

Integrative Publicness: A Framework for Public Management Strategy and Performance

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ABSTRACT

“Empirical publicness” explains organizations on the basis of their mix of political and economic authority, whereas “normative publicness” seeks to identify, prescribe or infuse public values. The scholarly traditions developed by these two types of publicness have tended not to overlap and for very good reason—blending empirical and normative theory and purpose is a problem of longstanding, one presenting practical and epistemological challenges. We seek to integrate these two different publicness theories with the goal of shedding light on public organization theory but also to provide a heuristic framework useful for strategic management of organizations. We illustrate the approach and its assumptions in the context of the domain of technology-based economic development policies. We consider the prospects and potential for integrating normative and empirical theories of organization.

If we define publicness as “the degree to which organizations are affected by political authority” (Bozeman 1987, xi), then we can surmise that publicness theory has early roots in classical political economy, a long-established, venerable field.

One of the earliest published studies of political economy is Antoine de Montchrétien’s (1651) *Traité de l’économie politique* (*Treatise on Political Economy*), published more than 200 years before the birth of Max Weber, arguably the first systematic administration scholar. De Montchrétien’s work set a tone for the next two centuries’ view (e.g., Smith 1759; 1976) of political economy as a moral theory of society, but one with an empirical basis.

“Empirical publicness” seeks to *explain* organizations and their management, in contradistinction to “normative publicness,” which seeks to infuse values or to *prescribe*. Until recently, contemporary publicness theory in public administration has been chiefly empirical in its orientation, owing more to Wamsley and Zald (1973) than to Montchrétien. Although the term publicness was not widely used in public administration until the 1980s (Bozeman 1984, 1987), the idea that organizations should be viewed in terms of their mix of external political and economic influences was developed not only by Wamsley and Zald but also Lindblom (1977) and much earlier by Dahl and Lindblom (1953). Recently, some

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public administration scholars have begun to take a values-based approach to understanding publicness (e.g., De Bruijn and Dicke 2006; Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007; van der Wal and Huberts 2008; van Gestel et al. 2008). Although coming from different starting points, these studies have in common is a concern with public values and a limited regard for the legal or ownership aspects of the organization.

In this article, we aspire to move “backward” to the aims of classical political economy: an integration of normative and empirical theory. The purpose of this article is to develop a richer, more fully articulated approach to publicness theory, an approach that (1) shows the linkage of normative and empirical theories of publicness and realized public values, (2) presents a revised publicness typology and discusses its implications for public organization theory, and (3) provides an extended example showing of the use of an integrated publicness model as long-range planning tool in dynamic policy environments. In developing the integrated publicness approach our central question is: How does integrated publicness affect organization and public management theory? In answering that question, we consider the utility of integrated publicness as a tool for strategic management and as a management lever on public organizational performance.

EMPIRICAL PUBLICNESS THEORY

The idea that organizations of all types are strongly influenced by both economic and political forces is not a new one. In particular, Lindblom (1977) and Dahl and Lindblom (1953) provided path breaking theoretical analyses underscoring not only the joint influence of political and economic authority but also the role of legitimacy in shaping “publicness” (though they did not use that term). Wamsley and Zald (1973) focus on social control as mediated in a political economy and develop a typology to show how a politics and economics affect organizations. Following Dahl and Lindblom, Wamsley, and Zald view political influences in terms of its basis in legitimacy but also concern themselves with political and organizational power. Political influence, as defined by Wamsley and Zald, is not only generated by government influence, but also by competitors, interest groups, interested citizens, beneficiaries, and for private corporations, even shareholders.

Empirical publicness emerged in the 1980s and differed somewhat from political economy orientations by emphasizing the dimensional nature of political and economic authority and focusing on the effects of these dimensions (e.g., resource publicness, personnel publicness) on a variety of organization behaviors and outcomes. From the outset, publicness theory faced two intellectual battle fronts, one side the political science and public administration scholars who had taken the uniqueness of public organizations as an obvious truism (Appleby 1945) and, on the other side, organization theorists who disregarded public status altogether, contending that any empirical difference between public organizations and private ones is owing to misunderstanding and researchers’ errors in model specification (Meyer 1982).

