

Instruments of Government: Perceptions and Contexts

Stephen H. Linder & B. Guy Peters

Government uses a wide variety of instruments to reach its policy goals, ranging from indirect methods, such as moral suasion and cash inducements, to more direct ones involving government provision of services. Although there has been a fair amount of writing on the nature and use of various policy instruments, there is very little work on either the meaning ascribed to these instruments by the decisionmakers who use them (or the experts who design them) or the processes by which some come to be favored by others. Characteristics of the political system, such as national policy cycle, the organizational setting of the decisionmaker, and the problem situation are all likely to have some influence over the choice of instruments. The relative impact of these variables, however, is likely to be mediated by subjective factors linked to cognition. Perceptions of the proper “tool to do the job” intervene between context and choice in a complex way. Efforts to account for variation in instrument choice, then, must focus not only on macro level variables but on micro ones as well.

Political Management and Social Development: Professionalizing Public Management

Sonia M. Ospina Bozzi

In this paper I highlight the distinction between public management as an organizational practice and public administration as a discipline of study, to then develop an “ecological” vision that acknowledges the impact of various concentric levels of the environment on the organization where the administrative practice is embedded. Linking the micro level of analysis within organizations to the macro level of public policy directed to promote development results in an appropriate theoretical framework for Public Administration within the context of Latin America. This is so because it addresses at the same time, and as part of the same conceptual problem, the search for technical solutions to the obstacles of administrative action and for intellectual resolutions to the barriers of social and economic

development. This framework can help clarify the role of public management within the present Latin American trend of modernization of the State which requires, among other things, the training of professionals to administer its institutions.

Analysis and Successful Innovations in Public Organizations. A Proposed Methodology

Enrique Cabrero Mendoza & David Arellano Gault

The reform of the Mexican State is encountering a series of problems caused by the imposed changes. The country's economic and political liberalization has had many results, including the dephasing of the public sector's organizational structures in the light of the new reality. After the corporatist and clientelist links which shaped many public organizations, the patterns of marketism and rationality established through state reform often imply radical transformations in the state sector's way of operating. In organizational terms, many public organizations are trying to make behavioral and structural innovations. This article, based on the Theory of Organization, explores the effects of state reform and changes in public policy on the need for and prospects of innovative actions in this sector; it also summarizes the expectations of three Mexican case studies.

The Challenges of Change for Management and Structures in British Local Government

Ita O'Donovan

This paper examines the traditional management and structure of local authorities, and suggests that it may be characterised by an overconcentration on operational management and the committee cycle. The author is of the view that the cumulative changes in local Government brought about by the plethora of Government legislation, active politics and changes in

society, mean that the relationship between the Centre and service departments for the 1990s needs to be examined and changed.

The paper offers a view of the Centre as a strategic core, structured to concentrate on setting overall direction, undertaking policy and performance review, and supporting the democratic process. To achieve this a clear separation between the support role to service departments and the strategic role is suggested. This has structural implications with the creation of a small strategic core at the Centre sharing a common resource team and the setting up of a Professional Support Directorate to support the service delivery departments on a commercial basis.

The Decentralization of France and Europe

Alain Delcamp

Decentralization is one of the means by which France is adapting to Europe. If comparisons with neighboring countries enable this process to be improved, it is not so much by transposing vague outlines of how structures should be adapted, but through research into the levels which should be accorded greater importance. Decentralization can also serve as a model for the freedom of choice that it brings to communities, and it affords a far more valid mechanism for comparison than is usually possible in financial affairs.