational formats and ambivalent status of these academic units within their institutions reflects lingering questions both within and outside the field about the strength of its identity – and thus mirrors field's relatively weak consensus.

The test of any field's consensus, however, comes in the form of inevitable challenges and controversies generated from within. Within academe, no disciplinary consensus – weak or strong – goes unchallenged for long. Not only are there inevitable disagreements over competing theories or alternative methods;¹¹ there are also those who invariably seek even greater consensus than already exists by advocating "grand theories," or "theories of everything" (e.g., see Barrow, 1991). Such challenges emerge in every field, whether we are discussing high-level theoretical physics or Public Administration.¹² What differentiates the fields is their respective capacity to build on or use the existing consensus to meet the challenges. In those fields where the fundamental consensus is strong (i.e., modern physics and other basic sciences), the controversies are handled through "normal science" routines. In less consensual contexts, controversies take the form of challenges to some dominant view within the field, with the result that the discipline begins to resemble a conglomeration of distinct but powerful sub disciplines (e.g., psychology) or a very active political arena where differences are tolerated and debated, and compromises struck among the field's elite (e.g., political science) (Lowi, 1972).

For Public Administration, an early intellectual consensus built around what we now often call the "classical" approach (i.e., scientific management and the "principles of administration") dominated until the end of World War Two. By then the emerging Canon included the writings of Luther Gulick and the advocates of the "principles" orthodoxy as well as the growing body of work associated with government reform and reorganization. The postwar attack on that consensus would seriously undermine the foundations of that Canon – converting most of it into an "anti-Canon" that stood for decades as textbook examples of outmoded and oversimplified perspectives. The major thrusts of the postwar criticisms came from two directions, one (represented in the work of Herbert Simon) challenging the integrity of the field's claim to science and another (led by Dwight Waldo) exposing its weak normative underpinnings. These

two challenges proved equally effective in undermining the orthodox consensus; more importantly, they came at a time when the field was unable to contend with the consequences by forging a new consensus. Instead, what took center stage was a debate between those seeking to create a social science focused on administration (Simon's agenda) and those committed to a normative agenda for the field (Waldo's goal). I will discuss that debate in greater detail below, for in a sense it shaped the minimal consensus that did emerge in the form of agreement that the field needed to find some focus to fill the void left by the devastation of orthodoxy.¹³

By the early 1960s, the debate had become unjoined as the major advocates for a social science of Public Administration abandoned the field to seek identity elsewhere, some in other parts of political science (e.g. comparative political studies¹⁴), others in the emerging fields of administrative and organizational studies.¹⁵ No hoped-for "reformulation" or "new orthodoxy" emerged, and those remaining in the field began to accept (albeit reluctantly) a non-disciplinary identity (see discussion of the "professional stance" below). By providing a conceptual focus in the form of "paradigms," Thomas S. Kuhn's (1970) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* revitalized discussions about the need for consensus within the field, and the search for some form of intellectual consensus has been an ongoing project central to numerous discussions and critiques of the field ever since (e.g., Golembiewski, 1977; Henry, 1987; see also Martin, 1989).

Given the current state of Public Administration, is a new or more comprehensive consensus necessary to sustain the field? Probably not, and for some critics the preoccupation with developing such a consensus has proven too costly (Golembiewski, 1977). Nevertheless, *the striving for consensus of some sort will continue* because there are some practical as well as psychic advantages gained as a result of reaching consensus in a field. Studies of graduate faculties in the sciences and social sciences indicate that scholars in fields characterized by relatively high intellectual consensus stand at the top of the academic social system and create clearer patterns for career advancement and the attainment of status within a field. These high-consensus fields also receive more favorable treatment from funding sources, and are more likely to provide opportunities for research of even the most abstract problems.

Among those fields with which Public Administration has been historically and intellectually linked, their status as social "sciences" has had mixed blessings. Relative to the "hard" or "natural" sciences, they often find themselves subject to the academic equivalent of snobbery and abuse applied to those of lower social status.¹⁶ On the other hand, the "mainstream" social sciences seem prone to treating their "professional" siblings (e.g., social work and education, as well as Public Administration) with equal disdain or indifference. For Public Administration, the decision of the 1967 program committee for the American Political Science Association annual meeting not to include a section related to the field has long symbolized its psychic alienation from other social sciences.¹⁷ Within institutions, similar challenges take the form of controversies surrounding the allocation of resources or personnel decisions.

The unrelenting urge toward greater consensus within Public Administration has been increasingly evident since the 1980s. The field's major journals are publishing more articles focused on the quality of Public Administration theory and research (see White & Adams, 1994a), and every major Public Administration conference seems to have a number of panels or events addressing "identity crisis" issues. The issue addressed in this paper is the failure of the leading theorists in the field to satisfy what seems to be a collective desire.

The Professional Stance

The other major “risky” premise of this essay is the assumed desirability of establishing Public Administration's identity as a social science discipline. Such an assumption, of course, implies that the field currently defines itself otherwise, and/or that there are alternatives to the social science stance. In that regard, I take seriously the conventional wisdom that the field has adopted (and adapted to) an identity closer to that of a profession than to a social science discipline. Furthermore, I also consider identification with the humanities as a serious option.

Public Administration's situation differs from similar identity crises that seem to constantly reemerge over time in fields such as political science, anthropology, history, and economics. For those other fields, past and present discussions about the nature of their disciplinary identity have occurred (and recurred – see Wylie, 1996) within the context of the “two cultures” debate eloquently articulated by C.P. Snow in his 1959 lectures on the growing intellectual gap between the sciences and the humanities (Snow, 1959). More often than not, it is a debate between advocates of social science methodologies and those favoring approaches that would associate them more closely with the humanities.¹⁸

For Public Administration, however, a serious third option emerged early in the field's history. At its simplest, the debate centers on the issue of whether the practice of public administration itself was an art, a science, or a craft. Taking their cues from either the “art” or “science” positions alone, the debates over the field's identity might have followed the same pattern as the related disciplines. But the idea of public-administration-as-craft opened a third path toward a “professional” stance.

Perhaps the classic statements of Public Administration's contemporary identity problem are found in two 1968 essays by Dwight Waldo in which he reflects on the state of the field (Waldo, 1968a, 1968b). Waldo directly (and with characteristic honesty) confronts the issue of how the community of “self-aware” Public Administration scholars should define their mutual endeavor. At the outset of his discussion, Waldo rejects two traditional alternative solutions: sub-disciplinary status within political science¹⁹ (or, for that matter, within any other discipline), and status as a distinct discipline among the social sciences (which he regarded as both too ambitious and not ambitious enough).²⁰ Instead, Waldo advocates the now famous solution that “we try to act as a profession without actually being one, and perhaps without the hope or intention of becoming one in any strict sense” (Waldo, 1968b, p. 10). Acknowledging that this position would be subject to “ridicule,” Waldo nevertheless defended the professionalism option:

The professional perspective or stance is the only one broad and flexible enough to enable us to contain our diverse interests and objectives, yet firm and understandable enough to provide some unity and sense of direction and purpose. It has meaning and contains useful cues and imperatives both in the academic world in which public administration is studied and taught and in the governmental world in which public administration is practiced. In the larger environment in which both these related enterprises are carried on, it gives us more purchase than any other oriented idea (Waldo, 1968b, p. 10).

As an analogy, Waldo (1968b) uses the field of medicine where “science and art, theory and practice, study and application” are included under the umbrella of a profession. “It is not based on a single discipline, but utilizes many. It is not united by a single theory, and is justified and

given direction by a broad social purpose” (p. 10). (In other contexts, Waldo would use the metaphor of “enterprise” to characterize the field’s broad scope and diverse perspectives [Waldo, 1980]. But it was the professional stance that he regarded as more strategically viable.)

The need to incorporate all aspects of the field in resolving the identity crisis is an important and defining characteristic of Waldo's support of the professional approach, especially for its impact on the academic field of Public Administration. One of the major objectives of Waldo and others has been to maintain the inclusive nature of the more general community we call public administration. This effort has deep roots in the brief intellectual history of governmental studies in the United States. When formed in 1903, the American Political Science Association adopted three missions which seemed so complementary at the time that they were regarded as ideally and necessarily indistinguishable: enhancing the civic education of the public, training public servants, and conducting research on government and politics.²¹ The centrality of Public Administration in political science through the 1930s and 1940s is evident in almost all aspects of the discipline – including the commitment to maintain a close working relationship between scholars and practitioners.

In hindsight, however, the signs of change can be found throughout the 1930s, and perhaps nowhere more clearly than in the formation of the American Society for Public Administration as a distinct entity. While it would be an oversimplification, one can characterize the history as a growing split between those in political science who sought to legitimize the discipline’s claim to status as a social science, and those committed to maintaining the link between research and practice in governmental affairs. To the increasingly influential hardline social scientists desiring greater detachment and objectivity for their discipline, their contact and efforts on behalf of practitioners intellectually tainted Public Administrationists; in contrast, practitioners often regarded them as too scholarly and academic. As a result, the contemporary student of Public Administration assumed “an ambiguous and often uncomfortable dual second-class citizenship status: He is the academic’s practical man and the public administrator’s academic” (Waldo, 1968a, p. 444-445).

It was within the context of that commitment that Waldo's argument for professional standing made sense. Public Administration involved not merely the study of government operations and management; it inherently included a “broad social purpose” no different from that characterizing the study of medicine. Any effort to resolve the identity crisis must encompass that strong commitment to purpose.

Public administration in contemporary government is not less, but more, complex than caring for and curing the ill (which, in a formal sense, it often embraces). We need a perspective, an orientation, appropriate to the task. In terms of my assigned topic, the scope of our theory should extend as far as the professional challenge and should respond to the needs and opportunities it presents. If the analogy to medicine has any validity, this means that we must be concerned not with a theory but with theories, indeed, with theories of many types, many dimensions and facets. The professional stand does not by a simple point-in-the-slot procedure provide “answers,” nor does it even provide a complete and clear agenda of theoretical problems. It does provide a framework large enough to embrace our theoretical problems; it helps to clarify the problems posed and to define the nature of proper answers; it gives direction on the time

that which and the level at which to seek solutions. Above all, it gives unity while permitting diversity. (Waldo, 1968b, p. 10-11)

Although published in 1968, and despite criticisms of his stand, Waldo's remarks should be read as authoritative rather than suggestive. He was articulating a position that had in fact come to wide acceptance during the postwar years in lieu of any strong consensus that might have led to a more disciplinary stance. As I argue below, Waldo wrote from the position of victor in his debate with Simon over the direction of the field. But from the perspective of 1968, the victory seemed a somewhat hollow one. At a time when he served as unofficial spokesman for the field from his formal positions as editor of *Public Administration Review* and the Albert Schweitzer Professor of Humanities at the Maxwell School, Waldo presented the "professionalism" stance without enthusiasm and with the rationale that it provided as good a strategy for dealing with the identity crisis as any other alternative.

However, such a solution proved only partially satisfying. His belief that by acting like a profession, the field might actually become one, has borne some fruit within academe in the form of a growing number of professional schools and formalized accreditation. Public Administration is rarely perceived as a distinct social science in academe. In line with Waldo's perspective discussed above, it is more frequently regarded as a field for professional education. In this regard, Public Administration educators have been successful (more often than not) in their efforts to extricate themselves both institutionally and intellectually from traditional political science departments²² while maintaining some distance from the clutches of other "social science" professions (e.g., social welfare, management).²³

Yet the attraction of disciplinary status remains powerful among members of the Public Administration community of scholars. It is a status that academic fields strive for as self-aware collectivities, and it has eluded our field for decades.

Disciplinary status in academe requires more than a collective declaration by members of the field.²⁴ There are some characteristics common to fields that achieve disciplinary status, most related to the development of consensus discussed above. Each field takes on a separate identity from other fields, and each is able to point to the establishment of distinct units in academic institutions. Members of the field become increasingly professionalized – that is, they achieve their membership by acquiring a body of knowledge that eventually takes the form of credentials. These characteristics apply whether we are discussing the humanities, the natural sciences, or the social sciences. In the case of the natural and social sciences, an additional commitment to "scientific logic" (Waldo terms this "scientism"²⁵) is also regarded as fundamental, although the exact meaning of that concept varies by time and field (see Ross, 1979).

As important, however, is the capacity of the field's members to interact with scholars from related disciplines on a relatively equal footing. Although seeking recognition as a separate and distinct group, the creation of a discipline requires interaction with other fields.²⁶ Interestingly, Waldo himself provides us with a case study of what is required for disciplinary status in his historical overview of political science published in 1975 (Waldo, 1975). Political science and other mainstream social sciences did not emerge in a vacuum, but rather as part of a growing movement in the post-Civil War era to apply the logic of scientific rationality to modern problems. The field itself was shaped into a discipline through a dialectical process involving contrasting efforts to enhance specialized knowledge while engaging in relationships and exchanges with related fields that highlighted overlaps and similarities. Political science achieved its status as a social science through its interactions with other social sciences, and by

accepting the emerging standards of scholarship that it helped create through its relationships with the greater community of social science scholars.

As I indicate below, despite Waldo's disparaging comments about the desirability of disciplinary status for Public Administration, the possibility of moving from the professional stance toward a disciplinary identity has been constant theme in the field's identity crisis. The urge for disciplinary status is (perhaps paradoxically) inherent in the scholarly and instructional roles played by Public Administrationists under the professional stance. While committed to advancing the professionalism of practitioners through education and research, those who teach public administrators and publish in the field are also part of the academic culture where mainstream disciplinary norms dominate, and where professional schools are often isolated from the more traditional faculties. Try as they might to maintain a distinction between themselves and their colleagues in the humanities and social sciences, they are pulled toward disciplinary status and its psychic (if not practical) benefits.

In a 1987 paper addressing the "disappointment and ridicule" suffered by Public Administrationists, Kenneth J. Meier and Joseph Stewart, Jr., summarize the benefits of disciplinary identity:

Disciplines are admittedly artificial divisions of knowledge, but they are useful for precisely the same reason that any divisions of labor or classification schemes are useful. They help us organize. They give the field of study coherence and often define a research agenda. As students of public administration have found political science too limiting, they have borrowed theories, methods, and analytic approaches from organizational sociology and psychology, management, law, history, and economics. But lacking any consensus on what constitutes the core of the field and what its appropriate research agenda is, public administration fails to integrate or take as its own what it discovers in other disciplines. Public administration borrows, but it does not adopt, foster, or develop. It does not incorporate because there is no clearly defined torso to attach appendages. Public administration remains a multidisciplinary, rather than an interdisciplinary, field. (Meier & Stewart, 1987, p. 6)

Rather than focusing on whether it ought to be disciplinary, the issue for Public Administrationists should be selecting status within either the social science or humanities disciplines. Historically, the roots of Public Administration in political science tend to draw them closer to the social sciences. There are, however, growing pressures to direct the field toward the humanities by stressing the benefits of knowledge drawn from interpretive and literary methods (see Kass & Catron, 1990). In this essay, I follow a preference for the social sciences.

What does it mean to suggest that Public Administration – or for that matter, the study of any human endeavor – can be a "social science"? What constitutes a "social science" today? For those engaged in what I have been referring to as "mainstream" social science, the standard is that is at once superficially minimal and in reality quite complex. For many it is engaging in "scientific research" about social life, and thus being "scientific" (whatever that means) is regarded as the defining characteristic of the social science. King, Keohane, and Verba (1994) recently noted four features of relevant research: (1) it is "designed to make descriptive or

explanatory *inferences* on the basis of empirical information...”; (2) it uses “explicit, codified, and *public* methods to generate and analyze data whose reliability can therefore be assessed”; (3) it accepts the role of “uncertainty” in the conduct of research; and (4) it “adheres to a set of rules of inference on which its validity depends” (King, Keohane, & Verba, 1994, p.7-9).

It is not the purpose of this paper to pass judgment on these or any other criteria for defining what is or is not social science research. It is enough to note that mainstream social scientists perceive themselves as members of a broad “truth community” (a variant on the “imagined communities” concept) through which certain knowledge development approaches are legitimized and others challenged. Achieving status as a field within such a community requires more than having individual members engage in legitimized activities. It requires a field-wide consensus that the norms and standards of the broader truth community should become the principal force in shaping knowledge development and theory building among its members.²⁷ The building of such consensus should be the job of those agenda setters and gatekeepers that I am labeling theorists.

The Argument in Brief

In the section that follows, I set the stage for my argument by focusing on a key event in the intellectual history of Public Administration – the publication of Simon’s *Administrative Behavior* in 1947. The importance of that work goes beyond the content of the arguments made by Simon. As important was the challenge it posed for students in the field to make the sacrifices (e.g., objectivity, detachment) required of scholars in a field assuming its status as a social science – at least, as defined in the heyday of logical positivist influence. I offer an overview of how that challenge played itself out in intellectual disputes between Simon and Waldo. In the end, both sides would win. A social science would emerge from Simon’s work (i.e., the *administrative sciences*) and he would go on to pre-eminence as a Nobel laureate whose approach to theory transformed entire disciplines outside his own (see Davis, 1996; Fry, 1986). At the same time, Waldo would win over the minds – and hearts – of Public Administrationists and help define the status of the field for most of the post-World War II period.

I follow this with a critical assessment of the current state of Public Administration theory, focusing on several recent and highly acclaimed works. The intent here is not to critique individual theories, but to indicate the challenge now facing the Public Administration community if it would seek (as I think it should) to reclaim its promising status as a social science discipline. I argue that today’s theorists are still engaged in the effort to protect the field from the logical positivist agenda – despite the fact that logical positivism has long since lost its influence in the social science disciplines.