Fortuitously, the emergence of publicness theory coincided with foundational empirical research comparing public and private organizations. When Rainey, Backoff, and Levine (1976) published their landmark review of public and private organizational differences, only a handful of the studies reviewed had provided evidence based on systematic data, either qualitative or quantitative. By the end of the 1980s, the situation was very different, with more than a score of evidence-based articles having been published on the topic (for an overview, see Rainey and Bozeman 2000). Almost all these published

studies reported significant differences between public and private organizations and their managers on such diverse topics as motivation, job satisfaction and commitment, and levels of organizational red tape (see Rainey 2009 for an overview of these public-private comparison studies).

From its beginnings, publicness theory found little common ground with generic organization theory and has been much more closely aligned with the public administration of the distinctiveness of public organizations. The first systematic comparison of dimensional publicness against ownership or legal status (Bozeman and Bretschneider 1994) found that *both* were important but that they predicted different aspects of organizations behavior.

Since that late 1980s period during which empirical publicness theory was being introduced in public administration, a number of scholars have viewed publicness theory as a means of broadening the public administration franchise, developing ideas relevant not only to government organizations but also to business (Goldstein and Naor 2005; Moulton 2009), hybrid (Emmert and Crow 1988) and, especially, nonprofit organizations (Isett and Provan 2005; Lee 2004; Nutt and Backoff 1993).

Premises of Empirical Publicness Theory

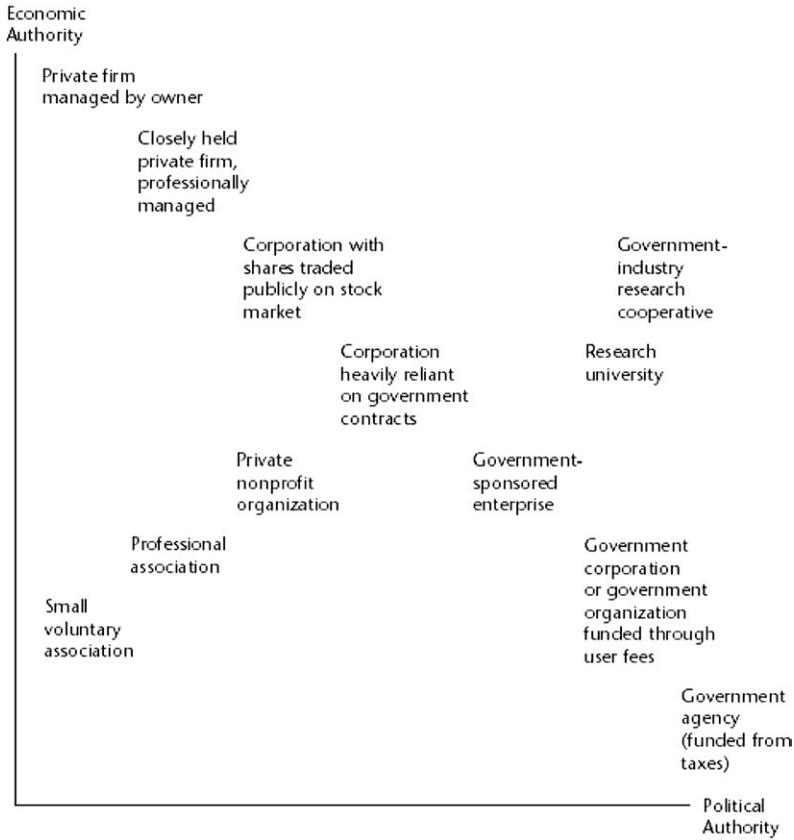
According to Bozeman's (1987, 2007) dimensional theory of publicness, publicness is best defined according to the degree of political authority constraints *and* endowments affecting organizations. Thus, political authority may limit the organization or it can rationalize, enable, and enhance it. Similarly, an institution's "privateness" may be viewed according to the degree of *market* authority constraints and endowments affecting the institution. All organizations are subject to influences of publicness and privateness and they vary in the degree to which they are subject to each. This variation permits one to identify organizations as "more private" or "more public," not only as a whole but also with respect to key organizational dimensions such as resource base publicness or personnel publicness.

The fundamental premises of publicness are easily depicted. Bozeman provided a two dimensional grid, based on the economic and political authority affecting organizations, suggesting that organizations could be arrayed on the grid and that the position on the grid (representing mix of political and economic authority) would distinguish organizations and help predict their attributes and performance. Although the publicness grid provided a simple means of conveying the most essential aspects of publicness and has been employed, often in somewhat modified form (for example, see Rainey 2009), it is nonetheless embodied of the original theory and requires substantial reworking to have any utility for subsequent theory. Figure 1 (from Bozeman 1987) provides the publicness grid in its original form. Though familiar, we present it here because we subsequently modify the grid and use it as a platform for integrating normative and empirical publicness.

