
Appendix D

TSU Comps Questions

MPA Comprehensive Exam
Study Guide

TSU: Ph.D. Public Administration Comprehensive Exams

Spring 2009 Thursday, February 26, 2009

QUESTION ONE: Identify, describe and explain the pivotal works and recurring themes in the literature about policy implementation. Has any scholarly consensus been reached?

The public policy discourse in public administration involves several components and centers on multiple questions: What are policies? What forms do policies take? Who makes policies? What is the policy formulation process? How are policies implemented? Is policy implementation effective? How do we evaluate public policy effectiveness? This discussion will involve examining these essential elements of the public policy discourse while finally addressing concerns, theories, and dominant themes in implementation research. However, this author will examine who makes policies and how policies are made, as this discussion is essential to understanding how policies are eventually implemented (or not).

Defining Policy and Policy Actors

A public policy could be defined as a purposive course of action designed to impact some social, political, or economic issue that affects the general public (Anderson 2006). Public policies may take the form of rules and regulations, legislative bills, budgeting and financial allocations, or legal decisions. Public policies are formulated through courts, administrative agencies, state and federal legislatures, executive offices (President or Governor), as well as citizens and public interest groups (Anderson 2006). With the complexity of policy forms and actors, Lindblom suggests that just agreeing on a particular public policy may be viewed as a sign of success in public policy making, not necessarily whether or not the policy will have the most impact on a particular public issue or concern.

Public Policy Theories

Because the policy formation process involves multiple actors—interest groups, politicians, administrators, citizens, committees—some scholars suggest that agreement on policy decisions is a viable goal and one that is the most policy makers can hope for (Lindblom). With this in mind, it is at least somewhat understandable that often the policy formation process and the implementation process are thought to be separate and distinct. If it takes such a concentrated effort to reach a consensus on a policy in the first place, is there time, energy or effort to confront the implementation specifics? Or should those specifics be worked out through administrative agencies? It has often been assumed that the policy formation process and

implementation process are distinct; however, much like the politics-administration dichotomy (Wilson, Goodnow, Waldo) public administration has moved past the “either/or” framework of most public administration arenas and recognizes that dichotomous relationships between policy makers and implementers no longer exist.

The following public policy theories center on how policies are made and who has the most influence on policy decisions. In group theory, policies are developed by predominant interest groups. Groups that have the most political power and access to political processes will see their demands met through public policies. As an example, Wildavsky discusses the political power of older adults through groups such as the AARP and their influence on policies such as Social Security and Medicare. Wildavsky would argue that these entitlement programs are not likely to be significantly altered because of the relative power of groups that have a vested interest in preserving them. Lowi, in *The End of Liberalism*, strongly criticizes interest group politics and pluralism and maintains that the competing interests of various groups ultimately stifles government progress. Lowi suggests that when power in the government is decentralized and “everyone has power” in the form of groups then power is “watered down.” Thus, if so many groups are competing for power, no dominant power emerges and government is stifled (Lowi).

Elite theory (Dye and Zeigler) argues that powerful players—particularly in the economic and political arena—determine the course of public policies. In other words, a select few in the capitalist democracy determine policy directions and will steer policy decisions toward more favorable outcomes for the elite (corporations, high-ranking government officials, etc.). An example of this policy theory might include tax cuts for the wealthy while benefits for economically disadvantaged groups may be less generous. The economically and politically disadvantaged groups (i.e. Food Stamp or TANF recipients) have little social, economic, and political power to impact public policies.

Kingdon’s policy streams model also describes how multiple influences and actors converge to make public policy decisions. The policy streams model is described as multiple streams—“streams” being problems, policies and new ideas, participants, and politics—that converge together in a policy window or an opportunity to form public policy. Kingdon analyzes what makes a policy window opportunity emerge (or as he says, “hot”) in a particular time while other policy choices, while being equally important, may not make it to the policy agenda. For example, two years ago, immigration reform was a prominent topic on the policy agenda at the federal level. When federal reforms were not instituted, states and local governments (including

Nashville) began instituting policies directed at curtailing illegal immigration, punishments for businesses that hired illegal workers, and English-first language proposals. Now with emerging policy concerns centered on the continued downward spiral of the economy—immigration reform has taken a “back seat” to other policy considerations. Another example of Kingdon’s policy streams model would include welfare reform in 1996—public perceptions, political agendas, and policy reform ideas converged to develop a massive overhaul of welfare in the United States.

Policy Decision-Making Models

Understanding implementation of policy studies should also involve an understanding of how policy decisions are made or the policy formation process or cycle (Anderson, Stone,

Kingdon). Some scholars argue that an integration of implementation considerations should be inherent in public policy formation (Wildavsky & Pressman; Elmore); however, much of the public policy formation literature primarily outlines the formation process while focusing less on the process of implementation.

The decision-making element of policy formation is of central concern in public policy research. For example, several models exist to explain decision-making processes in public policy formation: rational-comprehensive model; garbage can model (Cyert & March); mixed-scanning (Etzioni). The rational-comprehensive model includes defining the problem, consideration of policy alternatives and consequences, deciding between policy alternatives, then finally, policy enactment. Herbert Simon advocates that bounded rationality of individuals limits “rational” decision making. To Simon, bounded rationality suggests that public actors are limited in their decision-making capacities because they have access to limited information or the

information may be filtered by the individual’s own constructs and experiences. In other words, individual actors do not always make “rational” decisions—they are limited by time, circumstance, experience, and information access; therefore, rational decision making is limited by these boundaries (Simon).