Finally, I consider some developments in the “post-modern” social sciences that bode well for Public Administration’s efforts to assume disciplinary status. I will argue from a position of optimism based on changes in mainstream methodological perspectives that have moved away from the logical positivist foundations of the past and in the direction of approaches that the more reasonable critics within Public Administration will find acceptable. I also stress, however, that the move toward disciplinary status will not be easy, and may ultimately fail unless the field’s intellectual leaders support a pro-disciplinary consensus.

Challenge and Reaction

Simon's Challenge

Public Administration's status among the social sciences was not always as unclear as it is today. In 1926²⁸ the Social Science Research Council established an Advisory Committee on Public Administration with the intention of "upgrading academic research in the field and bringing it into closer and more operational contact with innovations in administrative methods and procedures" (Egger, 1975, p. 66). By 1936, the Committee's funding activity accounted for one-fifth of the SSRC's expenditures, including support for special studies, commissions, research institutes, and creation of academic units devoted to the field.²⁹ These and related developments led Dean Mosher of Syracuse University's Maxwell School to declare in 1939 that the field "is itself a discipline and a method that is learnable and teachable" (Egger, 1975, p. 65).

The Second World War intervened, however, and all disciplinary development came to a halt as many Public Administrationists left academe for assignments in the war effort. What they learned during the war significantly altered their views, creating a postwar cadre of "realists" ready to question their prewar assumptions. James W. Fesler (1975) notes at least four major "shifts" in the field's postwar agenda:

- (1) the shift from administrative specialties (e.g., personnel, purchasing, and workflow planning) to the line operations concerned with achieving public purposes; (2) a shift from the chief executive and major auxiliary-and-control agencies to administrative problems of the departmental and bureau levels; (3) a shift from general, abstract principles to appreciation of the varying contexts of individual departments and programs; and (4) a shift from the rather arid concern for efficiency and economy to a concern for how American public administration is (or should be) affected by the political values and processes of its democratic setting. (Fesler, 1975, p. 104-105)

In this context, both the emerging prewar orthodoxy and disciplinary pretensions came under scrutiny by a group of young scholars emboldened by their wartime experience. The first explicit challenge came with Simon's (1946) famous "Proverbs of Administration" article pointing to fundamental flaws in the principles approach. Several months later, *Public Administration Review* published an article by Robert A. Dahl highlighting the major obstacles facing any effort to establish a science of administration based on general principles (Dahl, 1947). Waldo's work would follow a year later. The foundations of the field's prewar consensus were being effectively undercut. Could Public Administration's disciplinary status be salvaged from the resulting ruins?

In a very direct sense, that question was central to the debate between Simon and Waldo that dominated the field for the next decade. In hindsight, it was the publication of Simon's *Administrative Behavior* that triggered the debate, although there is no evidence of an immediate reaction (see Simon's comments in later editions). Published in 1947, that work was not merely the product of wartime experience. It began as Simon's dissertation before the war, and to some extent reflects intellectual developments in the field tracing back to at least the mid-1930s³⁰ as some scholars began to raise issues about the quality of research in the field. Like Public Administrationists educated at the University of Chicago and influenced by Charles Merriam and other leading advocates of an empirical political science, Simon sought to rescue

the field from what he and others perceived to be the pseudo-scientific approaches of Taylorism, the human relations movement, and the “principles of administration” (Martin, 1952).³¹ The basis of the critique was not “anti-scientific”; quite the opposite, Simon sought to save Public Administration from “bad science.” Thus, while challenging the integrity of the “science of administration” that dominated in the prewar years, Simon was simultaneously proposing a more credible social science approach for the field.³²

An important feature of Simon’s social science perspective was its roots in the logical positivist approach popular among many young scholars at the time, especially at Chicago. In addition to his exposure to the rich and diverse perspective on empirical research provided by the political science and sociology faculty at the university, Simon attended courses on logic taught by Rudolf Carnap, arguably by then the most visible member of the famed Vienna Circle. In his autobiography, Simon implies that his dissertation – which eventually developed into *Administrative Behavior* – had its roots in the philosophy of social science he culls from Carnap’s teachings (Simon, 1991). Carnap offered a clear vision of what constitutes a “science”: the presentation of knowledge in empirically verifiable statements untainted by the bias of values or ethical statements (see Smith, 1997; Wilson, 1998). It is a position Simon (1957) adopts in his brief but vigorous discussion of what constitutes a “science” in the final chapter of *Administrative Behavior*: “science is interested in sentences only with regard to their verification” (p. 248-249).³³

It would be a mistake, however, to regard Simon’s attachment to logical positivism as unthinking, or untempered. He was, if anything, a critical adherent to the approach.³⁴ In addition, there were the offsetting influences of Merriam’s Chicago School.³⁵ While stressing the need to apply scientific methods to the study of politics and government, the behaviorists at Chicago were also progressives and New Dealers committed to political change. As Simon would note in 1993, the Chicago behaviorists “generally believed that understanding must precede advocacy, and that to a limited extent [they] were able to separate their roles as scientists from their roles as citizens, a separation that is still eminently desirable if clear thought is to prevail in the discipline” (Simon, 1993, p. 49).

For Simon, adopting a logical positivist method did not require a complete and total indifference to the social dimensions of political or administrative life. Responding to Theodore Lowi’s critical assessment of Chicago School behaviorism (Lowi, 1992), Simon notes that “the individual decision maker is never taken as an uncaused-cause, independent of society” – a point, he stresses, that is repeatedly emphasized in *Administrative Behavior*. Nor did it require that the scientist engage in over-generalization or be permitted to claim more for his or her theory than is warranted. Nevertheless, the approach generates significant insights through the theories they generate.

Theorists of decision-making don't understand the whole polity...; but they have taught us an enormous amount about the minds (and emotions) of the human characters who play roles in the political drama... They have told us much about how these actors think, what they know, and what they value. Without that knowledge, accounts of events at the global, holistic level become pointless (if hair-raising) dramas without plot or motive.

No one argues that all political studies should take decision-making as their organizing thread. But for all that, it has been an extremely effective organizer, shaping much of the most useful work in the discipline. And for larger systems (e.g., in studying

public administration), the underlying structure of decision-making processes illuminates the coherence of the whole, the contributions of the parts to that whole, the organization's functions and its malfunctions. (Simon, 1993, p. 50)

Simon was also influenced by at least two efforts to apply social scientific methods to the study of public administration published prior to World War Two. In an opening footnote, Simon makes reference to the authors of those works: Chester I. Barnard and Edwin O. Stene.

Barnard's influence on Simon is quite explicit (Simon, 1957),³⁶ and concepts drawn from Barnard's (1968) *The Functions of the Executive* are frequently cited in *Administrative Behavior*.³⁷ In his famous Harvard lectures, Barnard stressed the need for a "science of organization or of coöperative systems" that would complement and enhance the "power" of the "executive arts" (Barnard, 1968, p. 290-291). While acknowledging that his particular "hypothetical scheme" was primarily based on "many years of practical work with organizations of various kinds," Barnard hoped it would stimulate work among social scientists (Barnard, 1968, p. 292-293). Simon eagerly took on the challenge.³⁸

Less prominently mentioned – although perhaps no less important – was Stene's 1940 article in *American Political Science Review*. In that work, Stene expressly addressed the need for theory in the study of public administration. He noted the growing body of empirical studies related to public sector administration, but questioned whether the field would advance without the development of a "rational theory" to guide those efforts.

Political scientists who give advice regarding fields and methods of possible research seemed to emphasize the need for empirical study. There is a danger, however, that the empirical studies will be lacking in direction or meaning until they are capable of being interpreted in full light of propositions brought forth by the rational or theoretical approach. Pithecanthropus was not discovered until after Darwin had expounded his theory of evolution, and the discovery probably would have had little significance prior to that time. Principles of economics which were originally derived from relatively superficial observations has served as guides to extensive empirical studies in recent years, but thus far the major conclusions derived from the rational analyses have been changed very little.

Without disparaging the importance of empirical research, therefore, one may be justified in taking the view that the early development of a rational theory is indispensable to the advancement of scientific method in the study of administration. (Stene, 1940, p. 1126)

Given its ultimate influence in a wide range of disciplines, there is little need to review the substance of Simon's *Administrative Behavior*, other than to stress the role intended for his theory as a foundation for Public Administration in the form of the "administrative sciences." He draws an important distinction between a "theoretical" and "practical" social science, noting that the theory-building goal of the scientist demands that he or she focus on the elaboration and confirmation of factual statements. However, in the case of the administrative sciences, the resulting theory is intended for practical application in addition to its value as a body of

knowledge. At the very end of his famous work, Simon expresses his hopes in the form of an analogy with economics:

These two alternative forms of administrative science [theoretical and practical] are exactly analogous to the two forms which economics science takes. First, economic theory and institutional economics are generalized descriptions of the behavior of men in the market. Second, business theory states those conditions of business behavior which will result in the maximization of profit. (Simon, 1957, p. 253)

This was ground-breaking material, and yet when first published, *Administrative Behavior* “created no sensation..., but it was widely and quite favorably reviewed in journals of public administration and business management.” At the time, Simon notes, “I was disappointed that none of the reviewer's recognized it as the revolutionary document I firmly believed it to be...” (Simon, 1957, p. 88).³⁹

The Response

While generating no immediate reaction, Simon's work would eventually prove to be as revolutionary as he perceived and hoped – enough so as to earn him the Nobel Prize for transforming the way economists and others perceived rational behavior. But in his own field of Public Administration, Simon's efforts generated mostly critical reactions that stirred debate, and eventually moved the field in the direction of the professional stance and research standards more closely aligned with the humanities than the social sciences.

Dwight Waldo's *The Administrative State* was being released at the same time that Simon was still reading the reviews of *Administrative Behavior*. If Simon represented the “hard” side of the social sciences, Waldo represented the “softer” approaches – a point he makes in retrospective comments published with the 1984 edition of his classic work.⁴⁰ While in agreement with Simon on the shortcomings of scientific management and the “principles” approaches, Waldo was more skeptical of efforts to rely solely on logical positivist methods in development of a theory for Public Administration. His perspective on the sciences developed under different assumptions about the possibility of separating out “facts” for scientific study.

Waldo's views on the philosophy of science were shaped during his graduate student years at Yale University.

That F. S. C. Northrop was at Yale during my graduate study I regard as a stroke of good luck. His interpretations of science, which I largely followed, I judge to have held up well in the following decades in which scientific philosophy and methodology became something of an academic growth industry. The limitations on physical science methods with regard to human affairs that, following Northrop, I then judged valid I still judge valid... (Waldo, 1984, p. xlin)

Northrop's views on scientific method and the role of theory were neither anti-scientific nor anti-theory (Chaudhuri, 1967).⁴¹ Rather, they were critical of (a) the popular conception of an atheoretical science dealing with “facts” alone,⁴² and (b) the view among some social scientists

that it was possible to apply the empirical methods of physical science to human affairs without taking into account the cultural and social context of the observed phenomena.⁴³

On the first point, Waldo notes that the popular misconception of the scientific method being a purely “factual” endeavor had carried over to the study of public administration, and that the “scientific inadequacy of the factual approach in public administration is now patent” (Waldo, 1984, p. 171). Revisiting this issue years later, Waldo noted the dilemma posed for those who assumed the scientific focus on facts.

The split between fact and value, ‘is’ and ‘ought,’ creates problems for the social scientist. It makes for a split personality. On the one hand the social scientist, as a general rule, carries along the baggage of moral beliefs he has received from the past, the beliefs constituting the liberal democratic outlook. On the other hand, the original philosophical foundations for these beliefs have disappeared, and no philosophy has gained general acceptance as a suitable alternative. So the social scientist lives in two worlds lacking an organic connection. There is the world of the facts, with which he is concerned as a scientist. And there is the world of his ideology or values. Since his value system cannot be justified in terms of facts, and his professional dedication is thought of as one to Fact, he is without justification for carrying his value system into his science. (Waldo, 1955, p. 62)

Waldo notes that this dilemma is merely a “pseudo problem” for those adhering to a logical positivist view. Questions related to values cannot and should not be considered by the social scientist, for they involve statements that cannot be empirically verified. Values entered into the equation when the theoretical knowledge accumulated by empirical studies are to be applied, and in that context of science is indifferent if not irrelevant (Waldo, 1955). Given Simon's views expressed in *Administrative Behavior*, this is a fair summation.

Waldo challenges these assertions on several grounds. He notes that the distinction between fact and value is more logical than real. In addition, there is the danger that what is intended as merely an “instrument of analysis” will become “inevitably a program of action – with unfortunate results.” Finally, and more specific to the concerns of Public Administration, the fact/value distinction promotes the separation of means from ends – “which is what administration is about.”

It is on the last point that Waldo would eventually build his critique of Simon's efforts to establish a theory of administrative behavior, but his comments in *The Administrative State* were focused on Stene's efforts to formulate a theory of administrative statics.⁴⁴ Waldo was most critical of Stene's effort to develop a generic theory, free from the normative context and other situational specifics that characterize the work of public organizations. “Administrative study, no less than economics study, is at its heart normative. Determinism does not apply to free will; ‘conservation laws’ do not apply to purposive human beings” (Waldo, 1984, p. 176).

With values so prominent in the work of government, Waldo believed that Public Administration must give priority to carefully and critically examining normative theories rather than generating the kind of empirical theories advocated by logical positivist approaches. Following Northrop's (1949, 1955) views, Waldo focused on the need to study the “presuppositions” and norms that were at the heart of the American administrative culture – the

central task and accomplishment of *The Administrative State*. And like Northrop, Waldo (1952) believed a theory of “good” (i.e., “democratic”) administration would eventually emerge from these efforts.

*The Debate*⁴⁵

It is perhaps too easy to characterize the intellectual milieu of the period as simply a debate between two individuals trained in opposing philosophies of science (Carnap’s logical positivism vs. Northrop’s philosophy of cultural), two schools of thought (empiricism vs. normative theory), or using more recent terminology, two conflicting social science paradigms. The situation was far more complex.⁴⁶ Logical positivism had already faced significant challenges that had undermined its legitimacy both prescriptively (e.g., Werkmeister, 1937a, 1937b) and descriptively (see Polanyi, 1964). In addition, the growing influence of alternative methodologies for the social sciences was significant enough to warrant critical assessment by Nagel, Hempel, and other prominent advocates of naturalistic methods (see Schutz 1954).

Nevertheless, the intellectual confrontation between Waldo and Simon did much to shape and determined the current status of Public Administration as a field still in the throes of an identity crisis. Interestingly, the debate itself was rarely manifest in exchanges between the two central protagonists. One notable exception was Simon’s reaction to a comment made by Waldo in his 1952 article in *American Political Science Review* on the “Development of Theory of Democratic Administration.” Reasserting a position initially expressed in *The Administrative State*, Waldo argued that one

major obstacle in the way of further development of democratic theory is the idea that efficiency is a value-neutral concept or, still worse, that it is antithetical to democracy. To hold that we should take efficiency as the central concept of our “science” but that we nevertheless must tolerate a certain amount of democracy because we “believe” in it, is to poison the taproot of American society. To maintain that efficiency is value-neutral and to propose at the same time that it be used as the central concept in a “science” of administration is to commit one’s self to nihilism, so long as the prescription is actually followed. (Waldo, 1952, p. 97)

In an accompanying footnote, Waldo explicitly attacks the assertion that decisions can be analyzed without reference to values. He ends that note with the comment that “Herbert Simon has patently made outstanding contributions to administrative study. These contributions have been made, however, when he has worked free of the methodology he has asserted” (Waldo, 1952, p. 97).

Simon’s response came in the next issue of the *American Political Science Review*. He acknowledges Waldo’s compliments, but felt “impelled” to comment “because the faults of Waldo’s analysis are characteristic of the writings of those who call themselves ‘political theorists’ and who are ever ready to raise the battle cry against positivism and empiricism. A scientist is not (and, in my system of personal values, should not be) flattered by being told that his conclusions are good, but do not follow from his premises. If Mr. Waldo’s [comment] is correct, then I should be condemned, not flattered” (Simon, Drucker, & Waldo, 1952, p. 494). He follows this with a critical commentary on the quality of Waldo’s arguments:

The study of logic and empirical science has impressed on me the extreme care that must be exercised, in the search for truth, to avoid logical booby traps. For this reason the kind of prose I encounter in writings on political theory, decorated with assertion, invective, and metaphor, sometimes strikes me as esthetically pleasing, but seldom as convincing. Since I am unable to discover definitions in Mr. Waldo's paper for his key terms, since he does not set forth his basic premises in any systematic fashion, and since his propositions appear to skip from philosophy to psychology to history and back, I have not succeeded in reconstructing the syllogisms which I presumed he reached his conclusions. (Simon, Drucker, & Waldo, 1952, p. 494)

Generalizing from that criticism, Simon states that he does not "see how we can progress in political philosophy if we continue to think and write in the loose, literary, metaphorical style that he and most other theorists adopt. The standard of unrigor [sic] that is tolerated in political theory would not receive a passing grade in the elementary course in logic, Aristotelian or symbolic.