Research on Dimensional Publicness

Several studies that have advanced publicness well beyond Bozeman's (1987) original theoretical conception (Antonsen and Jørgensen 1997; Boyne 2002; Haque 2001; Moulton 2009; Pesch 2008). Empirical publicness has been used as a framework for a wide variety of conceptual and data-based studies on topics including strategic management (e.g., Bozeman and Straussman 1990; Nutt and Backoff 1993), deployment of information technology (e.g., Bretschneider 1990; Carte et al. 2006; Rocheleau and Wu 2002), decision

Figure 1
Empirical Publicness Grid



Source: Adapted from Bozeman (1987).

making (e.g., Coursey and Bozeman 1990; Jennings 1996; Nutt 2006), administrative procedures, and government reform (Dutta and Heining 1999), organizational networks (Isett and Provan 2005), ethics (Wheeler and Brady 1998; Wittmer and Coursey 1996), operations management (Goldstein and Naor 2005), and even as part of a larger governance model predicting policy and/or program outcomes across sectors (Heinrich and Fournier 2004; Moulton 2007, 2009). In a distinctive application of the dimensional publicness model, Demortain (2004) argues that publicness can also be viewed as a symbol that official actors and other stakeholders, regardless of sector, seek to shape and exploit.

The first empirical research employing a dimensional publicness model was Bozeman's (1984) of aerospace firms. This study focused on resources—operationalizing publicness in terms of the mix of market-based versus government-based resources. The historically grounded study showed that the level of publicness (defined as resource publicness) affecting aerospace policy and firms in the industry changed remarkably over

the years but that one could track the degree to which, respectively, political forces and market forces shaped outcomes. Considering dependence on government contracts, the range at the time of the study the range was between 18% and 99% and study suggested ways in which these very different levels of publicness affected the behaviors and composition of aerospace firms.

Bozeman and Bretschneider (1994) provided one of the few studies operationalizing publicness in terms of multiple dimensions. They examined the mix of market and political authority impacts on not only resources but also goal setting, composition of personnel, and structure and technology. The study was limited, however, by the fact that it focused only on one functional type of organizations, those performing research and development. Further, political authority was largely viewed as a function of government interaction or constraint (e.g., communications with government, perceived importance of government, and funding from government sources).

Most studies of dimensional publicness have focused on institutions, organizations, and their management. However, the model seems just as applicable to policies and policy implementation and has been used to understand the mix of economic and political authority in specific policy domains such as science and technology policy (Crow and Bozeman 1998), mass transit (Boschken 1992), substance abuse (Heinrich and Fournier 2004), and mortgage lending (Moulton 2007, 2009). Indeed, we can think of almost any set of government policies and programs (as well, for that matter, firms' policies) as representing and responding to a distinctive mix of political and market forces. Quite possibly, different policy issues require not only different publicness measures but perhaps a different way of thinking about publicness—as we suggest in a section below.

NORMATIVE PUBLICNESS

“Normative publicness” is defined as “an approach to values analysis assuming that a knowledge of the political and economic authority of institutions and policies is a prerequisite of understanding the potential of institutions and policies to achieve public values and to work toward public interest ideals” (Bozeman 2007, 18). Recent work in public management theory employs normative publicness to a variety of purposes. Some scholars seek an infusion of public values into management, regardless of whether the provider of goods and services is government, contractors, or public enterprise (e.g., De Bruijn and Dicke 2006; Feeney and Bozeman 2007; van der Wal and Huberts 2008; van Gestel et al. 2008). A related stream of research operationalizes publicness through public values, most recently termed normative publicness (Antonsen and Jørgensen 1997; van der Wal et al. 2008; Bozeman 2002, 2007; Bozeman and Sarewitz 2005, 2011; Haque 2001; Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007).

Bozeman (2007) defines public values as those values “providing normative consensus about (a) the rights, benefits, and prerogatives to which citizens should (and should not) be entitled; (b) the obligations of citizens to society, the state, and one another; and (c) the principles on which government policies should be based” (131). Just as organizations and policies can be evaluated by the extent to which they are constrained or enabled by political and economic authority, policies and organizations can also be evaluated by the extent to which they achieve public (and/or market) values. In a recent article, Moulton (2009) describes this process as the realization of public values or realized publicness. Further, although government institutions may embody public values and thus constrain organizations

to provide for such values through funding or regulation, other institutions and individuals can also provide constraint toward public values (Bozeman 2007; Moulton 2009; van der Wal et al. 2008).