Because of the bounded rationality constraints of actors, Simon would argue that many policy decisions result in administrators and policy officials “muddling through” or what Lindblom would characterize as incrementalism. The concept of incrementalism is considered a descriptive theory in policy formation. In other words, prominent scholars like Wildavsky and Lindblom would argue that incrementalism is “what really happens” in policy

formation, thus,

normative theories of how policies *should* be made (i.e. rational-comprehensive approach to policy formation) are not realistic.

The garbage can model suggests that policy decisions are made in “organized anarchies.” An example might involve a university administrator who makes policy decisions and justifies the rationale later. In the garbage can model, there are various forms of information that flow into the garbage can of policy formation, these information flows are essentially combined, and the resulting policy is a combination of various information sources and influences that “flow out” of the proverbial garbage can.

Mixed-scanning (Etzioni) involves scanning the environment for the most pressing or seemingly relevant policy issues, then addressing those policy issues first. In this way, some issues are isolated and addressed by public policy, but not all. The disadvantage to this approach is that there may be a tendency to focus on the bigger problems/issues or even crises while neglecting other public policy concerns.

Public Policy Implementation: Top-Down, Bottom-Up, Hybrid, and Principal-Agent Approaches

Anderson (2006) would note that the policy cycle has several stages, including defining the problem and agenda setting, consideration of and decisions between possible policy alternatives, implementation, and then evaluation of policy progress (success, failure, or “the jury is still out”).

There are several approaches to policy implementation which will be discussed in the remainder of this paper—top down approaches, bottom up approaches, and hybrid approaches. Top down approaches to policy implementation involve a strong hierarchical structure and would purport that policies are implemented through higher level administrators, who are ultimately responsible for the success or failure of policy implementation. In his early work, Aaron Wildavsky was considered a “top-downer.” In Pressman and Wildavsky’s landmark research on policy implementation in Oakland, California, they questioned why federal work policies in Oakland failed. Their assumptions centered on what administrative and political officials did or did not do correctly in the policy formation process and advocated that if policy structure is viable, then implementation should not be a problem. Pressman and Wildavsky looked for “holes” in the policy formation, structure, and development

process to explain the failure of federal policies in Oakland.

Lipsky—in his now classic work on “street-level bureaucrats” suggested that policy implementation may occur more so at the bottom-level of the administrative agency than may be assumed. “Street-level bureaucrats” for Lipsky are the fire fighters, police officers, social workers, and food stamp case workers that have direct contact with the public being served by the policy. Lipsky argued that street level bureaucrats may have too much discretion when it comes to policy implementation and have more influence on policy outcomes than previous research outlined. While Lipsky’s study focused on the impact that lower level bureaucratic workers have on policy implementation, the ultimate conclusion from his studies was that too much discretion on the part of the street-level bureaucrat was negative. In other words, Lipsky’s research supported (for him) that street-level bureaucrats have too much discretion in policy implementation. For example, the street-level bureaucrats’ perceptions of clients may negatively impact effective implementation of the designed public policy. As an example, if a police officer or social worker is racist, will they be effective implementers of public policy? If a welfare case worker perceives a client to be reliable (or non-reliable), how will this impact the client’s benefits and other considerations in implementing the policy rules and guidelines of TANF?

A third approach—the hybrid approach—is another perspective on policy implementation research and considered the contemporary culmination of early public policy implementation studies. This approach ultimately combines both the top-down and bottom-up approach to policy implementation. In the hybrid approach, of which Wildavsky, as well as Elmore eventually converted to—both top-level officials in the hierarchical structure of the public bureaucracy and political arena, as well as the bottom-uppers or street-level bureaucrats, have significant influence on the implementation of public policies. In the hybrid approach, both the top-down and bottom up perspectives on implementation are valued. From the top-down approach, the political support of the policy, the structure and design of the policy (policy formation), as well as administrative resources to carry out public policies (budgeting, personnel, etc.) are important in successful public policy implementation. At the same time, the bottom-up perspective, which involves the direct contact of agency personnel and bureaucratic workers with their constituencies (i.e. the public or clients) also matters. Street-level bureaucrats are, after all, the face of the government to the people, thus, their impact on public policies cannot be marginalized (Lipsky, Halachmi, Easton).

Public policy implementation studies can also be informed by other theories, namely *principal-agent* theory. For purposes of this discussion on public policy implementation, let's assume that the "principals" are policy makers, such as administrative managers and politicians while "agents" are in charge of implementing public policies through various mechanisms.

Forrester would suggest that agents may act in their own self interests in order to preserve power, status, or resources and withhold information from the principal (moral hazard). As applied to public policy implementation, let's take the example of the state of Tennessee policy makers (principals) contracting out work placement services of TAN F/Families First (aka welfare) clients. In other words, the state has private agencies finding work for TANF clients rather than the Tennessee Department of Human Services. If the work placement agencies (in principal agent theory, the "agents") act in their own interests by cutting costs or lack the staff to help TANF recipients locate gainful employment, these actions inhibit successful policy implementation.

Future Directions of Implementation Research

Scholarly consensus can be reached on the value of all public policy implementation approaches—top-down, bottom-up, and hybrid and even the inclusion of other theories, such as principal agent theory. The hybrid approach has had the most converts, such as Wildavsky and Elmore, and appears to be more descriptive of implementation reality. While the hybrid approach in public policy implementation may lead to further developments in public policy research—not only for the implementation discourse, but for the policy formation discussion, it is this author's position that even the hybrid approach may no longer be sufficient. Since many public policies are implemented by a variety of actors—not just in public agencies, but increasingly in private agencies as well—should there be also be a top-down, bottom-up, and "sideways" (private organization implementers) approach to public policy implementation?