If political philosophers wish to preserve democracy from what they regard as the termitic borings of positivism, I suggest that as the first step they acquire a sufficient technical skill in modern logical analysis to attack the positivists on their own ground. Most of the positivists and empiricists of my acquaintance will then be likely to receive them more as allies in the search for truth than as enemies. (Simon, Drucker, & Waldo, 1952, p. 496)

The debate continued throughout the 1950s, although with less directness and in a somewhat softer tone.⁴⁷ Waldo (1955) continued to take issue with the logical positivist perspective on values, while Simon (1957) continued to characterize his critics as "political theorists" (rather than giving them the status of Public Administrationists) whose criticisms were faulty and lacking rigor. A process of mellowing also began during this period, with both Simon and Waldo expressing reluctance to stand by every word and paragraph written about positions contrary to their own. In 1984, Waldo states he

must confess... that at the time [1940s] I was not well informed about this significant development [i.e., logical positivism]; and while my treatment of positivism as a temper and characteristic of modern philosophy will pass muster (I believe), my discussion would have been improved by more awareness of the philosophic movement that would prove to be so significant for developments not only in philosophy but for the social sciences, and for public administration specifically, chiefly through its formal introduction in... *Administrative Behavior*. (Waldo, 1984, p. xxxix)

As for Simon, the irony of receiving ASPA's 1995 Dwight Waldo Award for his outstanding contributions to the study of Public Administration led him to remark that

There was no real conflict between Dwight's vision and mine, except that each of us felt a strong urge to direct attention to the

particular problem area in administrative theory that we felt to be most urgent, and our priorities were different. Nevertheless, with the enthusiasm of the young (which I hope neither of us has lost), we managed to exchange some rather purple prose... which, however, never interfered with our personal friendship. (Simon, 1995, p. 404)

“As matters worked out over the years,” Simon continued, “public administration absorbed both revolutions...” (p. 404).

That last observation, however well intended, does not do justice to the current situation. It is evident that Simon's work has had considerable influence in mainstream Public Administration research, but more often it has served as a counterpoint to those who have shaped the intellectual tone of the field. A social science discipline did emerge from Simon's work, but it was established as a distinct alternative to Public Administration. The administrative sciences – and its central publication, *Administrative Science Quarterly* – would initially draw its “subscribers” from the ranks of Public Administrationists as well as those in related fields (e.g., sociology and management). By the 1960s, however, administrative sciences had developed into the scholarly extension of business administration and organizational studies.

Within the Public Administration community itself, social science scholarship was often subsumed under the pressures of a field intellectually committed to avoiding the perceived drawbacks and traps inherent to what had emerged as mainstream social science. In that regard, Waldo's characterization of Public Administration as a “profession” served two purposes. On the one hand, it legitimized the distinct position of the field by stressing its working relationships with practitioners and “real world” problems. On the other hand, it allowed the field's intellectual “gatekeepers” to maintain their defensive posture against the unwarranted intrusion of the (logical positivist and technocratic) barbarians at the gates.

For those who sought to do more than merely train and advise public administrators – including Waldo – the success of his perspective (manifest in the contrived identification as a profession) was intellectually unsatisfactory as well as frustrating. This is apparent in almost every contribution published in the Waldo-sponsored *Toward a New Public Administration* (the first Minnowbrook conference) (Marini, 1971). The desire for disciplinary status as an empirical social science is pervasive, but so is the desire to maintain the normative standards central to Waldo's approach. Consider, for example, the following comments drawn from two major contributions to that work:

The major problem of Public Administration as an intellectual enterprise is this: Contemporary Public Administration exists in a state of antique or maladapted analytic models and normative aridity. There is almost no basis for reaching or accepting either substantive problems or analytical models save political-administrative crises or academic fashion. Teaching and research tend to be based on past problems or instant response to present “establishment” problem definitions. Both bases have limited utility in developing administrative vision, political leadership, or intellectual vitality of lasting quality. The result has been a deadening of intellectual vigor and a kind of wandering relevance to students, practitioners, and the future.

Younger students, men in public affairs at various levels, and many among us complain that we are not relevant, that the intellectual stuff of Public Administration has restricted meaning and limited significance to their experience, that it misses the drama of social change... that it misses the point! Most of our efforts *do* come perilously close to missing the point; they fall between the stools of searching normative interpretations and detailed practical solutions to specific problems faced by administrators. Most are neither normative league nor practically relevant. (La Porte, 1971, p. 21)

* * *

The new Public Administration must cope with... weaknesses in empirical theory and innovate in selected directions. This chapter, by pointing up limitations in the quality of systematic empirical theory, represents an exhortation for greater scientific authority in the pursuit of our tasks. Obvious steps called for in the future are to better delineate and seek agreement on the nature of the things we study, to improve the empirical quality and theoretical adequacy of our work, and to raise the level of systematization of our explanations of Public Administration phenomena. But the new Public Administration requires more than these things. *We must add to our emphasis on better science – scientific authority – a critical second criterion: moral authority.* (Kronenberg, 1971, p. 217)

In 1977, Robert Golembiewski called for his colleagues to turn their attention away from the search for a “comprehensive paradigm” and toward more essential work. For Golembiewski, the intellectual time and energy devoted to “maintenance” functions would be better spent on what he termed “task” functions. What was unique about his argument was its explicit purpose to have the field “move beyond the present anguish about identity or intellectual crises in public administration, and to do so in constructive ways that will highlight specific skills and technologies for both research and application. Only in this way... is progress in public administration likely to occur” (Golembiewski, 1977, p. 67). Although sometimes cited, Golembiewski’s prescriptions have gone unheeded among the field’s leading theorists.

In the late 1980s, the authors of the Blacksburg Manifesto – self-described “Minnowbrook I with institutional grounding” (Wamsley, 1990, p. 20) – maintained the Waldo-inspired aversion to endorsing a social science disciplinary identity for the field. They blamed Simon and the positivist/behavioralists movements in political science and organization theory for diverting Public Administration theory “into an intellectual cul-de-sac” (Wamsley, 1990, p. 42) and creating “tacit boundaries” (Wamsley, 1990, p. 246) that had taken decades to overcome.

There has been no major advance in public administration theory per se beyond the writings of Appleby, Waldo, Redford, Long, Price, Selznick, Sayre, and others. Although some of these theorists (most consistently, Long) have continued to expand on themes that should be central to public administration theory, those themes have not stirred nearly the interest in serious theory-building efforts that we feel they warrant. They seem never to have gained the kind of recognition and adherents they enjoyed

in the late 1930s or 1940s. There are, no doubt, several reasons for this, but foremost among them has been the suffocating hold of behavioralism and positivism upon the social sciences in general. That hold has begun to loosen in the past two decades, but very slowly. (Wamsley, 1990, p. 19)⁴⁸

The urge for disciplinary status continues today, and is perhaps even stronger among those who regard themselves as social science researchers. A series of articles published in *Public Administration Review* and other journals beginning in 1984 have reflected both the desire for greater “rigor” (in mainstream social science terms) and the equally powerful urge to resist such standards.⁴⁹

The indicators are numerous: from the decline of academic membership and conference participation in the American Society for Public Administration, to the reemergence of a strong organized section on public administration in the American Political Science Association; from the growing participation of academics in the annual conferences of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, to increases in the number and status of scholarly journals devoted to Public Administration research (e.g., *Journal of Public Administration, Research and Theory, Administration and Society, Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*).

The growth in the number of Ph.D. programs in the field has also re-generated concerns about its status as a social science. A clear distinction must be drawn between the professional education of practitioners and the academic education of scholars if a doctorate in Public Administration is not to be merely a “black belt in MPA.”⁵⁰ This position was supported in earlier years by such preeminent scholars as Wallace Sayre and Leonard D. White,⁵¹ and more recently led one colleague to suggest that the best Public Administration doctoral programs are located at least 25 miles from the nearest MPA program.⁵²

But fulfilling that urge for disciplinary status has not been easy. It has proven exceedingly difficult to overcome a half-century of bias against social scientific methods and theories, as is evident in the views reflected in several recently published works on the theory and nature of Public Administration.

Theory as Gatekeeping

The Failure

Despite its importance in the field’s current self-awareness, the “bias against social scientific methods and theories” alluded to above has hardly been unique to Public Administrationists. Controversies surrounding the application of “scientific” methods to the study of human affairs can be traced back at least to the work of Auguste Comte (see Smith, 1997), and the first major articulation (and defense) of a philosophy of scientific social studies is found in J. S. Mill’s (1965) *On the Logic of the Moral Sciences*, published in 1843. The debate certainly intensified with the elaboration of the logical positivist perspective during the 1920s and 1930s,⁵³ a factor that shaped much of the content of the Simon/Waldo debate.

The debate itself was more than merely a conflict between those favoring and opposing the scientific study of society. As I argue in the concluding section, the debate has succeeded in generating changes within mainstream social science that have fundamentally redefined the disciplinary standards for research and publication. The degree of change has not satisfied many

of the most adamant critics, nor has the logical positivist ideal been totally abandoned in psychology, sociology, political science, and the other social sciences. But the basic idea of what constitutes legitimate social science research has moved in directions quite in line with the critical perspectives that have dominated Public Administration for the past half-century. Much of this change can be attributed to the prominent “theorists” who have played the role of intellectual gatekeepers in their respective fields (i.e., see Gergen, 1994a).

I argue that those who play similar gatekeeping roles in Public Administration – those who I call the field’s “theorists” – continue to assume a more isolated and defensive posture. The work of leading theorists in our field – our intellectual agenda-setters – has remained fixed on the need to protect our scholarship and our students from the shortcomings and evils of logical positivist social science. In the process, they have perpetuated a fixed and distorted image of social science research and have been indifferent to the significant changes in disciplinary approaches. In that sense, Public Administration theory – or, more specifically, the theorists – has failed us.

Two caveats are in order. First, while contending that Public Administration has not achieved the status of a social science, I am not arguing that there is a lack of social science scholarship focused on public administration and government bureaucracy. In fact, quite the opposite is true. There are a significant number of relevant studies generated each year by scholars who identify with – and often publish in – other fields, from political science to administrative science to organizational studies to social psychology. The important point is that few of these scholars identify with the imagined community of Public Administration scholars. As important, those conducting such research rarely cite or make reference to the mainstream literature in Public Administration – thus providing another indicator of the relatively low regard for research in our field among the social science disciplines.

Second, by focusing on some of the field’s leading theorists, I am not arguing that there exists some conspiratorial intellectual elite consciously controlling what is or is not presented or published in the field. Rather, I am arguing that there is a pervasive and powerful anti-social science theme found in the diverse literature of our field – powerful enough to set the standards and expectations for researchers in the field. My own “gatekeeping” experience in Public Administration convinced me that the perceived prejudice against positivist social science research resulted in fewer submissions of those sorts of manuscripts.⁵⁴ For those who might challenge the dominant view, it is easier to present and publish one’s work outside the field than it is to fight the “powers that be.” No less a figure than Herbert A. Simon himself offers a model of someone with deep roots in the field who met considerable success outside the community of Public Administration scholars.

In attempting to grasp the various dimensions of this failure, I offer a framework highlighting four analytically distinct groups of Public Administration theorists (see figure 1): Reformers, Alternativists, Normativists, and Transformationists.⁵⁵ Each of these groups is engaged in what John R. Hall (1999) calls a “formative discourse” about the field’s identity crises – that is, each considers the issues within a particular definition of the problem.

What these four groups have in common is a bias against turning Public Administration into a logical positivist social science. To understand their different perspectives on this issue, it is useful to distinguish between two general criticisms levied against naturalistic models of scientific research such as logical positivism. On the one hand, there are criticisms focused on the technical limitations of natural science methodologies. Here the challenge is to the capacity of such methods to live up to the declared criteria of objectivity. On the other hand, there are critics who draw attention to the social, ideological, and political dangers inherent in adopting

Figure 1. Gatekeeping Theories in Public Administration

		Problems with “Social Scientific” Methods	
Perceived Possibility for an Acceptable Social Science		Technical	Social, Political, Ideological Implications
	High	Reformists (Methodology)	Normativists (Ethics)
	Low	Alternativists (Epistemology)	Transformationists (Ontology)

the “value-neutral” perspective of a logical positivist science. A further distinction can also be drawn within each of these two groups, differentiating between those who believe that a social science is still possible despite the noted problems and those who are more pessimistic about such possibilities.

The resulting framework offers a useful means for examining and assessing the recent work of Public Administrationists. Those who fall in the upper left quadrant include a range of writers who consider the problems of achieving disciplinary status as technical and resolvable. Their focus is on methodology. They remain advocates for an identity rooted in the mainstream social sciences, and they focus their efforts on modifying and “reforming” methods and approaches to make mainstream social science more acceptable to Public Administrationists – and vice versa.

In contrast, those in the lower right quadrant adopt a far less optimistic view, concluding that nothing less than a radical and continuous transformation of our worldview will suffice. The challenge is ontological, and demands nothing less than a rethinking of our thoughts about the role of government and the behavior of those engaged in the practice of public administration. Although a number of labels can be used for this group, I will use the term “transformationists” to reflect their primary agenda for the field.

In the lower left quadrant are those who believe that mainstream social science provides a narrow and incomplete perspective for our understanding of the world of public administration. For them, the objective is to legitimize “alternative” approaches to studying and understanding our subject, creating a diversity of acceptable tools – even if this means going beyond the boundaries of approaches acceptable to mainstream social scientists. For them the problems facing Public Administration are epistemological.

Finally, there are those who believe that the pervasive and powerful ideological forces that dominate the mainstream social science perspective can be overcome through the integration of appropriate norms and values in research and analysis. Members of this group will be termed “normativists,” reflecting the high priority they give to ethical issues in the work of Public Administrationists.

Reforming Methodists

For the theorists I have termed “reformers,” Public Administration cannot as yet regard itself as a part of the social science “truth community” because the field has yet to demonstrate a commitment to relevant disciplinary standards as the criteria for conducting and assessing the research of its members. From the reformist perspective, therefore, the challenge facing Public Administration is to deal with the methodological problems that pose obstacles to joining the broader community.

From this perspective, it is more than merely a matter of exercising the “will” to be disciplinary. Rather, there is an emphasis on adopting those standards *without explicitly challenging* the basic anti-positivist premise that defines the field. In lieu of a more radical critique of the research in the field, the reformers choose to focus on adjustments in methods to “fit” the distinctive qualities of the field’s core subject matter. In addition, the reformist position also stresses the need for greater methodological competency for researchers, as if to argue that there would be a greater appreciation of social scientific approaches if only more Public Administrationists were competent to conduct such research.

On the first point – and despite the mythology of a common commitment to some idealized scientific methodology – the reformers have lots of allies within the scientific community to support their contentions. The shortcomings of “naïve” inductive approaches and covering-law explanations have long been acknowledged in the natural sciences, as has the “theory-dependence” of empirical observations (see Chalmers, 1994). Physicists studying quantum mechanics since Werner Heisenberg posited his “uncertainty principle” in 1927 have acknowledged the inherent limitations of scientific observation (Cassidy, 1992; see also Matson, 1964). Although a few hardline empiricists remain (Wilson, 1998; see also Horgan, 1997), most scientists conduct their research with an understanding that their methods and instruments are necessarily imperfect and that a good deal of what they do involves “tacit knowledge” (Polanyi, 1962).

Nor would many “mainstream” social scientists argue that their methods live up to the arbitrary and unrealistic standards associated with extreme forms of logical positivism. For most, the logical positivist perspective is a stereotyped distortion of what social scientists actually assume and how they act. Social science research is, instead, perceived as an effort to deal with the limitations and uncertainties inherent in studying human social behavior. It is in that intellectual context that reformist theorists in Public Administration of remain committed to the view that their field is capable of dealing with the limits of social science research and should operate as a social science discipline through a variety of “reforms.”

Which leads to the second, related issue of researcher competency. If social science involves doing research applying methods that deal with methodological limitations and uncertainties, then any field aspiring to disciplinary status must provide its scholars with the relevant training and promote the appropriate standards for conducting and publishing that research. Public Administration, in short, must reform its education of Ph.D. students and adjust standards used in the major scholarly outlets such as *Public Administration Review*, *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *American Review of Public Administration*, and *Administration & Society*.

There is nothing new about this perspective, but beyond the writings of Simon and his colleagues fifty years ago, there has not been a major theoretical work or radical stance explicitly supporting this position in the field in any comprehensive way – a point I will return to below. Instead, there have been a number of efforts to prescribe what Public Administrationists must do to achieve their status as social scientists. Specific prescriptions are, not surprisingly, related to the particular shortcomings highlighted by each “reformer.” For some, the issue is a lack of methodological “rigor” in Public Administration research (Cleary, 1992; Cleary & McCurdy, 1984; Perry & Kraemer, 1986). For others, there is a need for more relevant measures of what the public sector does (Meier & Keiser, 1996). Still others believe that Public Administrationists would undertake more “scientific” research if they understood how research is really conducted (in contrast to the idealized model of how scientific research ought to be conducted) (Bailey, 1992). And there are those who see the answer in emerging new paradigms more conducive to

the complex realities of the public sector (Kiel, 1994; Overman, 1996). Each of these suggested reforms would indeed move Public Administration closer to the vague but highly desired objective of disciplinary status as a social science – assuming, that is, we accept the reformer's implied or explicit standard for social science research. It is on that point that the reformist perspective tends to disappoint.

Consider, for example, the approach assumed by Hal G. Rainey and others (e.g., Menzel & Carson, 1999) focused on the need to systematically organize what we know about public administration into a coherent propositional inventory that can be used to set a research agenda for the field. The assumption is that Public Administration has access to a significant knowledge base, but it lacks an organizing theory or focus that would create order out of the intellectual fragments. While similar in purpose to the search for a comprehensive paradigm, this approach does not call for radical shifts or revolutionary changes in research agendas. Instead, it seeks to establish something like a “research program” based on existing work.

The approach can be traced back to Edwin O. Stene's 1941 call for a more systematic approach to the field through the development of a theory of administrative statics (as discussed above). A decade later, Donald W. Smithburg would make an argument similar to Stene's, noting that “the vital scientific task of attempting to make a coherent, logically consistent system out of the hodge-podge of sensory fact” is a critical task for the field (Smithburg, 1951, p. 68). From time to time, the field has benefited from individual and collective efforts to develop a coherent body of empirically testable propositions drawn from the vast knowledge base of Public Administration and related fields. March and Simon's (1958) *Organizations*, James D. Thompson's (1967) *Organizations in Action*, Rainey, Backoff, and Levine's (1976) “Comparing Public and Private Organizations” are three notable examples from the past.