Melding Empirical and Normative Publicness

Only recently has publicness theory begun to guide empirical research on public values, not only in case studies (Feeney and Bozeman 2007; Furneaux, Brown, and Allan 2008; Jørgensen and Bozeman 2002; Steenhuisen and van Eeten 2008) but also in questionnaire-based work (e.g., van der Wal, De Graaf, and Lasthuizen 2008; van der Wal and Huberts 2008) and large-scale analysis of aggregate data (Moulton 2007; Moulton and Bozeman 2008).

There are several key rationales for incorporating public values into discussions of public management (Bozeman 2007), including:

- 1 public value is something more than collective private value,
- 2 much of importance is missing in market-based expressions of public value,
- 3 the fact that public value or public interest are ideals is not a sufficient justification for ignoring them or assuming they cannot be systematically studied, and
- 4 (perhaps most controversially) government service sometimes offers something not easily attainable in operations and participation in efficient markets, namely individuals' commitment to the collective good.

Although the tools of normative publicness to date have focused primarily on public values, the concept of normative publicness begs a natural integration with empirical publicness via political and economic authority.

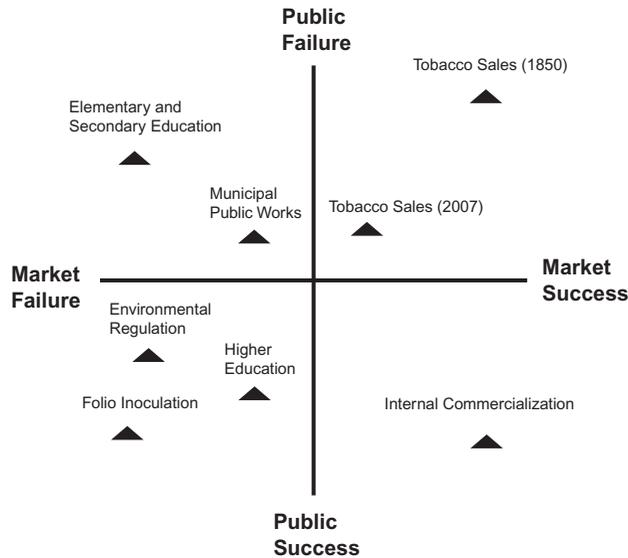
The Public Value Mapping Model

Public value mapping (PVM) is intended to identify failures to provide essential public values, regardless of market failures. "Public value failure occurs when neither the market nor the public sector provides goods and services required to achieve public values" (Bozeman 2007, 144). Similar to market failure models, PVM is based on public value criteria, with eight criteria proposed by Bozeman (2002, 2007) ranging from values articulation and aggregation to threats to dignity and sustenance. Rather than pitting public value failure and market failure at two ends of an extreme continuum, both are situated on a PVM grid, allowing for four different combinations of public failure/public success and market failure/market success. Policies, strategies (or even organizations) can be positioned on the grid, to demonstrate the extent to which they achieve market and public values.

Figure 2, below, provides a basic depiction of this grid, where each of the triangular objects represents a value of some sort, perhaps an individual value or perhaps a social or public value (see Bozeman 2007, 157).

As we see below, the combining of the empirical publicness grid and the PVM grid provides a heuristic for planning and strategic decision-making supporting an integrative publicness approach.

Figure 2
Public Failure Model



INTEGRATED PUBLICNESS: A HEURISTIC FOR PUBLIC MANAGERS' STRATEGIC THINKING PLANNING

Public managers often ask some form of this question: “given the organization’s mission or objective what are the resources I have available for achieving prescribed public values” (i.e., *normative* publicness)? *Empirical* publicness directs the public manager to another set of resources: institutional environment and organizational configurations and designs (Moulton 2009; Shangraw and Crow 1989).

A focus on sets of organizations and their environments is less common than is consideration of people, funding, and technology. Perhaps sets of organizations and institutions are less often addressed systematically because the concern straddles public policy and public management. Perhaps the failure to give much attention to analysis of institutions is owing to the fact that high-level strategic questions are asked all too rarely in public administration (Bryson and Roering 1988). But one limitation to such strategic thinking is a lack of appropriate analytical tools. Possibly, integrated publicness can help in this respect.

