Public Voices

Call for Manuscripts, Book and Film Reviews

Public Voices is a unique journal that focuses on historical, artistic and reflective expression concerning public administrators and the public service. Published by the National Center for Public Performance (NCPP), it is now accepting submissions for volumes X and XI.

Public Voices is sponsored by the School of Public Affairs and Administration (SPAA) at Rutgers University – Campus at Newark.

Unlike traditional social science journals, *Public Voices* publishes unorthodox, controversial perspectives on bureaucracy in particular and the public sector in general. We seek submissions from public servants, writers, artists, and academics in all fields. In addition to analytical articles, submissions may include original fiction, poetry, photographs, art, critiques of existing works, and insights based on experience, observation and research. Especially encouraged are manuscripts that explore ethical dilemmas and public controversies, discuss value conflicts, or generate new ideas for improving public service and public organizations. Personal essays that relate fictionalized experiences in government agencies are equally welcome. We also welcome reviews of novels, literature, popular fiction, a series of works by one author, scholarly books, films, art, etc.

All submissions will be evaluated on a blind, peer-reviewed basis.

For manuscripts, submit five copies, with the author's name and affiliation on a separate cover page, to:

Iryna Illiash, Managing Editor, *Public Voices*
School of Public Affairs and Administration (SPAA)
Rutgers University
701 Hill Hall, 360 Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd.
Newark, NJ 07102-1801
Email: illiash@pegasus.rutgers.edu

Proposals for symposia, as well as movie reviews, photographs and art work should be sent to:

Dr. Marc Holzer, Editor-in-Chief, *Public Voices*
School of Public Affairs and Administration (SPAA)
Rutgers University
701 Hill Hall, 360 Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd.
Newark, NJ 07102-1801
Or for further information:
Email: mholzer@andromeda.rutgers.edu

Book Reviews should be sent to:

John R. Phillips
Professor of Political & Social Sciences
Springfield College in Illinois
1500 North Fifth Street
Springfield, IL 62702
Email: jphillips@sci.edu

Public Voices

Knowledge Analytic

Symposium

Contents

Symposium on Knowledge Analytic

Editor: Ralph Hummel

Ralph Hummel

> A look at modern organizations shows that the leadership is seldom trained in science. Executives or administrators claim authority on the basis of an alien reason more suitable to milking the resources of financial markets and government budgets than to mid-management knowledge of production. Workers, too, have persisted in the claim to possessing knowledge: their hands-on know-how, an art often kept under wraps, silenced by management science and disregarded by the executive suite.

> A new way of dealing with resulting conflicts identifies and tests the compatibility of different kinds of knowledge in accomplishing work. It is called the knowledge analytic.

David G. Carnevale and Ralph Hummel

> David Carnevale and Ralph Hummel propose a mixed "knowledge analytic" to deepen the study of trouble in modern organizations beyond the usual suspects. Science and reason are said to require help from art, aesthetics, and judgment to penetrate from precise but shallow understandings to the heart of work as it is practiced from the

inside out. The focus here is the art of conceptualization at the level of the worker and the failure of unions to mobilize worker knowledge.

Recent and past problems with the NASA shuttle program are illustrative of decision-making problems centered at the executive level of knowledge on the organizational pyramid. The poor responses to hurricanes Katrina and Rita by executives at all levels of government, but particularly with regard to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), also bear scrutiny. These catastrophic incidents, beyond the obvious partisan/political differences and the physical and psychological devastation, are demonstrative of management failures in their respective organizations. The author argues that the key to unlocking the conundrum of management failure rests with the fact that multiple knowledges exist in modern organizations like NASA, DHS, and FEMA and the use and development of the knowledge analytic offers new theoretical insights for understanding managerial crises.

Just as the rich knowledge of craftsmen was once the basis of working life, the complex knowledge of ordinary people has organized life outside of work and held communities together to confront all kinds of disasters. In this paper, FEMA's model of man prevented it from understanding how local knowledge could be used to prepare for an earthquake and then contributed to making things worse in New Orleans. This paper explores the use of another model of socially distributed knowledge and action for protecting people from natural disasters, especially at the bottom.