If public administration research points to the influences of both top-level (politicians and administrators), as well as bottom-level public officials (agency representatives, case workers, social service agency personnel), in addition to other actors in the private sector now involved in the delivery of public services, then should it not follow that all of these groups should be involved in public policy formation? If we refer back to various policy-making models, such as elite theory or group theory, then it may be suggested that Lipsky's street-level bureaucrats will still have limited input in policy formation while ultimately still impacting the policy

implementation process. In addition, if the key players (administrative and political, personnel and agency representative, as well as private agency representatives) are all involved in the policy formation process in order to impact implementation, then it is this author's contention that public policy implementation research will expand to include as many theories and perspectives as public policy formation and decision-making models.

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QUESTION TWO: In his classic 1940 APSR article, V.O. Key discussed the absence of a theory of budgeting that addresses the fundamental question, "On what basis shall it be decided to allocate x dollars to activity A instead of activity B?" Discuss the development of scholarly attempts to remedy this lack, citing relevant literature. Would you argue that a useful theory or theories of budgeting have been developed? Why or why not? Have any of these theories adequately distinguished the differences between capital and operational budgeting?

V.O. Key's often cited question--"*On what basis shall it be decided to allocate x dollars to activity A instead of activity B?*"—forms the basis for trying to determine if there is, in fact, a budgeting theory or if public administration is still working toward one. While there have been significant scholarly attempts to remedy this lack of budgetary theory, some would advocate that a "theory of budgeting is a theory of politics" (Wildavsky) and that incrementalism is the primary method through which budgeting decisions are made. With those concepts in mind, additional attempts at developing a theory of public budgeting are unnecessary (Wildavsky). This paper will discuss not only various budgeting theory proposals, but also budgeting concepts and historical changes in U.S. public budgeting which ultimately provide a background to the academic discourse on public budgeting theory.

Public Budgeting Concepts

A public budget is an accounting, political, policy, and management tool (Rubin). A budget—in a very general sense—is designed to balance expenditures and revenues (or expenses and income, for example, in a household budget). However, public budgeting involves more than just a simple balancing of expenses and revenue. Because a public budget involves decision-making, policy choices, and resource allocation for a society, the public budget involves value decisions that affect a large group of people (Wildavsky; Rubin; Caiden; Mintz & Stevenson). Historical budgeting reforms have emphasized various utilities of the budget—as a control

instrument, an administrative instrument, an accounting instrument, a political instrument, and a policy instrument. During various periods of history and as American society has changed, the conceptualization of how the public budget is to be used has varied greatly.

A History of the Public Budget in the United States (and a Possible Explanation for the Lack of an Overarching Budgeting Theory?)

A discussion of the history of public budgeting in the United States is essential in understanding the evolution of budgeting theories in public administration. As Raadshelders would point out, American society has expanded, thus, so have government services. As a result, these combined forces have greatly impacted the conceptualization of the public budget and its purpose. Many authors, such as Janet Kelly, Tyler and Wiland, as well as Aaron Wildavsky and Irene Rubin, have written about the historical evolution of public budgeting in the United States. The history of budgeting has been shaped by Presidential and societal goals/issues/changes, thus, it is this author's contention that this variation in reforms and budgeting adaptations throughout American history is one of the possible reasons that a unifying budgeting theory is difficult to ascertain. In other words, Key's (1940) question, "on what basis shall x dollars be allocated for activity A instead of activity B" could be answered as "it depends on what period of history and what President we are talking about." It is not this author's intention to sound flippant about the development of a budgeting theory; however, it is apparent that reviewing the evolving history of the U.S. public budget suggests that one answer to Key's question might be "it just depends...on who is in control and where society is at that moment" (author's quote and wording).

The Taft Commission in 1912 was the first to suggest that a federal budget was a necessary ingredient in directing the affairs of the federal government, and Frank Goodnow and William Willoughby—central figures in public administration history—were proponents of this initiative. Although Willoughby and Cleveland suggested the need for a federal budget to direct government programs and initiatives, it was not until the Budgeting and Accounting Act (BAA) of 1921 that the federal budget was implemented and began to form the basis for the federal budgeting system today. Prior to this period, cities and municipalities had budgeting mechanisms in place, primarily to curtail corruption at the local level, but the federal budget was in its primary stages. During this time period, the public budget was primarily an instrument of control and line-item budgeting was the dominant budgeting form (Tyler and Wiland).

Under President Hoover, budgeting focused on performance, or "not on what

government buys, but what it does” so government activities were the primary focus (Tyer and Wiland).

During the 1960s and under President Lyndon Johnson, budgeting was used as a planning tool under the Programming, Planning, and Budgeting System (PPBS). The primary aim of PPBS was multi-year planning to determine program budgets. However, PPBS was replaced by Zero-Based Budgeting (ZBB) under President Jimmy Carter’s administration. Under ZBB, program and administrative budgets had to essentially “start over” each year—budgets could not use the previous year’s budget to determine the current or future budgets, thus, ZBB required that agencies justify their programs and expenditures year after year. By the 1980s, ZBB ceased under President Ronald Reagan and there were efforts at curtailing the federal budget deficit, thus a series of acts were implemented to address these issues. In the 1990s under the Budget Enforcement Act, budget expenditures had to be balanced with increases in taxes or cutting other expenses, but by 2002 the BEA was not re-instated. Since then, the U.S. federal government has spent more and taken in less. As a result, the United States is currently facing an enormous budget deficit, thus, annually increasing the total federal debt (Rubin).

