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**1. Title: Developing the Theory of Pragmatic Public Management through Classic Grounded Theory Methodology**

**Authors: Joseph A Hafer**

**Abstract:** Public administration scholars argue that further research is needed to understand ordinary day-to-day behaviors of the traditional government agency in the era of inter-organization collaboration and governance, including reconciling traditional bureaucratic management theories with modern-day cross-sector governance theories. I answered this call by utilizing classic grounded theory methodology to discover and theorize the latent patterns of behavior of such an agency—the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry—via the perspective of public managers. The primary source of data was unstructured interviews with 55 district and assistant district managers from the Bureau, and two interviews with executive directors of statewide nonprofits that frequently engage with the districts. Following the systematic processes of classic grounded theory methodology, I developed a theory called the Theory of Pragmatic Public Management that consists of the core category of Mission-driven Management, its four sub-core categories (Balancing, Advocating Value, Adapting to Uncertainty, and Prudent Collaboration), and two contextual conditions in the form of organization dynamics that impact the system (Organizational Capacity and Organizational Discretion). The theory is a modifiable and transferable theory that entwines traditional intra-organization management and inter-organization collaborative public management behaviors and relies on pragmatist thought for additional conceptual integration. It informs existing public management research that focuses on the day-to-day behaviors of public managers and offers practical insights on public management in the contemporary era of governance.

**2. Title: When Tensions Become Opportunities: Managing Accountability Demands in Collaborative Governance**

**Authors: Seulki Lee**

**Abstract:** Accountability in collaborative governance comprises a tangled web of vertical and horizontal accountability relationships. Although different accountability mechanisms are apparently complementary, they also clash with each other, producing serious accountability tensions. This study explores how actors in collaborative governance experience and manage conflicting accountability demands in the context of a Korean interorganizational network. Using qualitative data based on in-depth interviews with 32 personnel across 10 organizations and document analysis, the study identifies different types of accountability tensions and actors’ strategic responses to them. The analysis reveals that accountability tensions vary across the sources of the demand, and they are more likely to emerge when there are gaps in procedural and institutional arrangements or differences in collaborators’ commitment levels. Findings suggest that accountability tensions inherent to collaborative networks, when harnessed and actively managed, may be viewed as opportunities for advancing the whole network’s mission and improving network accountability. Based on these findings, the study proposes a novel framework for accountability tensions in collaborative governance with propositions about the mechanisms through which accountability tensions emerge and are managed. The study provides insights into the complexities of maintaining accountability in cross-sector, multi-actor networks.

**3.** **Title: The Dynamics of Sources of Knowledge on the Nature of Innovation in the Public Sector: Understanding Incremental and Transformative Innovations in Local Governments**

**Authors: Julio C Zambrano-Gutiérrez, Jose A Puppim de Oliveira**

**Abstract:** Understanding the effects of different sources of knowledge acquisition in public organizations has become widely promoted for overcoming sociotechnical challenges through innovation. This study divided the sources of knowledge into external and internal learning mechanisms to assess their divergent effects on incremental and transformative innovations in 82 local governments involved in green and blue infrastructure projects. First, the study tests whether more diverse external sources of knowledge acquisition are more effective in increasing transformative innovation than internal learning mechanisms. The second proposition tests whether internal changes in organizational routines are associated with incremental rather than transformative innovation. Results from mediation analysis using structural equation models confirm that the initial negative effect of external and internal learning mechanisms on innovation can be eliminated, on the one hand, by engaging in more diverse cross-sector collaborations to increase transformative innovations and, on the other hand, by focusing on changing administrative routines to support incremental innovation.

**4. Title: Following the Paper Trail: Systematically Analyzing Outputs to Understand Collaborative Governance Evolution**

**Authors: Emily V Bell, Tomás Olivier**

**Abstract:** Collaborative governance has emerged as a popular approach to address complex governance problems. In recent years, research within this tradition has studied the linkage between outputs—agreed upon courses of action and outcomes—and the impacts of those actions. Yet, collaborative arrangements (“collaboratives”) are likely to vary depending on their context and policy domain, making it difficult to draw generalizable insights about the linkage between outputs and outcomes. Furthermore, as collaboratives change over time (e.g., by building capacities, gathering resources, and fostering participant engagement), the nature of their respective processes—and outputs—also evolves. We argue that the burgeoning research on collaborative evolution thus needs a way to not only theoretically organize but also to identify what, in practice, reflects collaborative evolution. Assuming that evolution—or change in the collaborative process dynamics—occurs across different milestones (e.g., each iteration of deliberation and planning, successes and failures of implementation, or the participant dynamics therein), we argue that outputs should reflect those changes over time. This study builds on collaborative evolution research by offering a series of propositions on how collaboratives change throughout different periods of their lifecycle. With semiautomated text analysis techniques, we examine how outputs change over time for 10 different regional collaborative planning processes. Specifically, our study focuses on how outputs from each region’s planning process change between two time periods (2009–2011 and 2015–2017) in the state of Georgia. We observe temporal- and arrangement-specific variation in recommended actions and nominations of actors responsible for implementing such outputs. Our evaluation of commonly designed collaboratives convened by the State suggest that certain action types are associated with specific stages of the evolution of a collaborative, as well as case-specific dynamics that occur in individual collaboratives.