Existing ways of dealing with environmental problems subscribe to (or use) a framework based on a resource model that is enframed in science and technology. As stated by Thomas Kuhn, science theory looks for a change within this framework by following certain rules and standards for scientific practice. This is different from phenomenology. Phenomenology is dedicated to describing the structures of experience as they present themselves in everyday life, without prior recourse to theory, deduction, or assumptions from other disciplines such as the natural sciences.

Understanding environmental problems from a phenomenological perspective means developing an alternative model that does not treat the world as a mere resource, but

instead as interdependent for drawing on human possibility. Kuhn would accept this view as a paradigm change (Kuhn, 1970). This paper will discuss how broad social paradigms in the form of attitudes affect individual opportunities for change. A model will be presented that theorizes how attitudes are developed both from knowledge and informed know-how gained through science and experience.

Analysis and Commentary

This article was previously presented as a paper at the International Conference "Ethics and Integrity of Governance: A Transatlantic Dialogue." We focus on families in poverty, a group who is currently often excluded from civic engagement. We want to stimulate thinking about the inclusion of their voices in policy formation, implementation, and evaluation. We go deeper into a new practice of activation of the long-term unemployed, namely community services, situated in the social economy sector in Flanders (Belgium). After introducing the basic concepts, we formulate arguments in support of a competence approach and a participatory approach. Then we touch on the problematic of the translation of this approach into policy criteria.

In this essay, we contend that the study of popular films serve as a valuable tool in understanding postmodern critiques of public administration. As cultural artifacts, their themes provide great insight into the culture from which they originate. Films serve as a means of understanding public perceptions of bureaucracy at a given time and place. Through a critical examination of the film *Office Space*, we analyze postmodern critiques emphasizing the psychology of bureaucracy among its members. We find that analysis of such films can be powerful pedagogical devices. We argue that films such as *Office Space* exacerbate negative public perceptions of bureaucracy, thus creating receptive audiences to those elected representatives who wish to vilify administrative agencies. Finally, we conclude by encouraging scholars to continue analysis of popular culture in order to appreciate its latent effects upon public organizations.

Fiction

As Bree tried to develop an academic identity, she began making sense of her administrative experience through fictionalizing aspects of it and, after taking a deep breath, she decided to teach her students to do the same.

Book Review

Reviewed by Karen Kunz

Dear Public Voices Readers,

If you'd like to share your thoughts on the material you read in our journal,

please write to:

Iryna Illiash

Editor's Letter, Public Voices

School of Public Affairs and Administration (SPAA)

Rutgers University - Campus at Newark

701 Hill Hall, 360 Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd.

Newark, NJ 07102-1801

Email: illiash@pegasus.rutgers.edu

The Florida Keys Memorial

Jerry Wilkinson
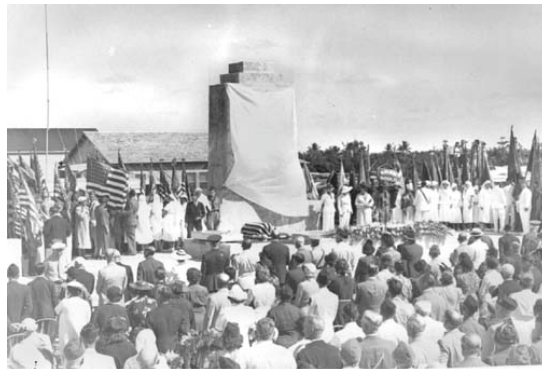
Dedication ceremony on November 14, 1937

The Florida Keys Memorial memorializes the World War-I veterans and civilians who perished in the hurricane of September 2, 1935. It was dedicated on November 14, 1937 and on March 16, 1995 was placed on the National Register of Historic Places by the U.S. Department of Interior.

The memorial was designed by the Florida Division of the Federal Art Project and was constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1937 as Zone 3, Project Number 2217. The finished cost of the project was around $12,000.