Many budgeting theories center on how the budget is a reflection of broad economic and political changes in a society, thus, a socio-historical overview is important in understanding public budgeting theoretical development. Janet Kelly discusses budgeting phases and reforms through changes in society or what she refers to as “public-regarding” and “private-regarding.” As an example, the New Deal period was a reflection of “public-regarding” in budgeting decisions whereby resource allocations were made in concurrence with dominant policy decisions at the time that aimed to institute economic and work assistance to the middle class and poor. Because many New Deal policies were aimed at lifting the country and its citizens out of the Great Depression, public-regarding was the dominant theme in budgeting during this time period (Kelly). The 1980s and 1990s were considered a time of private-regarding for the following reasons: 1) the lack of trust in government performance and accountability, 2) more emphasis on private agencies taking on tasks previously filled by government agencies, 3) tax cuts and “trickle-down economics.” These examples refer to the shift in resource allocation from the public to the private sector, as well as general budgeting policies that focused on expanding private agency roles in the delivery of government services and emphasizing government accountability and entrepreneurship (Kelly).

An Examination of Viable Budgeting Theories

Irene Rubin is a seminal author in public budgeting who has not only influenced the discourse on budgeting theory, but also budgeting concepts and challenges as well. For Rubin, budgeting reflects societal theories, thus, she discusses Neo-Marxist, Incrementalism, and Public-Choice budgeting theories. For Rubin, Neo-Marxist budgeting theory reflects a conceptualization that the most powerful economic and political actors in society direct the budget. Neo-Marxist theory has its root in Critical and Conflict paradigms (Babbie; French, Spears, Stanley; Burrell and Morgan) in that there is a focus on social injustice—powerful groups “win” while less-powerful groups (i.e. racial/ethnic minorities, women, the poor) are disadvantaged. Under the Neo-Marxist theory of budgeting, the economic and politically powerful will have their interests represented in the public budget more so than disadvantaged groups. As a practical example of how this theory might explain contemporary events, tax cuts for the very wealthy or an expansion of defense spending would be reflections of the economic elite and military power elite (Dye and Zeigler; C. Wright Mills). This theory would also explain why many social programs that serve the poor, such as Food Stamps, TANF/welfare, or housing assistance may receive a lower percentage of the federal budget pie (less than 4% collectively).

Incrementalism is a “favorite” budgeting theory throughout the literature as it is deemed by many to reflect a descriptive theory of budgeting or an examination of what really happens in budgeting vs. normative theories that suggest what “should” happen. Aaron Wildavsky and Charles Lindblom are proponents of incrementalism—in public budgeting and in public policy. For them, incrementalism reflects what policy makers really do as it relates to public budgeting. Furthermore, Wildavsky would argue that budgeting is an inherently political process, thus, the best way to “satisfice” (H. Simon) or “muddle through” (Lindblom) the political process of budgeting without a politician risking a chance for re-election would involve making incremental changes to the budget rather than any massive overhauls in policies or programs. Wildavsky and Paul Light would note that while major policy decisions that inevitably affect budgeting allocations have been made (i.e. Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security), most policy and budgeting decisions are incremental in nature.

A public-choice theory of budgeting suggests that individual actors or “greedy bureaucrats”(Forrester), act in their own self interests to maximize their utility. In public-choice theory, actors support policy and budgeting decisions that reflect their own self interests rather than the public interest, whether we are referring to individuals or bureaucratic administrators or personnel. Under this theoretical umbrella—everyone is out for themselves (or

their agency).

Other budgeting theories include Mintz and Stevenson's "theory of budgetary tradeoffs" or what may be referred to as the "guns versus butter" argument. In this theory, defense

allocations may be made at the expense of programs for the poor, thus, budgetary decisions reflect a "tradeoff" which essentially reflects a value system—do we want better defense or more resource allocations for the poor? Mintz and Stevenson found that this theory does not always hold true, but it is relevant in discussing value-based decision making in public budgeting allocations.

Institutional economics theory has also informed public budgeting theory through principal-agent (Forrester; Eisenhardt; Moe) and transaction cost theory (Whicker and Mo). Also, theories of agency mission reflect public budgeting allocations. If the agency is distributive, redistributive, or regulatory—these various agency missions will reflect varying budgetary choices.

Viable Public Budgeting Theories: Do They Already Exist?

Because this author tends to view public budgeting as a reflection of public policy choices, it is this author's position that viable public budgeting theories already exist. Perhaps because of this author's own paradigmatic view, which is essentially the Conflict paradigm (Babbie; French, Spears, Stanley), public budgeting is reflective of existing theories—1) public budgeting as politics and 2) public budgeting as a conflict between competing interest groups (i.e. Neo-Marxist, theory of budgetary tradeoffs). Budgeting as politics is relevant and applicable (Wildavsky; Peterson, 2003) while public budgeting as reflections of socio-historical changes (as well as Presidential choice) is also reflective of political influences (Tyler and Wiland; Rubin). However, for this author, budgeting as a political process is not explanation enough. A theory of budgeting centered in politics must also be combined with Neo-Marxist theory (Rubin) or a theory of budgetary tradeoffs (Mintz & Stevenson). Put as succinctly as this author can, it is my position that public administrators may be informed by the interconnectedness of both the political and Neo-Marxist public budgeting theories, whereby political preferences and power for budgeting resources may be understood in a framework of social justice, struggles for power among advantaged and disadvantaged groups. Based on those assumptions, theories of viable budgeting theories already exist (in this author's view).