Let us consider how an application of integrated publicness could proceed. One begins with a set of public values, presumably related to an organization’s mission, and (a) examines the status quo mix of institutions’ and organizations’ political and economic endowments and constraints, (b) examines the extent to which, under the status quo, relevant public and social values are attained (realized), aiming to (c) develop new institutional designs or interventions suitable to (d) produce new outcomes more in align with a preferred set of values and desired outcomes. The approach described is not new (Caws 1967; Solomon 1994); rather it is a variation of applied social science, the sort of application

of social theory to context prescribed by Gouldner (1956) many years ago, later embodied in "adaptive organizational learning" (Dosi et al. 1999; Tyre and von Hippel 1997).

APPLICATION: THE CASE OF STATE GOVERNMENTS' TECHNOLOGY-BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The prospects for an integrated publicness, joining values, and empiricism, are perhaps best communicated with an extensive example. Our hypothetical example comes from state governments' technology-based economic development (TBED) programs (Malecki 1991; Feller 1992, 1997). Although our illustration is within an US public policy context, core questions of TBED and their regional impacts have many shared aspects among developed nations (Carree et al. 2002).

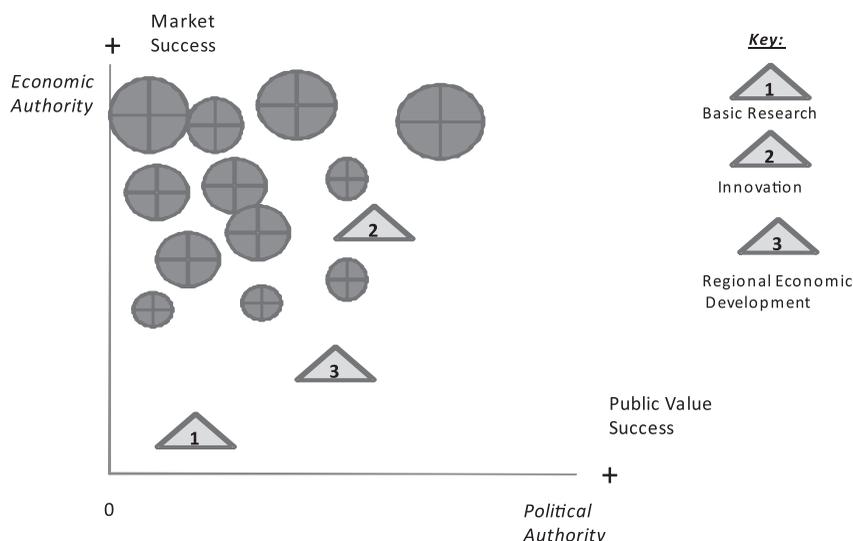
State governments with large economies, such as New York, California, and Illinois, but also smaller states such as North Dakota and Vermont, have for years invested in economic development and in nearly every case, a key element of economic development strategy has been use of science and technology to spur innovation, new firm development, and revitalization of older businesses. State programs are diverse, with economic development budgets ranging from a few million dollars to more than 100 million, but regardless of scale, programs tend to focus on a few well-known policy and institutional mechanisms including technology incubators, research parks, technology transfer centers, and university-anchored "centers of excellence" promoting university-industry technology partnerships (for historical overview, see Plosila 2004).

Researchers (e.g., Brace 1993; Kingsley, Bozeman, and Coker 1996; Feller 2004) have shown that factors affecting regional economic development are numerous and extraordinarily complex. Although state technology policies can sometimes have significant impacts (e.g., Lee 1998; Jones 1990), there is abundant evidence that other factors are almost always more important determinants of state economic development (for an overview, see Fisher 1997). Such factors as the character of the state's labor force (Johnson 1970; Riefler 2007), its supportive infrastructure (Duffy-Deno and Eberts 1991; Munnell 1992), and its quality of public education (Gottlieb and Fogarty 2003; Quan and Beck 1987) are almost always more important. Moreover, the state's taxation policy is likely to have a much greater impact on economic development (Helms 1985; Papke 1991) than any technology policy, no matter how designed and how successful it may be. State technology policies work at the margins (Plosila 2004). That is why so many state government policies speak of using policy to "leverage" economic development (US Department of Commerce, Office of Technology Policy 2001).

