

Advancing Public Management: New Developments in Theory, Methods, and Practice



Review Author[s]:
William Eric Davis

The American Political Science Review, Vol. 95, No. 4 (Dec., 2001), 994-995.

Stable URL:
<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-0554%28200112%2995%3A4%3C994%3AAPMNDI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Z>

The American Political Science Review is currently published by American Political Science Association.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/about/terms.html>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/journals/apsa.html>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is an independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating and preserving a digital archive of scholarly journals. For more information regarding JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

homogeneous parties one finds in Congress today are the result of fewer cross-pressured members. This in turn is the result of more homogeneous congressional districts and the party realignment in the South since the advent of voting rights for African Americans. Endorsing the theory of "conditional party government" developed by Aldrich and Rohde, Bond and Fleisher conclude that the current situation may be subject to change if the condition of more homogeneous preferences within the party majority changes. But the higher level of partisanship in Congress has not reduced the responsiveness of legislators to their constituents, or eliminated party mavericks who can swing the outcome of a close vote, or produced gridlock, even in situations of divided government. Although the interchanges may be nastier and the policymaking process more difficult, policy decisions are nonetheless reached.

As is the case with many studies of this sort, the Senate is not seriously considered in most of the pieces, and this is a serious omission as we seek to understand the implications of changes in partisanship for congressional-presidential relations. Left unanswered, as well, is how much of the decline in civility and the intensified partisanship is attributable to the personalities involved. Certainly, the visceral hatred of Bill Clinton that the Republican leadership displayed had as much to do with his personal characteristics as with his essentially centrist ideology.

Anthologies are always chancy, but this one is a must read. The chapters are of high quality, present original data and original arguments, and fit together nicely. As a whole, they demonstrate that changes in partisanship and party organization do matter in Congress, at least in the House, and they provide an important counterpoint to theories that tend to minimize the role of party in favor of an exclusive focus on individual legislators and their preferences.

Advancing Public Management: New Developments in Theory, Methods, and Practice. Edited by Jeffrey L. Brudney, Laurence J. O'Toole, Jr., and Hal G. Rainey. Washington, DC, Georgetown University Press, 2000. 320p. \$65.00.

William Eric Davis, *University of California, Riverside*

What is the role of public managers, and do they matter? How should we study public management? Which strategies for reform and innovation hold potential for improving the success of public agencies? Which frameworks hold the most potential for advancing the field of public management? These four questions represent the organization and themes of the book reviewed here.

If addressed competently, each question can advance public management's ability to deliver on promises, improve service, and better satisfy public demands. More important, we will know whether success is being achieved in those respects. The book's greatest strength lies in its diversity of approaches, methods, and frameworks. The opening chapters are devoted to the role of managers and illustrate the difficulties of measuring the effect of management. The most appealing aspect of Part I is that it seeks a greatly expanded definition of management, which for many years was simply considered something that managers did. This created conceptual and empirical difficulties. Part I also supports the notion that there can be no single recipe for management success. Much depends upon the external and internal contexts.

Laurence O'Toole sees a need for a broader but workable

definition of management. For a broad definition to be workable, we must assume that a manager "does something" that gives an indication of the limits of organizational structure and the limits of employees. Following up on that, Anne Khademian asserts in chapter 3 that cultures tend to be deeply ingrained and difficult to shape, which limits the effect of management. Her suggestion is to acknowledge even more directly that culture is part of an organization's institution, which implies that neoinstitutionalist literature may hold the best promise for future advances. Her chapter reflects the somewhat pessimistic assertion that culture does not so much represent a management tool as offer a way to understand the institutional context. That is, the culture will suggest whether there is a possibility for organizational governance or change.

Thomas Hammond and Jack Knott use spatial theory to specify the conditions under which public agency managers can move policy in their preferred direction. Spatial theory requires simplifying assumptions that open it to attack for being unrealistic, thus impractical. Nonetheless, the goal of Hammond and Knott is to show the conditions under which an independent regulatory agency head can have influence in one or two policy dimensions, given the ideal preference positions of, respectively, the House, Senate, and president. Using their version of McKelvey's "chaos theorem," (Richard D. McKelvey, "Intransitivities in Multidimensional Voting Models and Some Implications for Agenda Control," *Journal of Economic Theory* 12 [1976]: 472-82), they do a good job of illustrating how agency heads, under certain narrow conditions, can achieve policy change closer to their preferred ideal point. They outline the environmental conditions and the particular individual skills that allow such an effect. An agent must be smart enough to know the size, shape, and location of the unbeatable "core" of policy space as well as when it is advantageous to preempt the House, Senate, or president by taking initiative. S/he must be an effective persuader and know how to frame issues to maximize policy advantage. In sum (although the authors do not put it this way), the agency head must know how to manipulate.

Hammond and Knott present a purely formal theory, so they do not indicate the proportion of managers who meet the specified assumptions or do the things they list as important to success. Thus, they do not (and do not seek to) offer a definitive answer regarding whether managers matter. They simply note when the potential exists. Furthermore, since the manager in their example heads an independent regulatory commission with rulemaking power, s/he can act almost unilaterally and force the House, Senate, and president to meet the specified assumptions and seek to persuade the agency head, rather than vice versa. Perhaps a more dynamic model is needed that incorporates the actions and reactions of all four major participants plus some component to represent the limitations on the agency head imposed by other endogenous and exogenous factors (culture, structure, and so on).