Rainey and his coauthor Paula Steinbauer (1999) continue this tradition in their article, “Galloping Elephants: Developing Elements of a Theory of Effective Government Organizations” (see also Rainey, 1993a). With the explicit intention of developing “propositions as a step toward development of a theory of effective government agencies,” Rainey searched through various literatures focused on organizational best practices, leadership, organization culture, and so on. Underlying this effort is the belief that a useful program of social science research can be developed from existing knowledge about public organizations. It is a “field of dreams” approach – if you build it (in this case, a comprehensive summary of existing knowledge), “they” will come.

The effort to construct this intellectual field of dreams requires more than merely knowledge of the literature. It demands the development of a framework broad enough in scope to capture the complex dimensions of the subject as well as the many varieties of relevant research. It also requires the capacity to discriminate among conclusions and hypotheses of such varying quality that only a few individuals are capable of doing the job effectively. It is a task we assume we can trust to one of the more respected intellectual gatekeepers of the field – a status no informed scholar would deny to Professor Rainey.

However, there are at least two critical problems with Rainey's approach. First, generating propositions is interesting and useful to the extent that it provides a summary of what others have concluded from their research. But the resulting propositional inventory does not provide what is necessary to establish a “research program” consistent with contemporary social science standards. Research programs, as described by Lakatos (1970), are defined by both negative and positive heuristics. They require hypotheses structured around empirically relevant and testable “mechanisms,” and therefore demand propositions that make explicit assertions of links among

variables. Rainey does note that the “concepts and relations in the propositions advanced here need more development in a variety of ways,” but he does not elaborate (p. 28). He discusses the possibility of paring down the list of variables for the sake of parsimony, but fails to note what that would accomplish in terms of theory-building efforts. Finally, he speculates that “based on the literature reviewed and cited in this article” there are certain variables (e.g., leadership, professionalism) likely to emerge as “most important” as a result of further analysis (p. 28). But Rainey fails to elaborate why these variables are salient for future research.

As discussed below, the frustrations associated with past theory-building efforts have shifted the standards for social science research toward models that specify causal mechanisms and away from models based on causal relationships. The willingness to settle for explanations based on strong correlation has passed. Although the quality of data and statistical analysis may have improved considerably over the past several decades (see Blalock, 1971), the fundamental fact remains that “Correlation is no proof of causation” (Simon, 1954; also Elster, 1989). This is one of the major reasons axiomatic theories have been widely adopted in the social sciences.⁵⁶

Furthermore, even if we were willing to honor a claim for disciplinary status on the basis of correlation-based studies, there is another fundamental problem to contend with. The literature Rainey relies on for constructing his proposition inventory reflects findings drawn from research using a range of methods, e.g. from carefully designed and executed empirical studies to interpretive observations. Here Rainey’s approach is subject to a Catch-22 problem. In his effort to create a foundation for research that meets the standards of mainstream social science, Rainey must rely on hypotheses drawn from conclusions generated by studies that might not meet even the most generous standards for empirical research. What emerges from this approach is a list of hypothesized relationships of such varying quality that they are in need of further analysis for purposes of verification.

Such is, in fact, the true value of Rainey’s efforts. In gathering and organizing these propositions in a coherent framework, Rainey enhances the potential for future research activity. Each proposition can be regarded as an empirical and theoretical challenge. Empirically, the challenge is to verify the hypothesized relationship regardless of the quality of research used by its initial source. On the level of theory, the challenge is to uncover the mechanisms behind those hypothesized relationships. Unfortunately, these challenges are unlikely to be joined within the field. Propositional inventories such as Rainey’s are more often perceived as *summaries of* rather than *agendas for* research. Thus, despite the obvious value of Rainey’s efforts in summarizing and focusing attention on work relevant to Public Administration research, the project falters on the lack of a clear expression of – and adherence to – relevant standards for disciplinary-relevant social science research.

In a sense, the reformers are plagued by a fundamental belief that they need not explicitly challenge the field’s gatekeepers. Wishing to avoid the demonization visited on Simon,⁵⁷ they see no value in confronting the powers that be with a forceful argument on behalf of positivist research.⁵⁸ Suffering from naiveté rather than arrogance, many feel they can rely on the strength of their work alone to convince others that social science research in Public Administration is both feasible and valuable. Thus, they complement their “field of dreams” strategy with a “just do it” attitude.⁵⁹ “One wonders,” Rainey (1993a) remarks in commentary on public management research, “whether public administration scholars might do better in advancing both the identity of the field and its research and theory if fewer of us ruminated on these topics and more of us simply identified important theoretical and research questions and worked on providing useful answer to them” (p. 9).

Enthralled with Alternatives

The group I term “alternativists” are, like the reformers, concerned about the technical problems plaguing those who attempt to apply scientific methods to the study of human behavior. Where they differ, however, is their assessment of the potential for adjusting mainstream scientific methodology to studies of public administration. In this regard, they often share with the “normativists” and “transformationists” a critical suspicion of what Guy B. Adams calls “technical rationality” – a pervasive characteristic of modernity that must be countered if we are to improve our knowledge of public administration (Adams, 1992). Technical rationality is not perceived as an ideological problem among alternativists, but rather as a major epistemological constraint on our ability to *understand* the phenomena we are investigating.

The alternativist view of social science is thus somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, there is considerable respect expressed for what social science methodology seeks to achieve and the standards used in the effort.⁶⁰ On the other hand, alternativists are not optimistic that more rigor, comprehensive paradigms, more relevant measures, etc. will make a significant difference in the advancement of Public Administration knowledge. Put simply, for them *the issues are not methodological but rather epistemological*.⁶¹ What the alternativists have in common is the belief that social science approaches must be complemented, supplemented, or even replaced by *alternative* (i.e., non-positivistic social science) methodologies if we are truly understand human social behavior.⁶²

Among Public Administrationists, a major statement on both the epistemological issues and possible solutions was articulated by Jay D. White and Guy B. Adams (1994b) in their introductory essay to *Research in Public Administration: Reflections on Theory and Practice*. After arguing the fundamental flaws of positivism (in the form of a pervasive “technical rationality”), White and Adams also note the drawbacks for (“threats to”) knowledge development inherent in the postmodern critique (see discussion of transformationists below). What they prescribe instead is that the field learned to live with epistemological “diversity.”

We are persuaded by the weight of historical and epistemological evidence that no single approach – even if accorded the highly positive label *science* – is adequate for the conduct of research in public administration. If research is to be guided by reason, a diversity of approaches, honoring both practical and theoretical reason, seems necessary. Thus we want to suggest that knowledge and theory development in public administration should proceed in many ways, including hypothesis testing, case studies, analyses of administrative or policy processes, historical interpretations of the field or parts of it, deductible arguments, philosophical critiques, and personal reflections on administrative experiences. (White & Adams, 1994b, p. 19-20)

Alternativist efforts have focused on three general alternatives to the mainstream social science epistemology: historicism, interpretivism, and critical theory. While all three approaches are credited with useful insights, none claims to fit within standards for valid knowledge and theory development demanded by the positivist social science community. Historicism has been subject to the most elaborate consideration on this point. Karl R. Popper’s (1964) systematic critique of the logic underlying various forms of historicism has proven decisive in the eyes of many social scientists, and even its strongest advocates admit to its shortcomings within the

sphere of social science research (see Tinder, 1961). Interpretive methodologies have gained considerable respect for the insights they provide, but even its leading practitioner (anthropologist Clifford Geertz) admits that it poses a challenge to the standards of mainstream social research (Geertz, 1974).⁶³ Critical theory approaches are explicitly designed to highlight the structures of power and tensions that lie beneath the surface of social life (see Bohman, 1991; Hayes, 1994), but their reliance on critical frameworks (e.g., neo-Marxist and Freudian analytics) as well as the implied commitment to action directly (and intentionally) challenges the basic premises of positivist social science (see Comstock, 1994).

Thus, despite the implied openness to and tolerance of⁶⁴ various methods and epistemological perspectives, alternativist theorists are unable – an often explicitly unwilling – to generate the kind of research agenda or quality of research conducive to disciplinary status among the social sciences. As a consequence, the impact of alternativist prescriptions has been to push Public Administration increasingly toward a relativistic position on questions of epistemology (see Miller, 1972), and toward identification with the humanities through the application of epistemologies more closely associated with those disciplines. Alternativists thereby challenge us to confront the field's identity issues directly by highlighting the value the humanities-based research as a means providing practitioners with useful knowledge and insights about being public administrators.

Historicist research in Public Administration has been increasing in recent years. As Larry Luton notes, much of this work was driven by an effort to improve the field's self-image and to offer exemplary models from the past that can be emulated (Luton, 1999). But there are Public Administration scholars using historical analysis as a means for enhancing both the field's knowledge base and theory development. The work of Stivers (1995) and Schachter (1995) have raise questions and offered new insights into the progressive roots of the field, while John Rohr (1986) and David H. Rosenbloom (1998) use historical analysis for greater understanding of the constitutional and legal foundations of contemporary administrative issues.⁶⁵

Regarding interpretive approaches (see Farmer, 1995), there is a long history associated primarily with "case study" teaching methods. More recently Jay D. White (1992), Ralph Hummel (1991), and others⁶⁶ have pointed out the value of narratives and storytelling in enhancing the understanding of public administration for managers, and Hummel makes the case that managerial storytelling needs the criteria for validity in the social sciences. Pursuing that argument, he and David Carnevale have developed an approach they call "knowledge analytics."

Critical theory has played less of a role in the field until very recently. Among the leading theorists in the field, Ralph P. Hummel (1994), and Robert B. Denhardt (1981) established the value of such an approach in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The most recent application of this approach is found in Adams and Balfour's (1998) *Unmasking Administrative Evil* (UAE). Because of the attention this work has received in the field, I will focus on it as an example of the problems the alternativist position poses for Public Administration as a social science.

The authors of UAE are quite clear about the epistemological foundations and methodological strategies driving their work. For too long, they argue, Public Administration has been avoiding its past, or has operated under the influence of a biased perspective (i.e., "technical rationality") that has distorted the field's historical consciousness.⁶⁷ An "objective" social science would be blind to the historical truth, and so would any historical analysis that has fallen under the spell of modernity. *Critical historical studies* are needed to offset the intellectual damage done by our obsession with the "technical rationality" inherent in modernist epistemology. "If critical,

historically based studies were in the forefront of public administration research, we could more readily consider questions crucial to the present and future configuration of public administration, and to administrative evil” (Adams & Balfour, 1998, p. 51).

Like all critical theory analysts, Adams and Balfour begin by articulating a framework that can be applied to describing the genesis and maintenance of the social situation being studied (see Comstock 1994/1982). For this they rely on “object-relations psychology,” a major form of post-Freudian psychoanalysis, and specifically the writings of Melanie Klein (1882-1960), who stressed how an individual’s emotional life is rooted in basic orientations toward objects formed during earliest childhood (see Smith, 1997; Segal, 1988).

Object-relations psychology focuses on the tensions we first encounter as infants as we develop both positive and negative feelings toward others, and Klein took note of a particular mechanism – projective identification – people use to deal with those tensions as they grow older. By “splitting off” our good from our bad feelings and projecting the bad onto external “objects,” we are able to obtain some relief but at a cost of how we relate to those others. Internalized resolutions (as an alternative to projective identification) are also problematic (i.e., leading to depression and other psychological maladies), although they would stop the individual from hateful and aggressive behavior toward the “other.” For critical theorists who adopt this controversial model, projective identification joins with the forces of modern organizational life to produce the social evil we see in today’s world. Adams and Balfour elaborate such a theory of evil – in their case, administrative evil – rooted in the structure and dynamics provided through Kleinian analytics (Adams & Balfour, 1998). Modern organizations and institutions, they argue, are “holding environments for evil.”

People who need direction – a target, really – for their unintegrated rage and aggression, who must split off the “bad” and projecting it outward, hear all too well the siren call of groups of organizations that will contain this psychic energy for them. The price tag is almost always obedience and loyalty, and sometimes moral inversion; occasionally, the price tag is very dear indeed – those truly evil eruptions that become the great moral debacles of human history. (Adams & Balfour, 1998, p. 27)

A major obstacle to the acceptance of critical theory and other alternativist epistemologies by mainstream social science is obvious in the Adams and Balfour adoption of this analytic framework: there is no evidence or rationale provided to support the acceptance of this particular framework for analysis. The framework seems merely to be presumed appropriate. The willingness to make such a major presumption seems reinforced by an interesting assertion made by the authors after briefly introducing the Kleinian theory. “However true to life one wishes to consider object-relations psychology to the inner workings of the infant mind (and there is controversy over this issue), for our purposes, *what is important is the way these insights help us understand the construction of social and organizational evil in adults*” (Adams & Balfour, 1998, p. 10). What Adams and Balfour are saying, in essence, is that we ought to accept their judgment that this is appropriate and relevant perspective from which to view modern public administrative life. “Trust us,” they seem to argue, and let’s see where this critical theory leads. There is no presentation of evidence, only a demonstration through application that this framework seems to make sense of the world and therefore is as valid as any other framework, period.

For mainstream social science, such an approach seems nothing less than arbitrary and unwarranted. It is a criticism that can be applied to historical and interpretivist analyses as well (e.g., see Jones, 1998; Popper, 1964). The only similar approach taken within the mainstream – Milton Friedman’s controversial assertion that economic theories should be judged on how well they make predictions rather than on the validity of their assumptions (Friedman, 1953) – cannot stand as a relevant analogy since its acceptance ultimately rests on how well it meets an empirically verifiable standard. Critical theories do not seek such assessments. They only assert that the field should follow their arbitrary lead and see where it takes them.

Still another issue about these approaches well illustrated by *UAE* is the lax attitude toward conceptual clarity, especially in regard to central concepts. In *UAE*, the importance of “evil” as an idea cannot be overstated. And yet there is an almost intentional effort to keep the meaning of the term ambiguous. What exactly do they mean by “evil”? The authors spend surprisingly too little time on this question, relying vaguely on approach that regards it as behavior that is “destructive to others.” This definition, they contend, “suggests a continuum, with horrible, mass eruptions of evil, such as the Holocaust and other, lesser instances of mass murder, at one extreme, and ‘small’ white lies, which is somewhat hurtful, at the other.” Their focus for the analysis is on the bloodier extreme (Adams & Balfour, 1998, p. 2-3). A good deal more energy is put into discussing where administrative evil comes from (e.g., technical rationality), how it escapes detection, and the role of organizations and institutions as “holding environments for evil”.

By an interesting coincidence, the question of “evil” and its role in the historical analysis of the Holocaust was the subject of two intensive examinations published just after *UAE*, and the complications of using the term are evidenced throughout both (see Copjec, 1996; Rosenbaum, 1998). What we discover is that conceptually, evil is so ambiguous that the concept of evil *may actually detract* from our ability to understand and assess human behavior. Perhaps more important, there are dangers in using such a concept carelessly. For example, the use of term to broadly characterize a group or a set of behaviors by a group (e.g., “administrative evil”) may itself generate reactions that can lead to scapegoating and destructive behavior. Such careless labeling for the sake of enhancing their critical analysis is all the more surprising since the authors demonstrate an awareness of the power of stereotyping (e.g., the comparison between the rhetoric of welfare reform in the U.S. and the Nazi characterization of Jews [see Adams & Balfour, 1998]).

Having set the conceptual stage, Adams and Balfour apply the logic of their critical perspective to examples of administrative evil that thread their way from the Holocaust to the Vietnam War, the *Challenger* accident, and beyond (Adams & Balfour, 1998). Here as well, the rather loose standards of research acceptable to many alternativists – and anathema to mainstream social science – become evident and significant. Despite the stress placed by Adams and Balfour on the need for greater attention to historical evidence to enhance our understanding of public administration, the history in *UAE* is *used* rather than *analyzed*. That is, history is used as source of case study material for applying a pre-supposed critical perspective rather than as the source of evidence from which patterns and insights about the field might be derived or the critical theory framework might be tested and evaluated.⁶⁸ While historical studies of the Holocaust, the *Challenger* accident, and other cases are relied upon (e.g., Robert McNamara’s role in transforming the Defense Department), the material is mined selectively for the purpose of demonstrating and promoting a particular view of the authors.

Such analytic strategies are necessary and acceptable when applying a critical theory approach, for the assumption of critical theorists is that the world of appearances is misleading and the

task of the scholar is to “reveal the lie.”⁶⁹ Therefore, this particular complaint might be dismissed as merely a statement of the obvious. After all, as the title of the book states, the authors intended all along to “unmask” administrative evil. Nevertheless, throughout the book the authors imply that the theory of administrative evil is not merely a critical interpretation of history, but is rather a historical fact that emerges from the careful study of administrative behavior. And what is the purpose of uncovering this historical fact? Is it for the purposes of knowledge development and/or theory building?

The answer is found in a characteristic of critical theory analysis that differentiates it from other alternativist approaches: its acceptance of a liberationist function for research. Critical theory analysts are committed to more than insight and understanding; they seek to raise the consciousness of those they determine (through analysis) to be dominated and repressed with the idea that such analyses will prove therapeutic if not liberating. Denhardt (1981) articulates this as the “activist stance”:

In both the Marxist and Freudian traditions, we see the suffering of the individual and the society has the key to reconstructive (revolutionary?) action. It is through our remembrance of the pleasures which reality denies that we see our true condition, and it is through the recognition of the alienation which marks our existence that we are motivated to move in opposition to the powers which holds us. For this reason, our suffering must not be “rationalized” away, for it remains at the heart of our “spiritual” quest; it is to transcend our suffering that we act. (Denhardt, 1981, p. 115-116)

For Adams and Balfour, the implications of their analysis should include a “new basis for ethics” in public administration, one that would lead administrators to actively resist administrative evil in its many and pervasive forms.