Distinctions in Budgeting Theory between Capital and Operational Budgets

Capital and operational budgeting have traditionally been separated in the federal budget process to eliminate issues where capital projects may be initiated but not completed due to inadequate funding. However, the public budgeting theories that this author is familiar with do not distinguish between capital and operational budgets. It is this author's contention that capital budgeting seems to be less transparent than operational budgeting and flies under the radar in budgeting decisions and out of the "black box." While it is understandable that the federal government would not want to initiate building or infrastructure projects without being able to complete these projects as a result of inadequate funding, thus the need for a capital budget, it would seem that budgeting theories should incorporate both types of public budgets.

The Future of Budgeting Theory (if there is one)

Naomi Caiden (from her work: *The Great Unraveling*) would suggest that contemporary public budgeting and theory is characterized by uncertainty. The public is more resistant to tax increases (thus, revenue increases for budgeting) while at the same time, the federal government is increasingly taking on more debt burden and entitlement spending (Caiden; Rubin; Peterson; Wildavsky). This current system of budgeting in the United States (increased spending while not being offset by increased revenues or spending cuts) cannot be sustained over the long-term and can (or will) cause federal budget instability. Caiden would also suggest that this new wave of instability within the budget inhibits the development of a budgeting theory. To develop a budgeting theory, the public budget must become more stable (Caiden).

However, as this author has noted, public budgeting, even amidst instability, could still be understood in the context of political decisions and power advantages. To illustrate—in the current economic crisis in the United States, even amidst public concerns over the rising national debt, there is still a political resistance to raising revenues (i.e. raising taxes). The idea of raising taxes is politically unpopular, even in the midst of great uncertainty about the future of entitlement programs on which much of the United States population depends, not to mention concerns about the rising debt for future generations (Caiden; Peterson, 2003). In addition, Caiden notes that even if concerns over the national debt are not central, concerns over the interest on the debt is a concern in the federal budget pie. Currently the interest on the national debt comprises as much (or maybe as much by now) of the federal budget pie as Medicaid. Peterson (2003) notes that many middle-class Americans benefit more from federal entitlement programs, such as Medicare and Social Security, and have traditionally had the power to resist any changes or overhauls in these programs. These trends, again, point to the

political unpopularity of reforming entitlement programs, raising taxes, even in the midst of fears that the U.S. federal government has officially over-extended itself financially.

Given contemporary events and budgeting challenges, public administration discourse on public budgeting issues should be enhanced and expanded. While the search for a possible unifying theory of budgeting may still be on the horizon, practitioners in public administration are currently dealing with more practical issues involving securing funding for government services. Focusing on how to help public agencies navigate these uncertain budgetary times may prove to be more challenging for public administration researchers and theorists than agreeing on or determining a theory of budgeting.

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Spring 2009 Friday, February 27, 2009: DAY TWO

QUESTION THREE: It has been argued that the field of public administration theory is in crisis. Do you agree with this argument? In your answer, address the paradigmatic issues that gave rise to this argument and explain any relationship you see between these paradigmatic issues, the status of the field, and future theory development.

Vincent Ostrom was one of the first to suggest that there was an “intellectual crisis” in public administration. Behn said the field needed “big questions” to focus on the macro issues public administration should begin to address—starting with public management—in order to really move forward as a field. Neumann said Behn was correct that public administration needed to address some “big questions” but Neumann suggested that those questions should center on public organizations—their roles, processes, efficiency, motivation, etc. Kuhn suggested that for a field to be considered in the “normal science” context, it must have the elements necessary for a paradigm, so with that concept in mind, is public administration really a science, a discipline, a field—what is it? Waldo suggested that public administration was more like a profession, similar to medicine. Denhardt and others have suggested that most of the students that have emerged from U.S. public administration programs have produced research that is more applicable to their current professional roles and that Ph.D. public administration graduates are more interested in advancing their professional status and padding their resumes rather than advancing the field with new and scholarly research in Public Administration.

While all of the above examples suggest that it may not be clear what the future of Public Administration research and education looks like, or what the dominant paradigm in public

administration is or whether public administration is a discipline, a science, or a profession, what is clear is that public administration research and literature has dedicated a considerable amount of research time trying to figure out exactly what IT is. Whether that is considered a crisis is dependent upon one's perspective.

This author would argue that public administration is in fact an academic discipline while also being a field of practice. By definition a discipline has a body of research and knowledge that is accepted among its participants and is considered a viable educational area that is legitimized through academia. Even though many public administration scholars may not agree on various theories, paradigms, or directions in the field, it still does not negate the fact that public administration is an academic discipline. Therefore, if public administration is considered an academic discipline, the next question involves determining the identify of that discipline. It is also this author's position, that there is a crisis in public administration, but not one that involves paradigms or theories (more on this at the end... last section).

Theoretical and Paradigmatic Evolution in Public Administration

What should public administration be? According to Frederickson, public administration should advocate for efficiency, effectiveness, and social equity. Raadshelders and Svara would suggest that public administrators are indirectly accountable to the public, but that protecting the public interest should be the guiding force in public administration. With these tenets of public administration in mind, what are the theories that help explain public administration as a practice and as a discipline? In Frederickson and Smith, they discuss many of the various theories that have been used to characterize public administration:

- public institution theory (public organizations are part of a larger network of social institutions)
- bureaucratic politics theory (politics is inherent in bureaucracies and through administration, thus these two elements are strongly interconnected)
- public choice theory (bureaucracy undermines democracy; bureaucrats are self interested; market should be more involved than government)
- decision-making theory (how are political and administrative decisions made in the name of the public interest)
- public management theory (focus is on fostering effectiveness and efficiency in public agencies)

- public organization theory (what are the processes and motivations in a public organization; how does the structure and organizational culture influence public organization efficacy)

In addition to these theories, public administration has also been thought to coincide with models of government (Stillman; Peters).