**5. Title: The Forest Ranger (and the Legislator): How Local Congressional Politics Shape Policy Implementation in Agency Field Offices**

**Authors: Cory L Struthers, Tyler A Scott, Forrest Fleischman, Gwen Arnold**

**Abstract:** Research on political control over government bureaucracy has primarily focused on direct exercises of power such as appointments, funding, agency design, and procedural rules. In this analysis, we extend this literature to consider politicians who leverage their institutional standing to influence the decisions of local field officials over whom they have no explicit authority. Using the case of the US Forest Service (USFS), we investigate whether field-level decisions are associated with the political preferences of individual congressional representatives. Our sample encompasses 7,681 resource extraction actions initiated and analyzed by 107 USFS field offices between 2005 and 2018. Using hierarchical Bayesian regression, we show that under periods of economic growth and stability, field offices situated in the districts of congressional representatives who oppose environmental regulation initiate more extractive actions (timber harvest, oil and gas drilling, grazing) and conduct less rigorous environmental reviews than field offices in the districts of representatives who favor environmental regulation. By extending existing theories about interactions between politicians and bureaucrats to consider informal means of influence, this work speaks to (1) the role of local political interests in shaping agency-wide policy outcomes and (2) the importance of considering informal and implicit means of influence that operate in concert with explicit control mechanisms to shape bureaucratic behavior.

**6. Title: Linking Organizational Capacity and Performance: The Case of Probation and Medicaid Reform in California Counties**

**Authors: Aeric A H Koerner, Jocelyn M Johnston**

**Abstract:** This article examines whether and how the capacity of a street-level organization moderates its ability to perform effectively in the context of a public program reform. We use the case of California probation departments during the phased implementation of the state’s Low-Income Health Program, a major Medicaid reform that offered critical new services for many probation citizens/clients, namely, mental health and substance abuse treatment. We exploit six years of monthly California county-level probation department data to conduct quasi-experimental difference-in-differences analyses. Results indicate that in those counties that had activated the reform, probation departments with greater capacity achieved higher rates of probation completion success when compared to departments with lower capacity. The analysis implies that organizations improved most when departments benefitted from a combination of reform-generated resources and more robust organizational capacity.

**7. Title: Representative Bureaucracy and Organizational Justice in Mediation**

**Authors: Patrick F Hibbard, Lisa Blomgren Amsler, Michael Scott Jackman**

**Abstract:** Studies of representative bureaucracy (RB) argue public organizations reflective of the public they serve exhibit better outcomes, especially when serving underrepresented groups. RB theory attributes improved outcomes either to the actions representative bureaucrats take (active representation), or a greater perception of trust and legitimacy toward them by service recipients (symbolic representation), largely treating active and symbolic representation as separate phenomena. We explore the intricate relationship between bureaucracies and the populations they serve by observing the cross-influence between active and symbolic representation, as revealed by self-reported outcomes in discrimination complaints (N = 1,372) referred for voluntary mediation in the United States Postal Service, the REDRESS© program, a context in which mediators are highly limited in representing a claimant’s interests given the requirement of impartiality. In exit surveys measuring employee perceptions of organizational justice, we observed the impact of race and gender representation by gauging changes in reported satisfaction when a mediator’s race or gender matched the nature of the complaint in cases of race or sex discrimination and sexual harassment, via multivariate regression estimation. These analyses support RB theory regarding sexual harassment complaints, where complainants rated outcomes significantly more favorably for female mediators. We found a negative correlation between female mediators and sex discrimination complaints, as well as African American mediators and race discrimination complainants. To explain this discrepancy, we argue that interactions between symbolic and active representation determine the expectations and perceptions placed on bureaucrats. When a bureaucrat does not meet those expectations, service recipients tend to have a more negative view of organizational justice outcomes.