Administrative evil lurks where governments seek to solve social problems using the technical-rational expertise of professionals, in the absence of a vital and active political community. A new basis for ethics is needed that does not demand individual conformity to the procedures of technical-rational solutions to social problems, but that instead he engages administrators as citizens in an ongoing effort to promote and sustained an inclusive democratic polity. (Adams & Balfour, 1998, p. 160)

If the purpose of accepting alternative epistemologies is to enhance our capacity to understand the phenomena we study, analyses conducted using those alternatives should be subject to assessment for their contribution to “knowledge development” (a position, it must be re-emphasized, that is closely associated with the writings of Professor Adams). Like other analyses using the critical theory approach, *UAE* offers us provocative insights and generates much needed reflection and discussion among both scholars and practitioners. But does it contribute to knowledge development in the sense of enhancing our understanding of public administration? Critics of the critical theory epistemology argue that the approach obscures and diverts the search for knowledge and understanding – that rather than “revealing the lie,” critical theory imposes its own distortions.

It is, of course, unfair to challenge the entire range of alternativist research by focusing on the problems inherent in one study. However, from the perspective of mainstream social science, most of the problems characterizing *UAE* can be found in historicist and interpretivist studies as well. The field of Public Administration seems unlikely to achieve disciplinary status as a social science so long as its scholars defer to alternativist epistemologies.

Spirited Public Administration

Among the four groups in this analysis, those I term “normativists” come closest to the views of Dwight Waldo during his debates with Simon. The issues are not framed in anti-scientific terms per se, but are focused on the drawbacks and dangers of value-neutrality in the study of governmental administration. The holy grail of this group is a normative theory of public administration, one based on social scientific knowledge but embracing a view of what constitutes “good” or appropriate ends for public service. For normativist theorists, the issues are ultimately ethical.

The efforts of Public Administration’s major theorists to establish an ethical foundation for the field has, in fact, defined the field’s “mainstream” scholarship for decades – again, an indicator of Waldo’s triumph. While these writings cover a wide range of alternative norms, a common theme has been the need to articulate those primary or core values that ought to guide not just public administration practitioners, but the community of Public Administration scholars as well. Thus, for normativists the central problem facing those who aspire to the status of positivist social scientist is the price paid in meeting the standards of value-neutrality and objectivity.

It should be reemphasized that Waldo’s (1984) arguments against positivist approaches were not that they were value-neutral, but that the claim to neutrality merely obscured the high value placed on efficiency and rationality in administrative studies. He therefore took Simon and his colleagues to task for the same sins that informed his critique of the “principles” and other “orthodox” approaches to public administration. Implied in the classic politics–administration dichotomy was the assumption that “true democracy and true efficiency are synonymous, or at least reconcilable (p. 199),” and that by enhancing the business end of that identity (efficiency) one is also enhancing the political (democracy). Opposition to this assumption energized Waldo’s work and led him to strive for development of a “democratic theory of public administration.” The role of such a theory is laid out clearly in the conclusion of *The Administrative State* where he discusses the challenges facing America’s democratic society as it becomes increasingly reliant on government by experts.

Closely related is the problem of providing adequate preparation and a “philosophy” for our administrators. Are training in the mechanics of administration and codes of professional ethics enough? Or should our new Guardian Class be given an education commensurate with their announced responsibilities and perhaps be imbued with a political philosophy? The present gap between the content of our administrative curricula and what we announce to be the responsibilities of our Administrators is appalling. Presuming that we are in the midst of some sort of “managerial revolution,” can we say that either the problem of our philosophy *about* managers or philosophy *for* managers has been adequately treated? (Waldo, 1984, p. 202)

With these words, Waldo sets the standard that Public Administration's normativist theorists have been seeking to achieve for more than half a century. Any legitimate theory for public administration must go beyond the empiricism and data-driven models of positivist social science; it must give priority to the purposes and values of the democratic society it serves.

There are various exemplars of the normativist approach to Public Administrationist theory, and the approach includes entire movements (e.g., "The New Public Administration" of the early 1970s, the "Blacksburg Manifesto Movement" dating from the early 1980s) as well as individuals. Two recent and quite notable publications provide explicit examples: H. George Frederickson's *The Spirit of Public Administration* and Louis C. Gawthrop's *Public Service and Democracy*. Both are interesting books for the quality and consistency of their respective arguments, but for present purposes we will focus on their perspectives on the purpose and role of Public Administration, particularly in regard to the role of theory and research.

Although a composite of old and new essays, Frederickson's (1997) book carries a powerful theme and purpose stated in the first major chapter: the need for a "theory of the public in public administration." Frederickson posits service to the public as the central value of public administration in general, and after assessing five different academic "perspectives" on the public (pluralist, public choice, legislative/representation, service providing, and citizenship), he calls for the adoption of a "general theory" of the public in public administration

designed not just for the purpose of theory development but also to guide those in public service. Because it is to be used by those who must make government work, such a theory must be practical. It should also be empirically based – and, of course, it must further the interests of the public both specifically and generally. (Frederickson, 1997, p. 44)

Each of the other models "contribute in some general way" to such a theory, but none is complete and "when taken together they still suffer from significant omissions" (Frederickson, 1997, p. 44). What is required is a theory that gives priority to the values of public service.

An equally strong normativist stance is assumed by Gawthrop (1998). While his latest work is focused primarily on the practice of (rather than the study of) public administration, he has little respect for those who directly or indirectly promote rationalistic, technocratic, detached, objective criteria for describing, explaining or assessing the work of public administrators. He is especially critical of any social theory that is morally vacuous – which is to say, most contemporary social theory. Citing Reinhold Niebuhr's contention that "every moral theory insists on the goodness of benevolence, Justice, kindness, and unselfishness," Gawthrop (1998, p. 155) notes that contemporary social theories do not meet that standard.

...[A]s we enter the twenty-first century, we seem to be mesmerized by the notion of theory to the point where theory is the only reality countenanced by our society. In whichever policy arena the public manager happens to be situated, whether it is law enforcement, healthcare, education, housing, and so on, there is no dearth of micro, macro, or meta theories to distract attention from the empirical realities that reveal the slow but steady degeneration of our ethical-moral values. Theory, not religion, has become the opiate of our society. Indeed, the ethical-moral "theories" advanced over the centuries by philosophers and

theologians have been relegated to the dustbins in the cellar of the edifice constructed by the twentieth century's new "sciences" of social life...Despite the intellectual rigor, precision, and rational certitude presumably associated with the process of theory building, the fact remains that the deeply rooted moral dimensions of democratic society are effectively disregarded and functionally distorted by most of our elegant and sophisticated sociopolitical theories. (Gawthrop, 1998, p. 155-157)

For both Frederickson and Gawthrop, the essence of public administration and public service cannot be captured by a Public Administration that does not itself capture the field's "spirit." For Gawthrop, the focus of his volume is "on the ethical-moral values and virtues that pervade the spirit of democracy and constitute the pathways to the common good. The core argument advanced is that these values and virtues must function as guideposts and benchmarks for those who serve in the name of democracy" (Gawthrop, 1998, p. xii). For Frederickson, the "spirit" in his book's title "is a deep and enduring commitment to the calling of public service and to the effective conduct of public organizations and their work."

The spirit of public administration combines rational and empirical forms of knowledge or ways of knowing with an understanding of the field built on experience, wisdom, and judgment. Rational assumptions and the traditions of social science research are essential to the creation of reliable and replicable theories of public administration. But theories that are derived solely from rational assumptions and social science methods may be unable to account for important forces in the field, such as compassion, courage, and benevolence. The aim of *The Spirit of Public Administration* is first to guide the reader to a knowledge of the field, and second and more important, to attempt to further an understanding of the field. (Frederickson, 1997, p. 2-3)

The focus of these two prominent normativists on "spirit" is not without precedent in the history of the social sciences. From the Renaissance until the 19th-century, spirits and "humours" were taken seriously as causal mediates through which distinct parts of nature and human nature (e.g., the intellect and body) were connected. For centuries, it served as the social science equivalent of the physicists' concept of "ether."⁷⁰ In the work of Hegel and other idealists, spirit took on the characteristics of a higher morality that becomes real through its apprehension and activation by individuals (Smith, 1997). In stressing the spiritual nature of public service values, both Frederickson and Gawthrop indicate that what they seek is more than a mere commitment to duty, obligation, objectivity, and so on. For them there must be strong moral substantive content in any theory of public administration worthy of the name. There is certainly no room for a value free or value neutral approach to the study of Public Administration.

In setting these normative standards for Public Administration as a social science, the normivist position makes it difficult – if not very uncomfortable – for any social scientist committed to mainstream standards who attempts to conduct research or undertake empirical theory development within the confines of the field. American social scientists are neither ignorant of, nor indifferent to, the role of values in research. It is a problem traced to Kant's observations about the limits of pure reason, and specifically the inevitable role of values in efforts to comprehend history. By the late 19th century, the role of values had become a major debate among European social scientists, and emerging from that milieu was the Weberian ideal

of value neutrality that has dominated as the methodological mainstream standard.⁷¹ It is a position that acknowledges the relevance of values and cultural influences on the research endeavor, but seeks commitment to methods that minimize their impact.

In the tradition of Waldo's critique of Simon, the normativists stress standards calling for value commitments that would guide research – a position clearly at odds with the mainstream social science position on the rules of inquiry. Intentionally or not, the strong normativist position set two related litmus tests for acceptable Public Administration research: first, does your research acknowledge the priority of values in public administrative behavior, and, second, are those values in sync with the norms of the major gatekeepers in the field? With the normativist position perceived as dominant by those outside the Public Administration community, those identifying with the social science mainstream avoid presentations and publications in Public Administration venues.⁷²

Some of the problem can be attributed to exaggerated misperceptions among “outsiders” regarding the standards of research for Public Administration. But the strong and pervasive position articulated by leading normativist theorists is also a likely factor. Consider, for example, Frederickson's critical treatment of various attempts by a number of scholars to conceptualize what is emerging today as “public administration as governance.” “Any serious student of the field,” he argues, “will recognize that the use of the word and concept governance to describe public administration is laden with problems – both of practice or application and of conceptual rigor” (Frederickson, 1997, p. 87). Intentionally or not, Frederickson's use of ad hominem argument reflects an inherent bias in the strong normativist stance to be dismissive of those who do not agree, i.e., a “serious” student is someone who agrees with Frederickson's position, while those who disagree (by seeing some value in the concept) can be dismissed as “not serious.” Frederickson also seems unwilling to explicitly distinguish between those who apply the concept prescriptively from those who seek to apply it descriptively. In what amounts to criticism that “shoots the messenger,” he seems unwilling to tolerate the conceptualization even when articulated for analytic purposes.

At the same time, the normativist does see the benefits empirical research that is accomplished in the service of moral theory. Frederickson's book is filled with mainstream social science research citations supportive of his positions. In addition, we find Frederickson outlining a research agenda that would enhance our understanding of the role of ethics in public administration, including descriptive and comparative studies of ethical “settings, professions, and cultures”; assessments of efforts to enforce, enhance, and teach ethical behavior; and studies of how privatization and administrative discretion impact public administration ethics (Frederickson, 1997). (Ironically, Frederickson would expect that such research would live up to the standards of mainstream social science. More important, however, it is the fact that it is research in the service of a normative agenda that legitimizes it.)

Which brings me to a major reason for arguing that the normativist has failed to enhance the disciplinary status of Public Administration within the social sciences. When all is said and done, the normativist perspective promotes rhetoric rather than research. Mainstream social scientists will argue that the normativists impose a non-scientific agenda on Public Administration research. The role of research is not merely – or primarily – to serve knowledge development or theory building, but rather to serve the rhetorical needs of a particular moral theory posited by the normativist.

This is not to argue that rhetoric is an insignificant or unworthy endeavor. I am not referring here to the thin, sophistic form of rhetoric associated with arguments intended to hide or distort

the truth. Instead, I am referring to the Aristotelian form of rhetoric developed to make persuasive arguments on behalf of a point of view. It is a form of inquiry with a long, honorable, and productive history that, some would argue, remains central to our search for knowledge despite the pretenses of scientific methodology.⁷³

Nor am I contending that research about public administration conducted in the social science mainstream lacks normative content or purpose. Wood and Waterman's (1994) *Bureaucratic Dynamics*, for instance, is a work reflecting the quality of research expected under mainstream social science standards, and yet contains significant normative themes relating to questions of responsiveness and accountability. In fact, a good deal of research about public administration done by those who would not identify themselves as members of the Public Administration community is initiated in response to normative issues.⁷⁴ And most conclude their works with prescriptions reflecting values and norms not unlike those advocated in the normativist literature of Public Administration.

My contention is that the influence of the strong normativist position in Public Administration reduces the incentives for those engaged in mainstream social science research too identify with our field. A work such as *Bureaucratic Dynamics* should be more closely identify with Public Administration, and perhaps would have benefited considerably from interactions with the field. Nevertheless, the work was clearly written to the standards of the mainstream social science community with which the authors identify, i.e. political science. An important indicator supporting this judgment are the relatively few citations to Public Administration research found in the eleven-page reference section (Wood & Waterman, 1994). Of those citations recognizable as associated with the field of Public Administration, almost all would be regarded as classics from the era when political science and Public Administration were considered inseparably one. And despite its direct relevance to an issue high on the normativist agenda in our field – as indicated by the work's subtitle: "The Role of Bureaucracy in a Democracy" – all the scholarly papers that eventually comprised the core research in the book were published in mainstream political science journals rather than those associated with Public Administration.

Under the influence of normativist standards, analysts who in every other respect are committed to promoting the values of democratic administration and public service, are subject to criticism for conducting studies or developing theories that do not have a stronger normative content guiding their work. It is not a matter of whether detached and value free research is possible; it is more a question of whether the research explicitly fosters the appropriate values. Despite courteous bows in the direction of empirical researchers, neither Frederickson nor Gawthrop nor many other normativists would give due credit to research or theory building that is not politically correct or ideologically in-sync or socially sensitized.⁷⁵

Of course, this assessment is vulnerable to charges of over statement about the standards of social science and over generalization about the power and influence of normativist writers in the field. The strong normativist position represented by Frederickson and Gawthrop has its equivalent within mainstream social science (see Wolfe, 1989), although its influence is muted within positivist arenas. And within Public Administration there are subtler normativist positions less likely to give the impression that research in the field must be subsumed under some dominant value structure. Nevertheless, the strong normativist position has both history and status on its side within the field. If Public Administration is to attain acceptance as a social science, the power and influence of the normativist gatekeepers needs to be addressed.

Transforming the Field

Finally, we consider those Public Administration theorists who believe that the positivist agenda in its varying forms is pernicious in its capacity to misdirect research and blind the field to the true nature of public administration's role in society. For this group of writers, nothing less than an ontological transformation will suffice to deal with the resulting problems. The very ideas of developing methodological, epistemological, or ethical solutions is dismissed in favor of opening up the “worldview” of Public Administrationists through development of new languages and a new consciousness.

Ironically, the transformationist goal is quite similar to that articulated by Simon in his efforts to re-orient Public Administration in the 1940s. He, too, sought a revolution in the way scholars approach administrative questions, not only through the adoption of the logical positivist epistemology, but also by re-focusing the conceptual and logical foundations of the field toward decision-making. The contemporary transformationists cast a wider net as they seek to replace the modernist ontology that has dominated the field (at the least in United States) since the Progressive Era. In so doing, they target not only Simon, but Waldo and Taylor and Gulick and the Blackburg Movement and Gawthrop – and just about anyone else who consciously or unconsciously relies on the world-as-defined-by-modernity perspective.

An early explication of this approach was offered in the late 1970s and early 1980s by Orion F. White, Jr. and Cynthia J. McSwain (1983).⁷⁶ Building on Jungian analytic psychology, they argued for a broader ontological foundation in the study of public organizations – one that would extend the reach of scholarly analysis from the positivist focus on structures and social relations to the depths of the human psyche and the collective and individual unconscious (White & McSwain, 1982).⁷⁷ As noted below, White and McSwain (writing as O. C. McSwite [1997]) remain active contributors to the transformationist perspective; today, however, they are joined by the growing number of Public Administrationists who identify themselves as postmodernists.

In articulating the postmodernist approach in the field, Charles J. Fox and Hugh T. Miller argue that “prevailing ontologies” are central to Public Administration's inability to deal with key issues. The very categories we use to think about public administration results in bias and distortion.

[T]oo much is assumed by prevailing ontologies – too much is assumed about the rationality of human nature, about the concreteness of organizations and institutions, about the consensus around organizational goals, and about the solidity of the key concepts and variables that shape public administration thought. We try to back away from as many of these assumptions as possible, and even goes so far as to allow that “reality” itself is neither concrete nor objective, but constructed by humans and hence malleable. In the process of backing away from these underlined assumptions, we come to understand that many of the categories that we uncritically employ in daily discourse far reifications, that is, socially constructed categories that are mistaken for things that exist “out there” in the world of “objective reality.” (Fox & Miller, 1995, p. 8)

David John Farmer explains the perspective in terms of the various languages used by public administration theorists and practitioners, and like others who adopt this approach he notes that a “sea change is necessary” if Public Administration (and the other social sciences) are to improve their understanding of governing. “Without such a root-and-branch shift in the foundations of an understanding of public administration, treatment of the sort of questions we want answered will remain unsatisfactory” (Farmer, 1995, p. 4).