Public Administration Reflects Models of Government

Stillman would suggest that the academic field of public administration has followed the path of state development. Stillman cites four models of public administration aligned with state development—*no state, bold state, pre-state, and pro-state*. Similarly, Peters postulates that there are other models of government that public administration practice and focus has coincided with: *market, participatory, deregulated, and flexible government*. Side-by-side comparisons of both Stillman and Peters' models show strong similarities. For example, in Stillman's Bold State and Peters' Market model, there is an emphasis on a strong executive and use of market forces in the delivery of government services. Both the Market and No-State models are reminiscent of public choice theory. On the opposite end of the model continuum is Stillman's Bold State and Peters' Participatory Government—both of which include a strong bureaucratic structure, emphasis on citizen participation, a belief in government and its ability to address social issues.

In Stillman's Pro-State and in Peters' Deregulated government, there is more inclusion of professional experts or what Stillman refers to as "technocrats"—the focus is on contracting out services in the way of government consultants, technical skills, information management, and other specialty areas. In other words, these models reflect a government partially controlled by professionals in various business and technical fields who claim to be experts, but who, according to Stillman, are tied to both the public and private sector and have no strong interest in maintaining the public good, as they are only there for the job and to carve out their niche in their specialty area.

In both Peters' and Stillman's typologies, public administration is situated within models of states and governments—thus public administration practice resembles government structure and goals.

Paradigms: What Are They?

What is a paradigm? One answer might be, "it depends on who you ask." The "what is a paradigm" discussion has been plagued with semantics issues. Even Thomas Kuhn

(considered the main culprit/genius in beginning the paradigm discussion among sciences) and others (Rainey; Henry; French, Stanley, Spears) may have differing versions of exactly what a paradigm is. While many define what a paradigm is in a somewhat similar way—that is, a paradigm is a way of viewing, a perspective on the world, a perspective on reality and the way things work—most of the disagreement comes from the way paradigms are conceptualized.

The use of the word paradigm is present in many academic disciplines, but how it is used and what it really means is the central question. However, across disciplines most would agree that understanding one's own paradigm is essential in understanding other paradigmatic views. A logical next question might be, why is it even important to understand one's own paradigm? If we know that we view the world through one paradigmatic lens, it helps us see the "other side" or another's view which can be useful in understanding society and government, thus, this could be a positive direction in understanding public policies and informing public administration. In the social sciences, one's paradigm informs many facets of research—the research question, the research methodology, the research focus, etc. For example, if I understand my paradigm to be within the conflict perspective (Babbie; French, Spears, Stanley; Burrell and Morgan) then this explains why I am interested in social injustice, why I may choose the research projects that I do, and why I value research that uses quantitative and qualitative perspectives, but I also understand that social events are interpreted by actors and researchers in different ways. With these concepts in mind, how might one's paradigmatic view shift or be altered?

For one's paradigm to be altered, resulting in a paradigm shift, all previous assumptions about an issue or social phenomena must be overturned. To illustrate with an example from the natural sciences, previously the world was thought to be flat and this was the dominant paradigm. Later, a new truth was discovered—the world in fact was not flat but round—thus replacing the previous paradigm or causing a paradigm shift (Kuhn). Unlike the natural sciences, however, social science "truths" are not necessarily replaced or completely overturned—they may still be on the periphery and not completely abandoned. As a public administration example of how social science paradigms may just move to places of greater prominence rather than being replaced (Kuhn), let's use Henry's version of paradigms. Once the predominant concepts in scientific management (during Taylor's time) were abandoned to include more of a human element, the concepts of

achieving efficiency in organizations were not entirely abandoned—it was still true that there was a desire for organizations to become more efficient, there was just a progression in thought about how this might be accomplished.

Now that we have what some paradigm concepts out of the way, let's evaluate various paradigm developments in public administration.

Paradigms in Public Administration: Do We Have One?

Nicholas Henry suggested that public administration has five paradigms, which essentially divide the discipline into time periods and focus areas:

- Public administration as politics/administration dichotomy
- Public administration as scientific management
- Public administration as administrative science
- Public administration as political science
- Public administration as public administration

Henry's categorization of public administration reflects the different areas of public administration focus during specific time periods. For example, in the early stages of public administration, Woodrow Wilson and Frank Goodnow's concepts of the politics-administration dichotomy (or the idea that politics and administration should be separate) dominated the field. Later as scientific management and the work of Frederick Taylor and Henri Fayol became centerpieces of organizational efficiency (modeled after many industrial practices), Henry declares this the scientific management period of public administration. Later public administration tries to return to a focus on politics, and Waldo and Wildavsky would be key theorists in this area suggesting that politics and administration cannot be separated and political implications and influences are inherent in bureaucratic processes.

French, Spears, and Stanley (2005) disagree with Henry's characterizations of the paradigms in public administration. Based on Kuhn's definition, French, Spears, and Stanley (2005) suggest that a paradigm must encompass several components: *ontology*, *epistemology*, and *methodology*. In French, Spears, and Stanley (2005), they denote five paradigms of public organizations and describe the ontology (view of reality); epistemology (how we know reality); and methodology (methods we use to determine reality) within each of these paradigms. The five paradigms of public organization theory in French, Spears, and Stanley (2005)

include: 1) positivist; 2) post-positivist; 3) interpretivist; 4) conflict; and 5) post-modern.