How then can PVM, based on an integrative model of publicness, provide a valid assessment of the effects of policy and intervention strategies on realized public values? In sections above, we reviewed two simple analytical depictions, one pertaining to empirical publicness (the publicness grid) and the other to public values/normative publicness (the public failure model). PVM provides an overlay of the two, providing a framework for developing hypotheses and strategies related to the mix of institutional publicness and public values to a preferred outcome. As such, it is a self-conscious strategic management tool, an approach to be tested alongside others (e.g., Meier et al. 2007).

Consider the illustrative case of figure 3. In this case, we have posited three interconnected realized public values (corresponding to missions), ones not without precedent in state government's TBED programs (see National Conference of State Legislatures 2000).

Figure 3
Integrative Publicness Model



The realized values include (a) enhancing basic research, (b) innovation, and (c) regional economic development. Most state economic development programs include explicit policy statements indicating they seek to achieve the values. Many such programs are premised on underlying policy logic, one that has some support in theory and research. The logic is as follows: (a) there is a shortfall of basic research owing to the inability of firms fully to reap their investments in research closer to the public spectrum (Arrow 2000; Nelson 1959), (b) increased basic research will ultimately lead to increased innovation (Joglekar and Hamburg 1983; Pavitt 2001; Salter and Martin 2001), and (c) more innovation will lead to regional economic growth, including not only more sales and direct stimulation of the regional economy (Cooke 2001; Malecki 1991) but also, ultimately, more jobs and increase yield in state revenue (through increases in income, corporate and sales taxes) (Feldman et al. 2005).

Despite some evidence in their favor, each of the above assumptions is problematic and research pertaining to this particular policy logic remains inconclusive (see Feller 1988; Bozeman 2000). However, the veracity of the assumptions is less important for present purposes than is the fact that the so-called “linear model” expressed above is still very much in evidence in public policy thinking, though sometimes in a slightly modified form (Etzkowicz 2006). Most states’ TBED programs have been premised on the idea that stimulating basic research will lead to technological innovation and that innovations’ economic benefits will, in turn, be captured in the individual state’s (or at least a multistate regional) economy. The confounding facts that applied research seems more often to give rise to technological innovation (Mansfield and Lee 1966) and that innovations’ benefits often are extremely difficult to contain geographically (Niosi and Zhegu 2005) do not in most instances have sufficient force to undercut the traditional linear model. Although certainly

not universal, one can point to many instances of convergence between technology-induced firm growth and attained public values, certainly public values directly related to or dependent upon regional economic development (Reese and Fasenfest 1997).

Figure 3 is an overlay of the publicness grid and the public failure model introduced above.

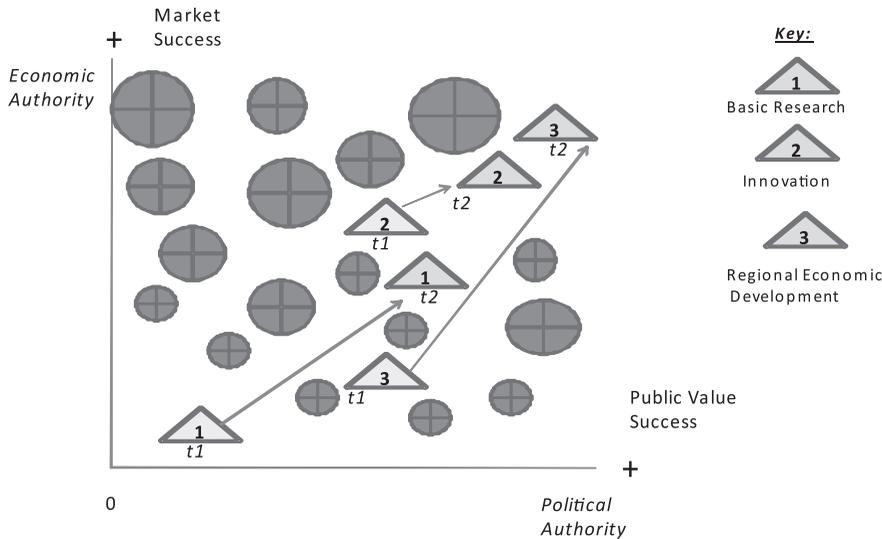
Let us assume that the circles represent firms and that the size of the circles represent firm profits at the particular point in time represented by this static figure. As indicated in the figure, the triangles represent the three realized public values, basic research, innovation, and regional economic development. The numbers within the triangles indicate a hypothesized link in a value chain—that basic research leads to innovation, and innovation leads to regional economic development. Although the figure neither supports nor disconfirms the linear causal logic, we can infer the following from the hypothetical data in figure 3:

- 1 Most firms have a moderate to strong basis in economic authority and (with one notable exception) no basis or a moderate basis in political authority.
- 2 The most profitable firms tend to have a strongest basis in economic authority (with one notable exception).
- 3 The realized public value of basic research has met with little success, as has the realized public value of regional economic development, and the goal of innovation has met with moderate success.