As an intellectual movement, postmodernism is difficult to capture analytically, and many of its leading advocates would argue against efforts to do so.⁷⁸ Emerging from a variety of sources, it has taken many forms and is likely to take many more before its influence is spent. But most share a common belief that society is in the throes of a change from a modernity rooted in the Enlightenment toward a future that (thus far) lacks firm intellectual grounding. For some observers (e.g., Peter Drucker [1969]⁷⁹), the postmodern era held the promise of positive change as society and the economy moved away from bureaucratic and industrial cultures and toward a more open knowledge-based society. The first reactions to the prospect of emerging postmodern conditions reflected an optimistic view of modern management’s ability to deal with the challenges it might generate – even in the public sector (Caldwell, 1975). Most contemporary postmodernists, however, expressed anxiety about these developments. The alienating and dehumanizing conditions fostered under modernity’s obsessive application of rationalistic techniques (see Ellul, 1964) are regarded as pervasive influences, and many forecast that life under postmodern conditions will lack meaning or direction.

Among those who perceive the postmodern world with anxiety, there are at least two major and somewhat opposing outlooks. In presenting an overview of the postmodern influence in the social sciences, Pauline Marie Rosenau distinguishes between “skeptics” and “affirmatives.” At their most extreme, skeptics regard the emerging postmodern condition as inevitable and unstoppable (at least short of revolutionary action). In contrast, the affirmatives hold out hope that through radical alteration of the way we think about our lives, we can create a more humane and livable world (Rosenau, 1992).⁸⁰

In their respective analyses of how we think about public administration, the works of Fox and Miller and O. C. McSwite reflect a critical view of current conditions, but ultimately they assume the tone of the affirmatives in proposing transformational strategies. Fox and Miller focus on the need to rethink how we think about bureaucracy and American democracy. The problem, as they see it, lies in existing ontological constraints making it impossible for us to even think about public administration as an active force in a truly open and democratic system. After reviewing the shortcomings of various modernist perspectives in dealing with the challenge of the postmodern condition, Fox and Miller write of the need to “theorize ourselves out of the cul-de-sac of postmodernism” through development of a “constructivist discourse theory” intended

to valorize proactive participation of public administrators intermingled with others of public-minded communities in policy networks, interagency consortia, adhocacies, and task forces. These we take to be the appropriate loci for a potential public sphere. Such extra-legislative policy forums... are, however, rendered through the lenses of orthodoxy as thefts of sovereignty – more, the ascendance of technocracy. Although we have laid some icks on orthodoxy and its alternatives, we’ve required a newly engineer epistemology/ontology to affirm a discourse alternative. (Fox & Miller, 1995, p. 78)

For McSwite, the goal is to reinvigorate a long suppressed constitutional ethos rooted in colonial traditions, manifested in the Articles of Confederation, fundamental to both populist and progressive ideas, and implied “in the present moment has postmodernism.” Their path involves the creation of an alternative to what they label the “Man of Reason method,” and it takes the form of a “collaborative pragmatism” that would rely on relationships rather than reason to determined collective action or resolve differences.

We can make a world by developing the kind of relationships with each other that allow us to figure out what we want to do next. Our shared purpose does not have to be a grand “once and for all-time” purpose, which is to say, and ideological purpose. Indeed, purposes like this quickly lose their vitality and die because they become appropriated by consciousness and cannot continue to create things. This is what happens when people start quarreling over whether what they are doing is really progress. The purposes I mean are simply iterative, tentatively experimental choices about what we want to try doing next. If we, in short, can agree on something that we want to do next and set about doing it, then we do not need to worry. Our subsequent actions will create the world. At bottom, it is authentic human relationship that creates the world. *If we have relationship, we do not need reason.* (McSwite, 1997, p. 261)

Transformationists like Fox and Miller and McSwite combine critical theory epistemology with utopian ontologies⁸¹ to create an agenda for Public Administration theory that has no room for the positivist world of mainstream social science. In fact, the transformationist is explicitly anti-positivist, to the point of demonizing those who would objectify the world and challenge the legitimacy of human subjectivity and the unconscious. Unlike the alternativists who seek epistemological diversity alongside positivism and normativists who desire greater value commitment within the positivist social sciences, the transformationist position dismisses and denigrates mainstream social science activity as inherently flawed and a key factor in the dehumanization and alienation of modern life.

For example, Fox and Miller critique the use of positivist social science methodologies (e.g., surveys, panels) in developing solutions to the postmodern condition (Fox & Miller, 1995). McSwite also regards such efforts as insufficient, and is particularly suspicious of efforts to merely reform how we think about public administration. Typical is McSwite’s assessment of “neo-institutionalism” which is “especially pernicious, in my view, because it appears to be something new when in fact it is reactionary, a defensive holding action against the effects of the wearing away of the epistemological foundations of the ideology of reason” (McSwite, 1997, p. 271).

The knowledge-gathering and theory-building functions of social science research are not high on the agenda of the transformationists. Knowledge and theory are instead treated as tools, intended to serve the needs of their respective utopian programs. This is especially evident in the way McSwite approaches historical analysis. The use of historical knowledge for rhetorical purposes, i.e. to persuade, is a fundamental and explicit part of McSwite’s methodology. Just as political and intellectual histories have been used to suppress equally legitimate alternatives (e.g., those of Antifederalists, Follett, Dewey) to the textbook versions perpetrated to enhance the Man of Reason world view, so it can be used to subvert that perspective. But in taking this approach, McSwite is subject to a variation of what Habermas terms “performative

contradiction”⁸² – that is, McSwite’s rhetorical use of historical analysis simultaneously implies legitimacy for that which it condemns and condemns that for which it claims legitimacy through its application. In a sense, there is irony and justice in McSwite’s approach, but there are also serious questions to be raised about the integrity of their presentation.

These and related problems have plagued postmodernists for decades, and often result in a greater appreciation of the value of positivist standards in the social sciences (see Rosenau, 1992). While the transformationist perspective constantly reminds us of our desire for a humane public administration and complementary development of a humanist Public Administration community, its inherent shortcomings highlight the price we would pay – in terms of knowledge accumulation, theory development, and (yes) disciplinary status – for adopting a utopian stance.⁸³

A Seat at the Social Science Table

One of the benefits of historicist thinking is the dirty little pleasure of engaging in “what if” exercises. What if the South had won the Civil War? What if Hitler had not invaded the Soviet Union? What if Truman had decided against using nuclear weapons? Or, for our purposes, what if Simon, and not Waldo, had prevailed in the postwar debate in Public Administration? What would the field have accomplished as a social science discipline rather than as a handmaiden to professionalism?

I will resist pursuing this speculative game in detail, but it seems clear that the field would have retained its autonomy relative to political science, although current ties would have been stronger. The Woods and Watermans of the world would regard themselves as members of the Public Administration community while suffering no intellectual or social discomfort in attending Political Science Association meetings. Mainstream political science would have developed a more deferential (rather than a dismissive) attitude toward Public Administrationists during the 1960s. Waldo’s professional analogy to medicine would have been replaced by one comparing the field with those who study international relations, and like their international relations colleagues, public administration would have a distinct organization (most likely separate from the American Society for Public Administration, and more like today’s Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management) as well as a significant section with the American Political Science Association (as it currently has).

But most important, as a social science, Public Administration’s gatekeepers would have been “at the table” (figuratively, of course) in the half century of discussions about the standards for social science research and what constitutes social science knowledge. From that perspective, they would realize that the logical positivist bogeyman was just that – a figment of their collective imaginations that could have sapped their energies in a decades-long tilt with windmills while others engaged in the business of inquiry.

But the South did not win the Civil War, and in fact Public Administration has been tilting at the logical positivist windmill for decades. It is not my intent to add a history of science or social science to this already lengthy essay, but few would argue with the observation that logical positivism’s day in the sun was a short one – if there was such a day at all. Among philosophers of science, logical positivism remained a powerful theme, even as it was reconstructed and adapted for use in the social sciences (see Kaplan, 1964). And there is no denying the impact of behavioralism and other positivist approaches on the research agenda and publications in the social sciences through the postwar era.

Nevertheless, no one familiar with the individual social science disciplines can ignore the continuous emergence of controversies regarding standards and methods of research. Division and debate were (and are) as commonplace as the “urge” for consensus that inheres in each discipline. Anthropology journals have been filled with discussions about alternative methods and the ethics of research for decades (e.g., Ammerman, 1992; Despres, 1968; Earle & Preucel, 1987); leading psychologists have been raising significant questions about the appropriateness, misuse, and bias of various mainstream approaches in the field (see Gergen, 1994a, 1994b; Kagan, 1998); and sociologists and political scientists are continually rethinking their “paradigms” and research methods in light of critiques generated by both traditionalists and postmodernists (see Campbell, 1996; Giddens, 1979; Rosenau, 1992). Economics has not only not escaped these debates, but has gone out of its way to honor those who “stir” the methodological or epistemological pot – as in the cases of Nobel laureates Herbert Simon and Milton Friedman (see, for example, McCloskey, 1994).

John R. Hall (1999) has provided a relevant view of the social sciences that is perhaps closer to the historical reality. He approaches the social sciences as “cultures of inquiry” constantly engaged in at least four ongoing “formative discourses” about the role of values, narratives, theories and interpretations in the social sciences. These discourses are necessary because social science inquiry is “an arena contested by alternative *practices of inquiry* – [i.e.,] relatively conventionalized methodological approaches to the production of sociohistorical knowledge” (Hall, 1999, p. 25).

Whether the endeavor is ethnomusicology or macroeconomics, any practice of inquiry presupposes some stance about how to theorize, and, similarly, about the ways that values, narrative, and explanation or interpretation come into play. Formative discourses are not types of inquiry; they are constituent elements of it. Thus, the ability to carry out research depends on resolving various problematics within different forms of discourse (such as social theory), but the solution to a problematic within a given form of discourse is not isolated. Instead, any resolution to issues within one form of discourse becomes articulated resolutions to problematics from *other* forms of discourse (e.g., theory with narrative). Compositions that align resolutions to problematics form multiple forms of discourse amount to practices of inquiry. (Hall, 1999, p. 27)

Within the context of these discourses, logical positivism has at most served as an idealization that generated reaction rather than submission to its tenets. Through these various and ongoing discourses, social science has always been something quite different than the “model” which caused so much angst among Public Administrationists for over five decades!

With their attention focused on the potential threat of value-less positivism, the leading theorists in the Public Administration hardly had time to notice that the social science disciplines had in fact moved toward a more open and diverse position on research standards. The black-and-white distinctions between objectivism and relativism, between modern and postmodern, between realism and constructivism have blurred rather than sharpened over time in the social sciences – a fact to which Public Administration theorists seemed oblivious. Instead, the field’s theorists began a subtle shift toward a more generalized conceptualization of logical positivism in the form of “technical rationality.” Now the peril is not merely the conscious effort to establish a value-neutral field; rather the danger is a spreading technocratic

logic and conformity that the human psyche finds irresistible. And before you know it, it has captured our souls as well as our bodies.⁸⁴

The question for the field is not whether it can turn itself into a social science by doing research that meets some perceived methodological standards (i.e., the reformist solution). Nor is a solution found in the “diversity of approaches” prescription of the alternativists. Brewing up some epistemological mix to study a social phenomenon poses a significant challenge that demands more than implied by a call for multiple perspectives. Nor will the subjectivism of either normativists or transformationists hold an answer to the future of the field. Focused as they are on the ethics and ontological foundations of research respectively, both seek to judge and direct knowledge development rather than promote knowledge accumulation or understanding. And intentionally or not, both approaches raise the kinds of fundamental intellectual and social challenges addressed by Popper in his critique of “holistic” or utopian thinking (Popper, 1962a, 1962b, 1964).

What is required is a willingness on the part of the field’s gatekeepers to engage in the formative discourses of the social sciences and to promote that engagement among other members of the field through changes in standards of research and publication. This might require another *Administrative Behavior* to pose a challenge to those fixated on the positivist devil, but this time the iconoclastic author would be arguing on behalf of a social science more sensitive and responsive to reflexive and emotional human beings as well as the complexities and chaos of social life.

Such a social science has emerged over the past several decades in response to constant criticisms and challenges. Among the list of “targets” in these ongoing discourses has been methodological individualism (Gergen, 1994b), the search for “lawlike generalizations” (Elster, 1989, 1999), the behavioral assumptions associated with homo economicus (Douglas & Ney, 1998), etc. At the same time have come calls for greater focus on institutions, relationships, reflexivity, and causal mechanisms. Topics previously avoided, especially the role of emotions in social life (e.g., see Elster, 1999; Gergen, 1994b), are now regarded as high on the social science agenda in several fields. And certain sources, data and methods previously dismissed as unsuitable (i.e., not “scientific” enough) are gaining wider acceptance.⁸⁵

What Public Administration will gain from engaging in the formative discourses of the social sciences is more than merely a collective identity or higher status among their peers. The true benefits will come in the form of contributing more to our knowledge and understanding of those subjects that fall under the field’s purview. Despite the criticisms made in this essay, Public Administrationists have a considerable amount of individual and collective intellectual energy to offer in dealing with the many questions that remain on the vast and diverse social science research agenda. Given the central role played by intellectual leaders and major gatekeepers in perpetuating the failures of Public Administration theories, however, harnessing that energy will require an upheaval in the field that is likely to be political as well as paradigmatic. As the history of the Minnowbrook and Blacksburg movements indicate, this is no easy challenge. Certainly, it will require more than polemics such as this. It demands the emergence of an individual or group with Simon-like abilities to articulate both a challenge and an alternative that would finally allow the field of Public Administration to assume the disciplinary stance it surrendered after World War Two.

Notes

1. This paper was originally prepared for and delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Atlanta, GA, September 2-5, 1999.
2. In this paper, I will use the now common convention, attributable to Waldo (see Waldo, 1968a, p. 443, note 1), of using capital letters to differentiate the academic side of the subject from the practice of public administration itself.
3. This argument, therefore, is narrower than – and overlapping with – Stillman's (1991). In his superbly presented analysis, Stillman covers the identity crisis among scholars as part of an overall historical pattern of themeless-ness and directionless-ness in both practice and study of public administration.
4. For classic and controversial analysis of an academic "community," see Bourdieu (1988).
5. E.g., see Smith (1997) and Gergen (1994a) on psychology and related behavioral sciences; also see Matson (1964).
6. The imagery of "gatekeepers" builds upon a broader metaphor that regards those who study Public Administration as forming a distinct community of scholars within academe. The boundaries and membership of such community are "imagined" (see Anderson, 1991, p. 5-7), a fact that makes them no less real or meaningful. Like other academic and scientific communities, Public Administration has developed norms and roles that helps sustain it even in the absence of a core paradigm, methodology, or clear sense of identity. (On this point, see Polanyi (1964); for a postmodern perspective, see Bourdieu [1988]). Among those who play gatekeeping roles are journal editors (see Simon and Fyfe [1994]) and individuals who, through criticisms and the articulation of theories, have the power to shape and define their fields (e.g., Calhoun (1995); Gouldner (1970)).
7. On psychology, see Smith (1997, chapter 14). Regarding political science, see Waldo (1975) and Leonard (1995). For Public Administration, see Chandler (1987). It must be stressed that I am focusing on the founding "myths," rather than asserting that these represent verifiable historical roots. In public administration, for example, credit can also be given to the work of lesser known contributors than Woodrow Wilson, e.g. Theodore Dwight Woolsey and Dorman B. Eaton (see Van Riper, 1987).
8. The first meeting of the Society was held in conjunction with an academic conference (the December, 1939, meeting of the American Political Science Association) and its first president was an academic (Dean William Mosher of Syracuse University).
9. See Stone (1982). Also see the brief comments in Egger (1975).
10. While this did not fit the pattern of the major social science associations, it did resemble the coalition of practitioners, reformers, and academics that characterized the founding of professional associations during the 19th and early 20th centuries (see Ross 1979).
11. See the now classic case of a debate between competing theories that challenged the consensus surrounding quantum mechanics in physics in the 1920s and 1930s (Cassidy, 1992).
12. On the "disunity" of science, see Galison and Stump (1996).
13. By the late 1950s, there was some optimism left in the observation of Sayre about the state of the field: "The post-war decade of the center and heterodoxy has not yet revealed the clearer outlines of an emerging new body of comprehensive doctrine. But perhaps we can anticipate some of the major components of the reformulation now in process. The premises around which the new consensus [sic] – perhaps to become a new orthodoxy – would seem to be forming..." (Sayre, 1958, p. 178-179)
14. Consider, for example, the careers of notables such as Samuel P. Huntington or Merle Fainsod.
15. Simon and James G. March are the most prominent examples.