Each of these paradigms expresses views on reality, how one comes to know and interpret reality, and preferred methodologies in these views. As an example, in the positivist paradigm, more common in the natural sciences, there is a reality that can be understood and determined through objective research and causality can be determined. In the post-positivist paradigm, reality can be known but with limitations, yet, research can inform reality because the research can be objective. In the conflict paradigm, there is a focus on social justice, inequality, particularly with certain population groups (i.e. racial, gender, economic, etc.). In the conflict view, research can inform some social realities but these are socially constructed realities and may not necessarily be understood through quantitative or experimental research.

Others (Rommels and Christianens) suggest that a paradigm for public administration is not necessary and we should stop looking for it. Their hope is that public administration students will move away from the influences of their professors and previous researchers' perspectives and break out of the "we have to find a paradigm" paradigm in public administration.

Future Directions: Does Public Administration Need a Paradigm or a Public Relations Overhaul?

When first embarking on this Ph.D. program in Public Administration, this author began reading about the identity crisis in public administration and it was this author's assessment that there was no "intellectual crisis" (Ostrom) in public administration for the following reasons:

- 1) public administration is valuable as a multi-disciplinary field and is only enhanced by drawing on the fields of business, psychology, sociology and economics
- 2) current theories (bureaucratic politics, public institutions, public management, etc.) within the field are sufficient to encompass key focus areas in public administration and are still relevant
- 3) public administration is driven by Frederickson's ideas of what the field should strive for: efficiency, effectiveness, and social equity
- 4) government is good, it can do great things, and public administrators should strive to serve the public interest through both practice and research (Raadschelders; Svava; Frederickson; Denhardt)

While this author has not abandoned these previous perceptions of what public administration is or should be, it is true that I am skeptical about the future of the field, but not because there is a lack of an overarching paradigm or continued disagreements about overarching theories. Where this author feels a level of concern for public administration lies in the following areas:

- 1) continued public distrust in government and the lack of value that much of the public places on public administration and government roles and services (particularly in the wake of this current economic crisis)
- 2) political resistance in making sweeping changes to address major social problems, thereby paralyzing public administrators (i.e. public and political cries not to raise taxes, reform Social Security, Medicare or other programs, thus leaving these areas vulnerable to funding constraints)
- 3) the development of applicable research in graduate studies within public administration that can truly be used to assist public agencies, or the lack of connection between research and practice

Public Administration and government in general needs a public relations overhaul. Public administrators continue to try and legitimize the field with paradigms, theories, etc. but in reality the field will be legitimized when the public legitimizes it—and this may only be accomplished through public relations, media, and strong efforts to bridge the ties between theory/research and practice. Raadshelders would suggest that public administration is legitimized because government is a social construction; however, even if government is legitimized, the public perception of government still matters, and it continues to be less than ideal (for public administrators anyway). If public administration begins to “feel” legitimized in the public’s eyes, then we can have as many paradigms and theories as we want...just as other disciplines, such as economics, sociology, psychology have. These disciplines struggle with various theories and paradigms and research initiatives, yet they do not suffer from an identity crisis. In this author’s view that is because these fields have gotten over their inferiority complex. Once public administration is truly legitimized, trusted, and valued by the public, public administration will no longer suffer from an identity crisis and it can have as many paradigmatic and theoretical debates as other disciplines... without these debates being a threat to its identity as a valuable and important field.

TSU: Ph.D. Public Administration Comprehensive Exams

Spring 2009 Friday, February 27, 2009: DAY TWO

QUESTION FOUR: To enhance accountability President Obama has asked you to study various approaches to accounting in government and nonprofit organizations. What approaches would you consider? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each approach? Which approach/method would you recommend to the President? Given the Sarbanes-Oxley Act would this approach be as useful in the case of both government and nonprofit organizations?

President Obama has a strategic vision for the United States which includes restoring the country's economic stability while simultaneously returning to a focus on federal government responsibility and accountability. While President Obama has asked the public and private businesses to support, as well as assist, in the responsibility of lifting the country out of the current economic crisis, he has also promised organizational and financial accountability, as well as transparency, within the federal government.

Government accountability for the public's financial resources has never been as important as it is in the current political and economic context. Part of the challenge in managing organizations involves accountability, and President Obama must meet this challenge. If he fails to show accountability or transparency in the distribution of the country's financial resources, what will be the implications, not only for his legacy, but for the country's economic climate?

Including Financial Accountability in the Strategic Planning Process

In this new Presidential administration, it is clear that President Obama and his staff will need to encompass Mintzberg's concepts on strategy and vision—have a plan and a long-term direction for the country in mind, while also allowing for creativity in solving complex social, economic, and political problems. As evidenced by recent cases of corporate fraud—on Wall Street and in the housing loan industry, as well as various “Ponzi” schemes—it is evident that Sarbanes-Oxley has not been sufficient to prevent these types of accounting frauds. At the same time, with the current economic crisis and public concern over the ever-expanding government role in banking and other economic industries, as well as an increase in federal spending and debt, it is clear that accountability measures will need to be put in place in order to prevent government abuse and waste of taxpayer dollars. Part of the strategic planning process involves developing management strategies that will address long-range goals and objectives. In this new Presidential administration, the strategic planning process must involve financial and accounting transparency, as well as accountability.

Strategic planning involves long-range planning that encompasses determining the organization's mission and objectives, analyzing internal strengths (organizational culture, accounting methods, personnel, structure), as well as analyzing external threats to the organization (for private—competition, costs of acquiring goods and services and for public—funding availability, political environment, social environment, etc.).