A public manager or policy maker armed with this descriptive information could perhaps engage in the following reasoning: (1) among the three public values provided, the end state, realized public value is regional economic development; both basic research and innovation are instrumental realized values leading to the achievement of the end state realized value; (2) the end state value of regional economic development is not achieved at a satisfactory level; (3) an important cause of the suboptimal level of the realization of the regional economic development value is insufficient innovation and this, in turn, is caused by low levels of basic research provided by market-dominated firms. Similarly, the policy maker could perhaps arrive at the following prescription: (a) we can increase basic research by providing university-based “centers of excellence programs” that make universities more attractive as partners for business (Poyago-Theotoky et al. 2002), (b) these new partnerships will occur and will result in greater innovation, (c) these innovations will lead to new products and services, the development of new companies and the expansions of old ones, leading to ultimately to enhanced levels of regional economic development (Etzkowitz 2008; Malecki 1991).

Now let us close the circle and consider how this extended example relates to the development of an integrative theory of publicness. Succinctly: public managers, including those responsible for state economic development programs, have public value goals they pursue and they expect that the configuration and performance of institutional actors (e.g., firms, universities, and government agencies) relate to those goals. Much like classical political economists, public managers are both empirical theorists and normative theorists and typically do not separate those tasks. One might prefer that public managers have a stronger information base than the one described in our illustration, but those preferences fly in the face of day-to-day decision making where the cost of information is great and the demands on the public manager are extensive (Bernier and Hafsi 2007; Lau et al. 1980).

Figure 4
Dynamic Model of Integrative Publicness



The approach we are suggesting will not prove useful for the decision of the moment. But by developing a stock of research and conceptualizations relating institutional change to outcomes, it may be possible to inform longer range policy strategies. In this connection, let us consider figure 4, a reworking of the previous figure. Although still quite simple, figure 4 shows the movement of realized public values over time. Some state economic development managers already have benchmark or time series data pertaining to innovation, basic research, and regional economic development. Sometimes these data are quite specific and include new technology-based start-ups, tax receipts from new business, patent rates, and firms' research expenditures.

The underlying logic of a dynamic approach to integrated publicness permits public managers to ask the question "how have realized public values changed in relation to changes in the institutional configuration of firms and other innovation relevant actors in the state?" To be sure, any inference public managers make from tracking the movement of realized public values against changes, planned or not, in institutional actors' political and market authority characteristics, suffers from the problem we discussed before—underdetermined theories. However, we submit that public managers make decisions in two ways: without evidence and models or with limited evidence and models. As such, a decision heuristic that promotes thinking about the relation of values to empirical aspects of institutions may have some utility.

For those interested in a more sophisticated approach, one that goes beyond elementary tracking, we note that it is possible to provide a great deal more information to the integrative analysis than we have provided. For example, it is possible to be much more specific about realized public value indicators (as we implied above), tracking such factors as percentage change in patents in industries within given Standard Industrial Classification

codes, changes in corporate tax yield in those same companies, and changes in research publications resulting from industry-university interactions.

By the same token, one can a more fine grained approach to the analysis of political authority constraining or enabling organizations; although we do not specify diverse sources of political authority in this example (as portrayed in figure 3), it is helpful to consider not only regulations or resources but also associations (networks) and cultures (individual motivations) that constrain or enable organizations towards realized public value outcomes (Moulton 2009). Similarly, it is possible to examine a great many organizational attributes in addition to size or profit. One that comes immediately to mind is location. We know that the geography of innovation clusters is quite important (Audretsch and Feldman 1996) and, of course, amenable to spatial representation and tracking.

We conclude then that (a) it is possible and useful to simultaneously track organizations and sets of organizations empirical publicness characteristics and the levels of realized public values (normative publicness) and (b) that the empirical can inform the normative as the normative provides a guide to the empirical. Analytical frameworks do not often blend the empirical and the normative (Laudan 1984; Knorr-Cetina 1999). But most public managers do so routinely and reflexively.