16. This snobbery sometimes comes to the surface in the form of confrontations over the distribution of awards or honors – as was the case in the 1980s when political scientist Samuel P. Huntington engaged in a public, but ultimately losing, battle for membership in the prestigious National Academy of Sciences (Cordes, 1988).
17. Dwight Waldo mentions this specific insult in a number of forums; see the discussions in Charlesworth (1968).
18. Does such identification of differences make a difference? It seems to in terms of research productivity standards and other evaluative norms (see Wanner, Lewis, & Gregorio, 1981).
19. In both essays, Waldo bitterly notes that this was not merely a matter of choice on the part of Public Administrationists. The field's relevance and status within political science was already significantly reduced in the eyes and actions of its colleagues. Start in 1962, Public Administration was relegated to the "other" category in formal reports and questionnaires issued by the American Political Science Association. But the most explicit indicator was the "disappearance" of Public Administration as an organized section in the 1967 program of APSA's annual meeting (see Waldo 1968a, 1968b). For responses to his concerns, see Sayre (1968) and Riggs (1968).
20. Waldo (1968b). A decade later, Waldo would use a narrower definition of "discipline" than he applied in his 1968 comments (see Waldo 1980).
21. See critical discussions of the founding period in Ball (1995) and Leonard (1995).
22. There are, of course, many institutions where the Public Administration faculty remains housed within political science departments (see <http://www.naspaa.org/programs/index.html>). However, anecdotal evidence indicates that the relationships between Public Administration faculty and their political science colleagues are often plagued by difficulties, particularly in questions related to tenure, promotion, and other status issues.
23. An interesting indicator of this accomplishment is found in the jobs posting section of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* where the field has a distinct status outside the listings for social science and among those designated as "professional fields."
24. The notion of a "discipline" is confusing as well as ambiguous to most of us. As Mark Rutgers points out, its use in public administration has been troubled by both philosophic and sociological meanings. My argument relies primarily on the sociological type (see Rutgers, 1995).
25. He characterizes it as a belief that "the way toward the discovery of greater (or 'true') knowledge...law in the application of modes of thought and methods of research which had demonstrated their potency so effectively in such areas that has physics and biology" (Waldo, 1975, p. 28).
26. See Newland (1994) for insightful comments on the efforts of "public management" scholars to see themselves as a discipline by stressing their separateness from public administration.
27. This perspective is drawn from the sociology and history of science literatures where stress has been placed on the role of community norms and values in shaping and directing knowledge accumulation. A classic presentation of this perspective is found in Merton (1957); for a more recent study, see Shapin (1994).
28. Different sources note different dates for the Committee's formation: Roberts (1994) reports it as 1926; Stone and Stone (1975) put it at 1928; and, Egger (1975) has its formation as 1934.
29. For an overview of the Committee's activities, see Roberts (1994).
30. E.g., Gulick and Urwick (1937). Earlier attitudes toward applying "scientific" methods to the study of public administration were reflected in the comments by William F. Willoughby in a survey of research in political science published in 1933. After noting the

“enormous amount of research” focused on the work of administrative agencies by research institutes and bureaus as well as other institutions, Willoughby was not quite ready to label these efforts as “scientific,” although he was willing to call them “analogous:” “While it may be that public administration is not entitled to the designation of a science, as that term is employed in respect to the natural sciences, studies in this field have gone far enough to establish that there are at least fundamental principles, of more or less general application, analogous to those characterizing any science, which must be observed if the end of administration, efficiency in operation, is to be secured” (Willoughby, 1933, p. 21). Even such limited claims to scientific status were subject to severe criticisms (see Hyneman, 1939).

31. For a contemporary and critical view of social science research applied to industrial settings prior to the 1930s, see Gillespie (1991).
32. On the significance of the publication of *Administrative Behavior*, see Landau (1972).
33. In his autobiography, Simon writes of weekly graduate student gatherings where the philosophy of science was the primary topic of conversation. “Logical positivism was the moment, perhaps exclusive, religion in this group, and we took turns talking about our special interests or projects” (Simon, 1991, p. 74-75). Ironically, one of Simon’s major contributions to the study of decision-making – i.e., the inherent limits to human rationality – undermines the very foundation of the logical positivism he builds upon (see Wilson, 1998).
34. In his autobiography, for example, Simon recalls a problem he had applying Carnap’s views to his initial work on the thesis that would become *Administrative Behavior* – a problem he shared with Carnap who “tried to show me that I was mistaken. However, in his 1942 book on semantics, he retreated from his earlier position in exactly the direction I had pointed” (Simon, 1991, p. 54).
35. See the discussion of Merriam’s perspective in Leiserson (1975).
36. In his autobiography, Simon notes that a picture of Barnard hangs in his study, next to those of his father, Clarence Ridley (a much-admired colleague and co-author), Charles Merriam (his mentor), Franklin Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln, and Albert Einstein (Simon, 1991).
37. There are at least ten citations in the index to Barnard.
38. “[The reliance of Barnard’s] administrative theory on common sense was not entirely acceptable to me. Systematic observation and experimentation were badly needed in this field to ever become scientific. Until someone build a satisfactory theoretical framework, it would not be clear what kinds of empirical studies were called for” (Simon, 1991, p. 73).
39. Waldo brings some clarity to this point when he reflects on Simon’s work some twenty years later. While *Administrative Behavior* represented one of the most critical “refutations” of the dominant ideologies of the time in Public Administration (see also Dahl, 1947), in many respects it was also a “conservative” work that gave priority to bringing valid scientific methods to the so-called science of administration. Rather than being regarded as a radical perspective that threatened to alter the world of administration, Simon’s work might have been perceived as a much-needed approach that would provide more realistic and useful knowledge (see Waldo, 1968a).
40. “My rearing and education disposed me to the soft side: to human us approach to social science and to a suspicion of all philosophies and methods that offered Truth. But I could hardly ignore the transformations wrought by modern science and technology; and I acknowledged that the claims made on behalf of science for further knowledge and control deserve to be heard and, if judged valid, heeded” (Waldo, 1984, p. xlix).
41. In fact, many in the scientific community though Northrop went too far in his views of what science could accomplish. At one of the early Macy Foundation conferences held

between 1946 and 1953, Northrop “proposed that the idea of ‘the good’ be based on science. He did not get very far. Most of these scientists present agreed with Einstein’s view that ‘science cannot create ends and, even less, instill them in human beings; science, at most, can supply the means by which to attain certain ends...” Several months later, Northrop would present a paper at a meeting of scientists and philosophers titled “The Scientific Method for Determining Normative Social Theory of the Ends of Human Action” (Heims, 1993, p. 267).

42. Waldo (1984) quotes Northrop on this point.
43. On this particular point, Waldo cites Northrop’s critique of economic theory (see Waldo, 1984) and uses it to criticize Stene’s attempt to develop a rational theory of administrative statics.
44. Waldo makes several somewhat uncritical references to Simon’s work with Ridley in *The Administrative State*, as well as a very positive citation of Simon’s 1946 *Public Administration Review* article on the “Proverbs of Administration” (see Waldo, 1984).
45. For a different perspective on the Simon/Waldo debate, see Harmon (1995).
46. Having described this essay as polemical and rhetorical, I could hide my oversimplifications of history behind those characterizations. However, I would be remiss not to point out a very significant, third major contender in the post-war Public Administration debate: the political realists who launched direct assaults on the idealism implied in the politics/administration dichotomy. Perhaps best known for leading this attack on the prewar orthodoxy were Paul Appleby and Norton Long.
47. In the introduction to the second edition of *Administrative Behavior*, Simon takes note of his response to Waldo quoted above, characterizing his views in that 1952 reply as set forth “accurately if somewhat too tartly...” (Simon, 1957, p. xxxiv).
48. See also comments on Simon’s role in Lowi (1992).
49. For a collection of most of those articles through 1993, see White and Adams (1994b).
50. The phrase is mine, but the sentiment is more widespread (see White, Adams, & Forrester, 1996).
51. Sayre’s position on this issue is well known among those associated with Columbia University during his tenure there. White’s views came in the form of a letter in which he noted that the study of administration in the university should be “intended primarily as a means of understanding the nature of government and its operations” as opposed to a focus on the application of knowledge to practical situations (see Waldo, 1968a, p. 445).
52. I attribute this comment to Professor Kenneth J. Meier. When asked to verify the comment (personal communication, July 14, 1999), Meier could not recall having made such a statement (“I don’t remember saying this, but I could have”), but expressed a willingness to accept attribution in his capacity as the “Yogi Berra” of our field.
53. Roger Smith notes that the practice of social scientific research based on methods drawn from the natural sciences was already well underway – at least in behaviorist psychology – by the time logical positivism became well known (see Smith, 1997; also see Matson, 1964).
54. Anecdotally, early in the Rosenbloom editorship, when *Public Administration Review* did publish an article that might otherwise have found a home in one of the more mainstream social science publications, we received a strongly worded complaint from one of the more prominent members of the field. That sharp critique certainly did not change Rosenbloom’s attitude toward publishing similar pieces, but the lack of similar submissions did. You cannot publish what is not submitted, and what is or is not submitted has more to do with perceptions of the field than the policies of any editorial board.
55. Compare with Stillman (1995).

56. For the classic argument supporting axiomatic theories, see von Mises (1944). For an assessment of the use of formal models to study bureaucracy, see Bendor (1990). The use of such models by members of the mainstream Public Administration community has been limited.
57. E.g., Lowi's (1992) statement that "[t]raditional public administration was almost driven out of the APSA by the work of a single, diabolical mind, that of Herbert A. Simon" (p. 4).
58. There are, of course, exceptions, e.g. the various examinations of published and dissertation research (see White & Adams, 1994a) and opinion pieces such as Meier and Stewart (1987).
59. Among those who do "just do it," many are doing it in journals outside the Public Administration community's mainstream publications. In doing so, they reinforce the isolation of the field by assuming identities as political scientists or policy analysts. The one notable exception (there may be others) is Gregory Lewis of Georgia State University. Not only does he "do it," but he does it almost entirely within the field's mainstream publications. According to his posted list of "recent publications" (found at: <http://www.gsu.edu/~padgbl/vitae.html>), he has published seventeen articles in the leading peer-reviewed Public Administration journals – most (if not all) using positivist methods and research standards.
60. The classical expression of this position was made by phenomenologist Alfred Schutz in a 1954 response to empiricist Ernest Nagel's critique of Weberian methodology:

I agree with Professor Nagel that all empirical knowledge involves discovery through processes of controlled inference, and that it must be statable in propositional forms and capable of being verified by anyone who is prepared to make the effort to do so through observations – although I do not believe, as Professor Nagel does, that this observation has to be sensory in the precise meaning of this term. Moreover, I agree with him that "theory" means in all empirical sciences the explicit formulation of determinate relations between a set of variables in terms of which a fairly extensive class of empirically ascertainable regularities can be explained. Furthermore, I agree wholeheartedly with his statement that neither the fact that these regularities have in the social sciences a rather narrowly restricted universality, nor the fact that they permit prediction only to a rather limited extent, constitutes a basic difference between the social and the natural sciences, since many branches of the latter show the same features. (Schutz, 1954, p. 260)

61. Mainstream social science has not been indifferent to these epistemological challenges, and one finds a variety of strategies to deal with the resulting disciplinary discomfort. Some, following the lead of Karl Popper, have developed "local epistemologies" – essentially assuming the existence of an analytically comprehensible "reality." Others have taken a "conventionalist" approach by accepting the fact that science is a social institution through which we accumulate knowledge. Still others (typically associated with Habermas, despite his claim that he is not engaged in such a project) have embarked on attempts to develop a new epistemological foundation that would integrate social science and humanist/historicist perspectives. For a survey of the issues and various efforts to deal with them (see Hall, 1990).
62. For a general collection of works associated with this perspective in the social sciences, see Morgan (1983).
63. For critiques, see Jones (1998) and Shankman (1984).

64. There are, of course, alternativists who demonstrate less flexibility in their solutions to the epistemological issues. Robert B. Denhardt, for example, acknowledges three distinct “models” characterizing the study of public organizations: the rational model, reflecting “positive social science” and its emphasis on control; the interpretive model, with its stress on phenomenological “understanding”; and the critical model, based on critical social theory and stressing a commitment to emancipatory “praxis.”

Although mainstream theory [i.e., the rational model] presents itself as the only available theory, many who have contributed to the intellectual and political heritage of public organizations have suggested alternative approaches. Completeness in the study of public organization requires that we be attentive to the full range of approaches available to us....

[However, in] my view, it is toward administrative praxis [i.e., the critical model] that practitioners as theorists must guide their theory buildings and their actions. (Denhardt, 1993, p. 232-233)

65. In many respects, historical analyses in Public Administration are closely related to the normativist perspective discussed below. Rohr, for example, is a prominent member of the Blacksburg Manifesto Movement, and Rosenbloom is a leading advocate for a view that promotes U.S. constitutional values in the development of Public Administration theory. Nevertheless, the standards of historical research are taken seriously by these scholars, and they are less subject to the criticism (which I apply to the normativists) that research is used to persuade rather than enlighten.
66. See Herzog and Claunch (1997) for a complementary analysis to Hummel's. Michael Harmon is the other notable writer in this area. His emphasis on “action theory” is deeply rooted in the phenomenological tradition (see Harmon & Mayer, 1986; also see Harmon 1990, 1998).
67. This is an argument Adams (1992) made several years earlier and is repeated in chapter 2 of *UEA*.
68. Compare with Stivers (1995) and Schacher (1995).
69. For a brief overview of the critical approach, see Denhardt (1981).
70. Nineteenth-century physicists believed that ether was a necessary medium for the propagation of electromagnetic radiation. “Ether theory” was abandoned after Einstein's special theory of relativity gained wide acceptance.
71. See an overview of this controversy and the Weberian position in Hall (1999).
72. This is a personal observation drawn from my experience as managing editor of *Public Administration Review*. Editor-in-chief David H. Rosenbloom had an “open door” policy in regard to questions of acceptable research, and we informally engaged in efforts to generate more mainstream social science submissions. With the exception of one or two submissions each year, we were unable to attract relevant work from outside the Public Administration community. This despite a growing body of mainstream social science scholarship focused on public administration and bureaucracy.
73. Donald N. McCloskey, for example, contends that all scientific research is rhetorical. “The rhetorical concern,” he argues, “is how we really do convince each other, not ‘what is true according to abstract methods.’ Abstract Methods are necessary for the unlimited conversation of Ultimate Truth. Rhetoric is necessary for courts of law and conferences of scientists, places in which the bell rings and the decision must somehow be made. How they really do convince each other in the here and now is the main concern of scientists; they could care less what is true at the Second Coming according to abstract

- Methods; they want to persuade, to bring a particular debate to a conclusion” (McCloskey, 1994, p. 106).
74. E.g., the “public management” research agenda is explicitly prescriptive as well as normative (see Bozeman, 1994; see also Newland, 1994).
 75. I am obviously avoiding labeling the normativists “authoritarian,” although others make an interesting case that there are authoritarian propensities present in such subjective approaches (see Geuras & Garofalo, 1996).
 76. White and McSwain (1983) cite an earlier paper by Larry Kirhart and White.
 77. The use of the term “transformationalist” in the present paper is not intended to reflect White and McSwain’s use of the label “transformational theory” to describe their approach. Theirs is derived from Jungian analysis; my use of the term is intended to be descriptive of the common agenda characterizing a number of Public Administration theorists.
 78. Which has not stopped such attempts (see Best & Kellner, 1991; Lemert, 1997).
 79. Drucker retains his optimistic view of postmodernism today (see Drucker, 1999).
 80. Compare with Lemert (1997).
 81. See Geuras and Garofalo (1996) for a related argument.
 82. Such a contradiction occurs when an analyst makes “performative use of something he expressly denies” (Habermas, 1990, p. 129).
 83. I am not addressing here an even greater potential cost to the utopian stance, i.e. its connection to the development of closed and authoritarian systems (see Popper, 1962a, 1962b). Again, it is ironic that approaches emerging from postmodern critiques of “totalizing” cultures are themselves subject to the same kind of utopian thinking that they are so good at criticizing.
 84. If you believe this characterization is unfair, I suggest a reading of *Unmasking Administrative Evil (UAE)*, discussed above. I also recommend that you compare the narrative in *UEA* with the plot of a movie released at about the same time as the book: *Fallen* with Denzel Washington as a detective who is pitted against an evil force that is able to maintain itself by passing from body to body through touch.
 85. Textual analysis, once dismissed as relevant only for the humanities, has regained some stature in the social sciences as analysts have turned to novels and proverbs and classical texts as sources. Again, see the work of Elster, Gergen, and others.

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Exorcising Our Demons: Comments on a New Direction for Public Administration

Bruce D. McDonald, III – North Carolina State University

The field of public administration has grown accustomed to the presence of an identity crisis. In his opus, Dubnick (2018) addresses the existence of this crisis, noting where we are as a field and highlighting some of the debate that got us there. In response to Dubnick, I argue that our position as a profession rather than a discipline relates to the failure of the field to pay attention to our history. Giving consideration to our history, we find that public administration as a discipline contains those who study public administration, and a profession or practice of those who are public administrators. As a field, the conversation should move beyond the study or the practice and accept the duality that is a sign a mature subject area.

Keywords: Bureau of Municipal Research, Discipline, Profession, Public Administration Theory

Is there an identity crisis within the field of public administration? Dubnick (2018) begins his composition by arguing that not only is there a crisis, but that the crisis has been ongoing for some time. In many ways, I agree. We have challenged the concept of “public administration” to its very core, nearly reaching where anything can fit within the umbrella of the field. Early in my academic career, I was told that public administration was dead, public affairs rules the day, and that I had best accept that the inevitable: an interdisciplinary field of pure practice. As a field, we train managers—nothing more, nothing less. Future research should speak directly towards this perception. This perspective is not what I was taught during my graduate studies; it is not what I teach to my graduate students; and it is not why I chose public administration as an academic home. There is an identity crisis within public administration, but I would argue that this crisis is self-inflicted and self-perpetuating.

In this response to Dubnick’s article, I am looking at the concept of public administration as a field in light of the work that has been done since he first presented his paper at the annual conference of the American Political Science Association in 1999. I am centering my argument on what created the crisis and tying a solution to the crisis back to the establishment of the public administration discipline in the United States. I do not pretend that I alone can solve the

crisis in the minimal words that I am have for my commentary; however, I hope that I can provide some direction on how we as a discipline can begin to move past this crisis. If we are a field of demons, I hope to provide guidance on how we might exorcise some of them.