To Mintzberg, strategy involves a vision, a long-range conception of where the organization, and in the case of the federal government, where the country is going. A strategy can also be a ploy (outsmarting competitors), plan, or a pattern (Mintzberg). A strategic plan can assist an organization (in this case, the federal government) in determining a viable direction and how it will get there. While some authors (David; Quinn) address formalizing strategy through the strategic planning process, Mintzberg advocates for the strategic manager to not lose focus on adaptability and flexibility. Since a strategy involves a vision, a strategic plan must also be flexible and adaptable to changes in the environment. Strategic planning has become a formalized process in many organizations that Mintzberg would argue may inhibit creativity. While organizations do need leaders who can “stick with the plan” and steer the organization in a purposeful direction, an organization needs creative leaders than can help the organization adapt to changes in their environment (Mintzberg). As a current example, Mintzberg has developed a program that he suggests is better at developing effective leaders than many current MBA programs, which in his view, are great at teaching students about business but not how to be effective leaders of organizations. Mintzberg suggests that business/organization leaders are not made in the classroom but in their environment. Leaders must be able to adapt to their environment by assessing both external and internal strengths and weaknesses. While managers must focus on the external environment, they must be equally in tune with the internal processes and structure of their organization, which includes elements such as, organizational culture, personnel resources, and accounting methods.

A Public Organization Challenge: Managing the Public's Money

Many strategies for managing the public's money have been utilized since the 1921 Budget and Accounting Act created a federal system of budgeting (Willoughby; Cleveland, Goodnow). President Hoover first emphasized the need for performance budgeting and a focus on “what the government does, not what it buys.” Other Presidential terms also shed light on various methods for managing the public's finances and a focus on accountability. During President Lyndon Johnson's administration, PPBS or

Programming, Planning, and Budgeting System was put into place in all federal agencies. This budgeting system was a reflection of strategic planning at the federal level, manifesting itself in a budgeting and accounting mechanism. The design of PPBS encompassed multi-year planning and the determination of a program's goals and objectives to determine funding and budgeting allocations (Tyler and Wiland; Rubin). The strength of PPBS involved multi-year planning which allowed a public agency to conceptualize long-term goals and strategies for achieving organization objectives. During the 1970s ZBB or Zero-Based Budgeting was instituted by President Jimmy Carter, modeled after a Texas Instruments budgeting system. ZBB required agencies and programs to justify their programs year after year. Instead of incremental increases each year, under ZBB program budgets began with a budget balance of zero and started the justification process (Tyler and Wiland; Rubin). Performance-based budgeting (PBB) was a Clinton era system which focused on program outcomes. However, there are several considerations in measuring outcomes within public organizations or of government services, such as, how do you measure the value of outcomes in public services (Halachmi)? Additionally, is the cost—in time and financial resources—of measuring outcomes in government agencies and for public programs worth it? In a practical example, let's assume that through the Tennessee Department of Human Services there is a performance-based budgeting system in place to measure outcomes of the TAN F/Families First welfare policy. If the Tennessee state legislature determines that in order to sustain budget funding for the Tennessee Department of Human Services, the organization must reach a particular performance criteria—for example, 75% of TAN F/Families First clients must be working within two years. If this is the case and these are the conditions, what are the challenges in measuring this performance criteria or outcomes of the current Families First program? If administrative agencies are dependent on showing “successful outcomes” in order to continue receiving funding, several questions must be addressed:

- How will the data be collected? What will it cost for the data to be collected, analyzed, and evaluated?
- Is “must be working” for TANF clients conceptualized as full-time or part-time work?
- Will there be too much discretion of the agency in calculating the numbers?
- How does the agency determine what the outcomes should be? Should the outcomes include: Work hours? Work income? Families being lifted out of poverty?
- Even if the agency meets the “outcomes” requirement of 75% of TANF

- clients in the workforce—are those clients still living in poverty? Are their basic needs being met? In other words, what value are the outcomes if the overarching social issue (lifting TANF recipients out of poverty) is not accomplished?

These are the challenges in measuring performance and accountability in government agencies—determining how to place value on “successful outcomes” in programs, as well as determining whether the cost of measuring and collecting data on outcomes will prove to be a productive and efficient use of resources (Halachmi). Another challenge will involve sustaining the funding for continued measurement of program outcomes.

Even considering the challenges of measuring accountability in government services and programs, it is this author’s view that President Obama must institute federal budget accounting and financial methods that ensure accountability. However, if a history of public budgeting tells us anything, it is that these reforms may not prove or show what they are designed to—program success and efficient use of taxpayer funds. Through the recent economic stimulus/economic recovery package, President Obama is accountable to the public for where the money goes—and to whom. The financial industry bailout from 2008 administered by the Bush administration is already encountering immense scrutiny for lack of oversight and accountability. Furthermore, the economic and budgeting allocations that the stimulus plan (thus federal debt) has committed the U.S. taxpayers to will surpass President Obama’s tenure as Chief Executive. With that in mind, will funding for measuring outcomes and showing accountability be sustainable? Public budgeting history informs us that any budgeting reforms, program or financial systems put in place will most likely be replaced by the new administration.

It is this author’s view that a hybrid approach, derived from previous budgeting and accounting systems, must be developed to assist the Obama administration in ensuring accountability and efficient use of the public’s resources. Unlike PPBS, the objectives and goals for programs and agencies should be targeted for measurement in 12-16 months. Funding must be made available to account for the measurement of accomplished objectives for the economic recovery and stimulus plans (Drucker’s Management by Objectives). For example, if the plan includes a goal of 2 million unemployed workers being placed into employment by the beginning of 2010 then this objective should be measured by that deadline.