**8. Title: Resisting or Facilitating Change? How Street-Level Managers’ Situational Work Contributes to the Implementation of Public Reforms**

**Authors: Lars Klemsdal, Tone Alm Andreassen, Eric Breit**

**Abstract:** Managers of street-level organizations play an important role in the successful implementation of public reforms. A prevailing view within the public administration literature is that this work involves the adaptation between reforms and local contexts, where divergence is viewed as a form of resistance to change. The article challenges this prevalent reform-centric view by introducing a situation-centric perspective and coining the concept of situational work as a significant form of managerial work during implementation. Situational work encompasses managerial actions that ensure functional and well-ordered service delivery in local street-level organizations by accomodating everyday situational contingencies, including reform objectives, but also the interests and expectations of workers, clients, and local service partners. The concept of situational work, then, broadens the recognized scope of managerial activities that contribute to successful reform implementation, reconceptualizing divergence from reform design as constructive rather than as resistance to change. The article draws on an extensive multi-wave study of a major organizational reform in Norway, based on observations of meetings as well as qualitative interviews of managers, union representatives, frontline workers, and collaborating partners in six welfare service offices at three points in time (altogether 23 observation sessions and 173 interviews).

**9. Title: Matching to Categories: Learning and Compliance Costs in Administrative Processes**

**Authors: Donald Moynihan, Eric Giannella, Pamela Herd, Julie Sutherland**

**Abstract:** A perennial task for the state is the creation and policing of categories. State-created categories have real world impacts on the public. The consequences of racial categorizations, for example, are well-documented. We examine a less studied consequence of state categorization, which are the administrative burdens created when individuals attempt to match themselves to state-created categories. Matching requires time and effort, and failure to match to an advantageous category can mean a loss of material benefits. The matching problem may sometimes result from obscure categories, or an overwhelming number of categories. The matching problem is also amplified when the state uses identity categories—such as self-employed or unemployed, a retiree, parent, spouse or disabled—where individuals hold pre-existing beliefs about such identities that map poorly onto equivalent state categorizations. To study the matching problem and ways to reduce it, we undertook a field experiment in a California welfare program, CalFresh, the state version of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Claimants often fail to select into the category of “self-employed” even though it would be more favorable for them to do so. We show how a more intuitive presentation of information about the category and its benefits increased the rate of those identifying as self-employed from 8.8% to 12.1%, approximately one-third. We also show that providing a simple self-attestation template to convey information about self-employment status, a means of reducing compliance costs while meeting state documentation requirements, increased the number of claimants providing an acceptable form of documentation to match to the category. The results show that people frequently lack an intuitive understanding of state categories, that the presentation of categories can reduce this matching problem, and that the state can make it easier to document the match.

**10. Title: The Enduring Role of Sector: Citizen Preferences in Mixed Markets**

**Authors: Eva M Witesman, Chris Silvia, Curtis Child**

**Abstract:** What role does sector play in citizens’ perceptions of products or services in mixed-market settings? Where governments compete with for-profit and nonprofit vendors, or when governments partner or contract with private-sector providers, do the public and nonprofit sectors have an advantage over for-profit providers? Do the public and nonprofit sectors have an advantage over for-profit providers? Using choice-based conjoint analysis with a nationally representative paid consumer panel, we examine the relevance of sector to consumers and compare it other signals of quality; namely, price, third-party certifications, and consumer ratings. Of these, subjects are most sensitive to information from consumer ratings. Regarding sector, we find that subjects generally prefer nonprofit to government providers and government to for-profit providers. Sector is most relevant to consumers in low-information environments when the quality of a product or service is otherwise unclear. We extend theory by proposing four possible mechanisms for the differential value of sector to consumers (process quality, product quality, expertise quality, and moral quality).

**11. Title: Individual Agency in Street-Level Bureaucrats’ Implementation of Policy Reforms: The Role of Their Policy Evaluation and Self-efficacy**

**Authors: Søren C Winter, Maria Falk Mikkelsen, Peter Rohde Skov**

**Abstract:** This paper develops and tests a parsimonious micro-theory of street-level bureaucrats’ individual implementation behavior. By systemizing and synthesizing theoretical insights from Ajzen’s theory of planned behavior, from Bandura’s theory of perceived self-efficacy, and from implementation literature, we claim that street-level bureaucrats’ policy implementation behavior is a function of their individual evaluation of the efficacy of the policy and of their own ability to implement the policy measures in terms of their perceived self-efficacy. We test our theory on a panel data set capturing teachers’ implementation of the wide-scale Danish public school reform of 2014. We use administrative data and a five-wave panel survey (2014–18) of 2,055 teachers in approx. 200 schools as well as their school leaders. Our results confirm the importance of teachers’ perceived policy efficacy and of their perceived self-efficacy for their implementation behavior. When, as shown in this study, street-level bureaucrats’ individual evaluations of a policy and their own perceived abilities shape their implementation behaviors, street-level bureaucrats become even more important individual policymakers than depicted in most research on street-level bureaucrats that mainly focuses on structural determinants of their behaviors rather than individual factors.