The New York Bureau of Municipal Research

Our crisis starts in much the same way as any identity crisis does – by either never knowing your history or by losing knowledge of it. By not knowing your past, there becomes an uncertainty of your place in the world. It is hard to know who you are and where you are going without knowing where you have come from. The impact of the disconnect between origin and present only grows across generational divides. Stories become lost and roots become harder and harder to trace. This failure can be seen in my own subfield of public budgeting and finance. Since Key's (1940) publication on the lack of budgetary theory, the common perception is that the subfield emerged without a theoretical foundation (also see Schick, 1988; Rubin, 2015). What this viewpoint neglects is that public administration, as we know it in the United States, emerged out of the New York Bureau of Municipal Research and its training school.

Founded as the Bureau of City Betterment in 1905 (Bruere, 1912; Dahlberg, 1966) and incorporated as the Bureau of Municipal Research in 1906 (McDonald, 2010; Stivers, 2000), the New York Bureau of Municipal Research operated on the belief that government administrators act ethically and efficiently when the citizenry are informed (Beard, 1919). As the first attempt in New York City to evaluate a government agency's operation to increase efficiency, it was believed that applying Taylor's principles of scientific management to city government would increase in the awareness of the citizenry to the activities of their elected officials and public administrators. By having an active citizenry, the Bureau hoped to make "democracy a living, vital thing" (Allen, 1949/1950, p. 159). Demonstrating the Bureau's dedication to the science of government, the subtitle of *Efficient Citizenship*, the Bureau's publication, was "[t]o Promote the Application of Scientific Principles to Government" (Bureau of Municipal Research, 1912, 1914). The Bureau did not limit itself to efficiency, however, as Henry Bruere (1947), one of the former directors of the Bureau, said that "[a]ll was historically logical in what we undertook" (pg. 46).

The success of the Bureau in New York City led to the formation of similarly structured bureaus throughout the United States, establishing the survey method as the foundation of administrative methodology (Dahlberg, 1966; McDonald, 2010). To meet this increased demand for experienced staff to run the new organizations, and the associated drain on their own staff, the Bureau establish a training school in 1911. Intending to "train men for the study and administration of public business" (Upson, 1938, p. 173), the training school emphasized the teaching of scientific principles to those who had an interest in the public sector (Allen, 1945). The school's curriculum included a series of lectures and symposiums, which often featured guests, including Frederick Taylor and Mary Parker Follett. While the school differed from traditional academic institutions in that it emphasized practical experience alongside theoretical education, the educational piece of the curriculum focused on the theory of good government and effective administration. The practical experience focused on how to apply the theory. By studying public budgeting, accounting, law, and municipal politics; graduates of the training school were ready to address the current problems in government faced at the time, but also prepared for addressing future concerns. To assist in the sharing of knowledge, the Bureau, its staff, and its graduates published some of the first research on public management, and produced the first public administration textbook in the country (McDonald, 2010). Ultimately,

the experience of the Bureau and their training school led to the creation of the first public administration programs at universities in the United States.

Established as a Duality

It should be noted that the Bureau envisioned itself as developing a science rather than a profession (Beard, 1919). Like other sciences, what the Bureau epitomized was a field that included its scientific study, but also its practical application. We abandoned this perspective at some point between the end of the Bureau experiment in 1921 and the publication of Key's article in 1940. In its place, we moved to disciplinary obscurity. This obscurity led to Key (1940) and others to conclude that we have no theoretical foundation. It is also this obscurity that Dubnick (1999, 2018) explores and challenges.

I first read Dubnick's (1999) conference paper in Richard Feiock's "Logics of Inquiry" course at Florida State University (for his own commentary of Dubnick's opus, see Feiock [2018]). Over the years, the memory of the piece has stay with me, leading me to assign it to my own doctoral students here at NC State University. While Dubnick (personal communication, October 12, 2017) has said that he has softened somewhat in his views since he presented the paper at the annual conference of the American Political Science Association, I am not sure that the field has come to an agreement. Whether we believe that public administration is a practice or a discipline, we must acknowledge that in our infancy we were established as a field that incorporates both.

To put our duality into perspective, I would like to draw a comparison between the field of public administration and medicine. A doctorate of medicine (MD) trains individuals to be physicians. Graduates of MD programs are prepared to treat the sick. In effect, they embody the practice of medicine. Although less common, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programs exist, often times within medical schools, preparing scientists for the rigorous study of medicine. The graduates of the PhD programs study the illnesses and diseases that strike the human body and work to develop cures. Within the medical field, the discipline and the practice are two sides of the same coin. They work in tandem to create the ultimate outcome: a healthy society.

In public administration, we have the same dual nature. Master of Public Administration (MPA) and Doctorate of Public Administration (DPA) programs around the world train graduates for the task of working in public organizations. That is, graduates are prepared for the practice of the field. PhD programs, on the other hand, train researchers in the science of the discipline to advance the theory that guides new generations of practitioners. This is who we are and how we were created as field. Any departure from this duality would be misguided.

Concluding Notes

Dubnick (1999, 2018) argues that public administration needs a consensus on "the field's status as a social science discipline" (p. 61). While it has been nearly twenty years since the argument was first made, the question remains to be answered of whether we have met this consensus. Based on my own view of the field, I fear that we have not yet reached that agreement. If anything, I believe that we have gotten worse. The divide between those who favor the practice and those who adhere to the discipline is ever growing, with both sides entrenching into their own academic corners.

But hope is not lost. I joined the Midwest Public Affairs Conference (MPAC) as its treasurer just as the organization was beginning to form. It was through my position on the MPAC board that I helped recruit the first editor-in-chief, and many of the editorial board members, for the *Journal of Public and Nonprofit Affairs*. In the early days of the journal we established our principles as being a publication outlet interested in connecting research to practice. Rather than choosing sides, we planted ourselves in the middle, much in the way that I believe the Bureau founders would have wanted us too. Good research should inform the science of public administration, but should also inform how we practice in our field. We might not have reached the consensus that Dubnick desires, we started that way and we are making gains to return to our roots.

Disclosure Statement

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Commentary on Demons, Spirits, and Elephants

Richard C. Feiock – Florida State University

A brief commentary on Melvin Dubnick's (2018) article: "Demons, Spirits, and Elephants: Reflections on the Failure of Public Administration Theory."

Keywords: Disciplinary Communities, Public Administration Theory, Simon-Waldo Debate

I was one of a few fortunate audience members who was in the American Political Science Association panel at which Mel Dubnick (1999) presented the first version of this paper almost 20 years ago to a stunned audience. With the passage of time the critique seems less stinging and the arguments less controversial, but at the time this was a radical critique of contemporary public administration theory and research, and of its leading scholars. This helps explain why it has not been published in its entirety before now.

Dubnick's (2018) reflection on the state of public administration theory at the turn of the century makes us aware of how much progress has been made in developing the disciplinary identity of the field, yet there are numerous critical observations and insights and that ring true today.

Today, I see much more consensus on the role of public administration as a social science. The prominent role of behavioral public administration and the wide use of experimental research designs would have been unthinkable 20 years ago. Yet rise of behaviorist public administration also highlights divisions with the discipline and the lack of "bridging concepts" (Moynihan, 2018, p. 4) and middle range theory to connect micro and macro level analyses.

Since that memorable presentation at the American Political Science Association conference, I have required first year doctoral students in my "Logics of Inquiry" seminar at Florida State University to read this paper and it inevitably produces animated debate and discussion. Now that it is in print and accessible to a wide audience, I hope and anticipate it will become a standard reading for such courses. I know of no more insightful depiction of the Simon-Waldo debate and its impact than Dubnick provides. Given the extensive historical account of the debate and competing approaches of Simon and Waldo, this essay should find a place in coursework on the intellectual history of public administration.

I have long felt this is an important work that should be more widely read and hope that this publication will realize that aspiration.

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Nonprofits as Policy Solutions to the Burden of Government by Herrington J. Bryce

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Bryce, H. J. (2017). *Nonprofits as policy solutions to the burden of government*. Boston, MA: De Gruyter. \$39.99 (paperback), ISBN: 978-1-5015-0579-9

Keywords: Book Review, Nonprofit, Public Management, Collaboration

Nonprofit organizations play an important role in the provision of public goods and services. The need for nonprofits to support public efforts is shaped by two competing trends. On the one hand, there is an increasing need for public goods and services. On the other hand, there is increasing resistance to public interventions. These trends present a significant obstacle for public organizations. Thus, assuming the absence of a market-based solution, many public goods and services must be provided through publically motivated nonprofits.

In *Nonprofits as Policy Solutions to the Burden of Governments*, Herrington J. Bryce provides a detailed guide for those who wish to establish a nonprofit organization that addresses public needs. Specifically, his book provides guidance to stakeholders who wish to initiate, or support, the development of nonprofit organizations that are focused on “lessening the burden of government.” Bryce’s effort is grounded in the real-world legal context in which American nonprofits operate. Thus, while Bryce offers a brief theoretical justification for his work, the book is aimed primarily at practitioners. It provides nonprofit administrators and other stakeholders with a clear set of guiding principles and tools. The book is comprised of 13 chapters, which, not including the introductory and concluding chapter, can be thought of as five distinct sections.

In the first “section,” (Chapters 2 & 3) Bryce offers the reader a set of organizational and conceptual tools for structuring a nonprofit whose goal is to “lessen the burden of government.” Chapter 2 outlines 10 “planks” that – while not enumerated in any legal code – should be reflected in the governing documents of a nonprofit. These planks include money, marketing, membership, management, mission, collaboration and cooperation, tax exemption, powers to transact, accountability, and legitimacy. Bryce illustrates the importance of these planks through an examination of the charter for the National Park Service. Chapter 3 extends this discussion

by focusing on the legal structure of nonprofits. This chapter offers insights into the role of charters and bylaws in designating the appropriate powers for a nonprofit. By the end of the two chapters, Bryce has provided the readers with a strong conceptual and organizational foundation by which to understand the components parts of nonprofit organizations, in general.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 reflect, what I consider to be, the next substantive section of this book. In these chapters, Bryce disentangles and demarcates various types of nonprofits that are designed to lessen the burden of government. In particular, he distinguishes between “doers” and “facilitators” as well as those that are “created by government” and those that “could also be created by citizens.” These distinctions are important to Bryce, in that they imply different legal forms and functions. For example, the doer is a nonprofit that is “most likely to assume and to carry out a burden of government” (pg. 69). In contrast, there are facilitator nonprofits whose principal goal is either to “principally raise and finance activities” or to serve as “a catalyst or a coordinator so that others might directly and effectively lessen the burden of government” (pg. 69). Given this distinction, Bryce is able to describe key substantive differences in the actions of nonprofits (doers versus facilitators) as well as operational differences. For example, Bryce contrasts the differing nature of collaboration in doing, and facilitating nonprofit doers requires internal networks of facilitators, while facilitators are more likely shaped by their external network partners. Thus, these chapters move the text from the structure or organizational components of a nonprofit toward issues of management.

Although only a single chapter, I consider Chapter 7 to be a substantive section in itself. In this chapter, Bryce focuses on the governance structure of a nonprofit as a key component that supports or inhibits the organizations’ ability to lessen the burden of government. In particular, he describes the specific responsibilities and expectations of board members. The central issue in this chapter, however, is its focus on areas of potential conflict and challenges for board members. Bryce considers how boards of these types of nonprofits are particularly vulnerable to a host of charges of bias and conflict of interest. He emphasizes three points: 1) nonprofit boards are likely to be comprised of individuals who face these risks; 2) a key duty of the organization is keep trustees from committing these offenses; and 3) shielding trustees is less about writing effective management policies as much as recognizing the individuals involved with the board.

Chapters 8 through 11 describe the financial components of nonprofit organizations. Each chapter offers specific insights into how a particular financing mechanism is employed to support the long-term sustainability of a nonprofit. In particular, these chapters focus on contributions, business earnings, debt, and then the related issue of ensuring cash flows for long-term sustainability, respectively. The chapters provide an overview of the legal context that governs and shapes these revenue generating vehicles for the nonprofits. These chapters, then, represent the central “management” topics covered in the book.

Finally, in Chapter 12, Bryce walks the reader through the potential for corruption in nonprofits. Corruption can, of course, take many forms both within the organization or, as Bryce notes, as a tool for corruptive acts. This chapter then identifies a series of controls that a nonprofit organization should have in place to limit or prevent corruption.

In general, there is much to like about this book. First, while the reader may get bogged down in the legal and conceptual jargon, Bryce has done a good job of simplifying the language without making it so simple as to omit the nuances and complexity of the issues at hand. In particular, his use of case studies to highlight key points and “ground” each chapter in the real world is extremely useful. Second, Bryce makes clear at the outset of the book that his target audience is made up of practitioners. As a guidebook for practitioners, it is thorough and engaging. It offers

important insights into developing and effectively managing nonprofits, so that they can remain sustainable while supporting the provision of public goods. That said, I think Bryce “undersells” the book in this regard. While it does not – by design – offer a unique theoretical contribution, scholars will, I am sure, benefit from this detailed examination of the component parts of a nonprofit. In short, this is a well-crafted and timely book that should, I hope, become part of the key texts adopted by students of nonprofits and nonprofit management.

Disclosure Statement

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest that relate to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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Managing Public and Nonprofit Organizations: Stories of Success and Failure by Charles Coe

D. Ryan Miller – Nova Southeastern University

Coe, C. (2018). *Managing public and nonprofit organizations: Stories of success and failure*. New York, NY: Routledge. \$44.95 (paperback), ISBN: 978-1-138-06486-7

Keywords: Book Review, Public Management, Organizational Success

When a curriculum is relevant, students are motivated to learn (Kember, Ho, & Hong, 2008). In his new book, *Managing Public and Nonprofit Organizations: Stories of Success and Failure*, Dr. Charles Coe provides a resource for making public management education more relevant to students. The book comprises a collection of stories taken from the headlines illustrating successful and unsuccessful efforts to put management theory into practice. Through these stories, the author seeks to underscore the importance of public management principles and best practices.

Guided by the question, “What can go wrong?” the author presents stories with the expressed intent of preparing readers to anticipate and prevent future public management failures. Each story illustrates the importance of principles and best practices to organizational performance. While stories of success are included, the book emphasizes stories of failure as cautionary tales, i.e., examples of the consequences of violating principles and straying from best practices.

The author organizes stories by managerial concept and function. The book includes two managerial concepts (organizational structure and organizational culture) and seven managerial functions (performance management, financial management, human-resource management, procurement management, policymaking, capital management, and information technology management), each receiving treatment in a separate chapter. The author divides each chapter into a set of principles and best practices, endeavoring to provide at least one example for each principle. This effort is unique in that, rather than presenting a few detailed cases to illustrate theories, the author presents 120 short vignettes within the book’s 167 pages.

The book begins with an introductory chapter outlining its purpose, the methodology used to select topics and examples, and a brief review of research on successes and failures. The author

identified stories by searching through *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and the *Raleigh News and Observer* over a four-year period. Additional stories were taken from government reports, books, and other periodicals. Examples of stories include the attacks on 9/11, response to Hurricane Katrina, and the siege of the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, TX. The chapter concludes with a cursory review of research on government successes and failures.

Chapters 2 through 10 examine each of the management concepts and functions in turn. For each chapter, the author provides a brief description of key principles and practices as well as simple summaries of the researched knowledge supporting each principle. The chapters include stories illustrating the successful or unsuccessful implementation of a principle. Throughout the book, all but three principles and practices have accompanying stories. Each chapter concludes with discussion questions intended to “prompt discussion as to how failures happened, how they could have been prevented, and how to replicate successes in other jurisdictions” (Coe, 2018, p. 5).

By design, the stories are presented without the level of detail included in a case study. The lack of detail places several additional demands on the reader. For instance, the stories and commentary imply cause–effect relationships between failure (success) in applying a principle and the situation illustrated by the story. The text rarely supplies evidence in support of these causal relationships, thus placing the burden of proof on the reader. In addition, the stories and commentary do not always connect the illustration to organizational outcomes. For example, the author includes the story of General David Petraeus’ sharing classified information with his mistress to illustrate a failure of organizational culture. The story is presented, however, without an explanation of the link between the general’s behavior and the organization’s culture. Lastly, the lack of detail is likely to inhibit meaningful discussion of post-chapter questions without additional research by students and instructors.

While well written and readable, the text suffers from poor editing. Several typographical errors occur, drastically altering or obscuring the presumed intent of the author. For example, in Chapter 8, when discussing the effects of pollution in the Flint River, the text reads, “When lead leaves the blood, it stays in one’s blood forever” (Coe, 2018, p. 133). In another instance, the text suggests, “The organization should therefore strongly encourage and reward unethical and illegal activities...” (Coe, 2018, p. 98-99). In addition to typographical errors, there is at least one factual error. When discussing pensions and other post-employment benefits, Chapter 6 reads, “Once prevalent, the DC [defined contribution] method is now superseded by the DB [defined benefit] approach, which costs the employer less” (Coe, 2018, p. 93). The reverse, however, is the case with employers replacing defined benefit with defined contribution plans due to the lower cost. These errors can lead to confusion among readers unfamiliar with the topics of discussion.

Despite its limitations, the text provides an excellent reference for instructors searching for real-world examples of key public management concepts and engaging questions for classroom discussion. It is a timely and concise supplement to any standard public management or organizational behavior textbook. The tables cross-referencing each story with the principle it illustrates and mapping the examples to NASPAA’s Universal Competencies are useful for quick referencing and curriculum development. This collection is a much-needed resource for public administration educators searching for illustrations to enhance student learning.

Disclosure Statement

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest that relate to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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