Part II is devoted to methodological issues and addresses how we should study public management. Often in statistical analysis we run the models, report the results, and walk away from the project without closer inspection of outliers. The chapter by Kenneth Meier, Jeff Gill, and George Waller asserts that traditional statistical techniques do not serve scholars of public management very well because they are interested in high and poor performers, rather than the "typical" case identified by traditional ordinary least-squares regression. They advocate the use of substantively weighted least squares (SWLS), which weights each case according to substantive performance. High-performing school districts were identified with a studentized residual selection criterion.

For subsequent analysis they were weighted more heavily than typical and poor performers. The authors similarly identified "failures" and analyzed them separately after also weighting them according to performance.

The point of the Meier et al. project was to remove average performers from the analyses entirely. A comparison between the two groups showed that high-performing districts in each category (high optimizers versus failures) were able to get better performance from various resources (increases in state aid, higher teacher salaries and instruction funds) than other districts. This chapter is certainly worth the attention of public management scholars. It might be interesting, however, to run the models (after applying their selection criterion) and weight each case by its standardized residual, rather than the somewhat arbitrary levels they chose. Nonetheless, their contribution supports the book's theme that there can be no single recipe for improving success.

Chapter 7 represents an interesting qualitative strategy for learning about "street-level" workers in public agencies. Steven Maynard-Moody and Suzanne Leland asked line bureaucrats to tell stories about fairness, working with clients, and life in the agency. The chapter would have been improved if subjects had been asked to tell a story about when they exercised judgment and it led to success, to tell a story about a personal exercise in judgment that led to failure, and to state their beliefs about why. This not only would examine more directly decisions and discretion but also would allow better theorizing about factors that contribute to success. Nonetheless, this omission does not detract from their major premise concerning the utility of stories as a learning tool.

Part III concerns strategies for reform and innovation that hold potential for improving the success of public agencies. It rejects the conventional lay wisdom that public agencies are resistant to change but notes many obstacles to it. The major task for the authors is to make sure change is reasoned. Eugene McGregor offers a new vocabulary and three heuristic devices. He asserts that a common language and conceptualization will improve the odds of bringing about desired change. His chapter is written more for the practical manager than the scholar, but both will find useful items. The other chapters in Part III offer their own frameworks for identifying obstacles to innovation and avenues for change. They mostly agree that the obstacles are formidable. One theme that appears in various places is the importance of culture, which is ignored by managers at the risk/cost of failure.

Part IV emphasizes general frameworks and is the strongest section theoretically. The focus is on frameworks that hold the most potential for advancing knowledge and practice. The chapter by Patricia Ingraham and Amy Kneedler is partly a summary of the literature, but it also offers a "performance model" for describing the key relationships and systems in public agency management. They take us inside the famous, or perhaps infamous, "black box" of public management in an attempt to understand what takes place within.

How competently does the book address the four organizing questions? The question about the role of a public manager and whether managers matter is never really answered. Instead, we learn that managers have the potential to have an effect, notwithstanding certain types of limitations. The contributors do not directly attempt to define that effect, although they intuitively assert that managers matter, but the section is really geared toward explaining why stronger answers have not yet been provided. Since that question is vastly more difficult and complex than the other three, the authors are to be forgiven for emphasizing the "role" of

managers over whether they matter. The other parts of the book come closer to providing answers to their respective questions.

Veto Bargaining: Presidents and the Politics of Negative Power. By Charles M. Cameron. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 292p. \$59.95 cloth, \$18.95 paper.

Charles Tien, *Hunter College, CUNY*

Veto Bargaining is an important book and a pleasure to read. It is important because it takes us a long way in understanding presidential veto politics. The power of the veto is a foundation of the checks-and-balances system and the separation of powers, and it is surprising that so few data have been collected on it. This book is a pleasure to read because it provides a framework for understanding the many absorbing veto cases it includes. For example, Cameron shows that congressional uncertainty about the president's acceptable policy preferences can help the president wrest policy concessions from Congress. This helps us understand why Truman vetoed Republican tax cuts three times during the 80th Congress. By the time legislators found the right package to attract an override majority, the Truman vetoes had forced Congress to concede 15% off the cut for the wealthiest Americans.

Cameron frames veto bargaining within the context of separation of powers, which summons institutional battles over policy especially during divided government. The main tool at the disposal of presidents during these battles with Congress is the veto. Cameron points out that presidents have been ready and willing to use this tool when government is divided and when the legislative stakes are high. More important, he shows that the veto has been a very effective factor in bargaining with Congress. Its use or threat has allowed presidents to wrestle policy concessions from Congress.

Theoretical work argues that veto power is limited and asymmetric: It allows presidents to get less out of Congress than what Congress wants to give but no more than what Congress wants to give. Cameron builds on earlier models and introduces uncertainty (about the policy preferences of the president and about the pivotal member of Congress whose vote can override a veto) into the veto bargaining game. The result is the view that veto power is "much more consequential than is commonly believed" (p. 26).

There is much to like about the book. The rational choice models are grounded in real-world politics. The research is more than a series of mathematical exercises and increases our understanding of veto bargaining. The applied rational choice models provide new intuition about veto politics between Congress and the president. Furthermore, Cameron's book should quiet critics who argue that empirical testing of the rational choice models is inadequate. The models developed in chapter 4 are thoroughly tested empirically in chapter 6, with original data, and in chapters 8 and 9, with many succinct case studies.

The amount of original data collected for this book is impressive and informative. Cameron compiled event histories of 434 vetoes from 1945 to 1992. These reveal that most vetoes occur during divided government (71%); very few appropriations bills are vetoed (8%, or 34 total); and a significant number of vetoes occur in chains (41%), that is, either Congress passes another version of the bill, or the president vetoes the bill more than once. Cameron also classifies all bills passed between 1945 and 1994 into one of four categories according to their significance. From these