A MODEL OF INTEGRATIVE PUBLICNESS: ASSUMPTIONS

Assumption: Institutional Potency

Perhaps the most important assumption is the same one that we have ascribed to public managers—the belief that outcomes can be changed by changing the design of institutions and configurations of institutional environments. This is a central tenant of open systems theories of organizations, applicable to both public and private organizations (for a recent discussion, see Scott 2001 and Pfeffer and Salancik 1978; for an application to public organizations, see Frumkin and Galaskiewicz 2004), and is critical to our approach. The assumption receives some support in the public organizational performance literature. Although much of administrative agency performance seems to pertain to factors beyond the public manager's control, especially characteristics of the citizens in a jurisdiction, strategy does predict performance (Andrews et al. 2005; Moulton 2009). Thus, our approach privileges strategy, especially strategy dealing intensively with institutions. Many other factors affect social outcomes and realized public values, including, among others, changes in demographics, natural and environmental change and disasters, ideology, characteristics of particular leaders, and the desires and resources of special interests. As Meier et al. (2007) have shown, it is not merely that a predisposition to strategy affects performance; particular strategy types are more effective in particular settings. Integrated publicness is a means of thinking about these institutional and environmental settings, one especially pertinent to public organizations.

Assumption: Publicness and Organization Ecology

An integrative approach to publicness stresses the malleability of organizations, institutions and environments, and the blurring and blending of constraints and endowments shaping organizations across sectors. Integrative publicness has much in common with population ecology theories of organizations (Amburgey and Rao 1996). The population ecology

framework considers “populations” of organizations, or organizations sharing the same organizational forms. Population ecology approaches tend to provide a quite circumscribed role to volition, focusing instead on environmental selection and retention dynamics.

Although we share with population ecologists a focus on the dynamics of organization sets rather than a single organization focus, we are less convinced that the organization’s or organization set’s environmental niche is its destiny. Our approach assumes that human beings design organizations and institutions to meet felt needs and that human beings outside the focal organization can often have a strong influence in framing perceptions of needs and in establishing new imperatives. Much of the work on public organization performance supports the view that managers, including frontline managers, are something more than creatures of their controlled environment and that strategic thinking can effect change (e.g., Brewer 2005)

Assumption: Dynamic Publicness

For any set of institutions, the mix of economic and political authority constraints and endowments shifts over time. The pace of this change may vary for an institutional set and specific organizations within the set may evolve at a different pace. For example, we hypothesize that in most domains small, high/market-low/public firms tend to be more immune to rapid change in their degree of publicness than larger and more complex firms. But even when some individual organizations seem to be changing at glacial pace, the mix of political and economic authority for any institutional set changes inexorably with, on the one hand, changes in tax structures, regulations, government contracts, and government mandates and, on the other hand, changes in such factors as economic concentration of industries, new entrants in the market, and change in the competitive environment.

Just as the mix of political and economic authority evolves continually, so do desired outcomes pertaining to public values. One observes entry-exit phenomenon for public values that resemble in some ways the entry-exit phenomena of organizations. Many of the same social and economic forces that create change or eradicate organizations or institutions have the same impact on values.

INTEGRATIVE PUBLICNESS: CONNECTING THE DOTS

Further conceptualizations and systematic research are necessary to refine and substantiate the integrative publicness approach. For example, how do we more fully incorporate political and economic authority, as diverse institutions (not only regulative, or resource based) that constrain and enable organizations (Moulton 2009)? What other aspects of organizations should be taken into account, aside from profit, to demonstrate a firm’s relative position in its environment? Finally, how do we uncover the causal linkages between competing or complimentary values that contribute to or deter from the realization of public value outcomes (Bozeman and DeHart-Davis 1999)?

The integrative publicness approach seems to offer fertile ground for a research agenda distinct to the public management field, yet building critically on work across fields. Rather than limiting the publicness as solely an approach to describe or predict individual firm behavior (as with empirical publicness), solely to characterize and examine public values in a given context (as with normative publicness), the integrative approach provides a field-level depiction of the empirical and normative publicness of policy environments

that can be useful for long-range strategic planning to achieve public value outcomes. Specifically, dynamic changes in institutional publicness and institutional configurations more generally can be mapped alongside changes in realized public values in a given policy context, to enhance the public manager's ability to navigate and shape institutional environments and organizations. If, as research suggests (Andrews et al. 2005; Meier et al. 2007), effective strategic management enhances public organizations' performance, then the provision of strategic analysis tools is a priority mission for public management scholars.

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