There is a crypt made into the upper level that contains the skeletal bones and cremated remains of some 190 veterans and citizens who perished, some after the 1935 hurricane. The total number of victims is unknown, but it is believed to exceed 423. A 22-foot long ceramic tile map of the Keys from Key Largo to Marathon by ceramicist Adela Gisbet is inlaid into the cover of the crypt.

The native rock-covered obelisk of the memorial rises 18 feet skyward above the dais with a relief sculptured tidal wave and palms bending under the force of the terrific winds. The

glyphic Mayan style design was by Harold Lawson and developed by Lambert Bemlemans. Other WPA artists involved were William Shaw, Allie Mae Kitchens, Emigdio Reyes and Harold Lawson.

Below the sculpture is a bronze plaque by artist John Klinkenberg, where it is inscribed, "Dedicated to the Memory of the Civilians and War Veterans Whose Lives Were Lost in the Hurricane of September Second, 1935." Nine-year-old hurricane survivor Faye Marie Parker unveiled the monument on Sunday, November 14, 1937 as about 5,000 officials, guests and visitors looked on.

Why were so many World War I veterans in the Upper Keys area?

To pull the nation out of the Depression, the government created the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) in 1933. A number of work programs and camps were established throughout Florida, including the Upper Keys. One of the projects of Florida's first FERA administration was building a better highway system in Key West. For this project, FERA engaged many unemployed WW-I veterans, who were to build a highway bridge to replace the car ferry. They were sent to the Upper Keys in May, 1935.

Bronze plaque on front of the memorial - 1937

This is an abridged and modified version of the text published by **Jerry Wilkinson** on the following web site: http://www.keyshistory.org/hurrmemorial.html.

Knowledge Analytic:
An Introduction

Ralph Hummel

Different work requires different knowledges (plural!). One size does not fit all. Even when mid-management calls it management science.

A look at modern organizations shows that the leadership is seldom trained in science. Executives or administrators claim authority on the basis of an alien reason more suitable to milking the resources of financial markets and government budgets than to mid-management knowledge of production. Workers, too, have persisted in the claim to possessing knowledge: their hands-on know-how, an art often kept under wraps, silenced by management science and disregarded by the executive suite.

A new way of dealing with resulting conflicts identifies and tests the compatibility of different kinds of knowledge in accomplishing work. It is called the knowledge analytic. It goes below the usual focus on rationalized social relations, values contests, personality conflicts, communications failures, and just ordinary politics to their underlying determinants: the underlying knowledges themselves.

Corporations, Agencies and Unions

Three kinds of knowledge – executive reason, mid-management science, and worker know-how – are synthesized to produce conceptual knowledge of the modern organization. Conceptualization allows workers to learn only *one* rule to work on *many* otherwise different production operations, yielding the great efficiencies that enable modern organization to win out over pre-modern crafts work. Claim to expertise in developing the concept places mid-management in the central position of superior technical power. Yet the executive elite still rules. And workers keep and hide their know-how (though they suffer from inability to use such know-how as a tool in union negotiations). Hidden costs, latent dysfunctions, and systemic distortions are only the flip side of the success of the present synthesis of knowledges in modern organizations. This knowledge theoretic perspective is represented

here as one version of the knowledge analytic by the work of David G. Carnevale and Ralph P. Hummel, both organization theorists.

Hurricanes and Space Shuttles

The foremost analyst using the knowledge analytic, Terence Garrett, is represented here by his critique and criticism of managers in the space shuttle program and executives at all levels in the response to hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Their troubles are traced to multiple knowledges and power differentials between them in three agencies: the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Citizen Knowledge and Self-Help

Organization theorist and planning policy consultant Mary R. Schmidt follows up her previous award-winning essay entitled "Grout." This traced a dam collapse to management's overruling of the concerns of lowly workers. Here Dr. Schmidt tackles the role, past and potential, of ordinary citizens' knowledge in earthquakes and floods. Expanding knowledge analysis into social criticism, she calls for a larger role of citizens and workers in the planning for disasters and their mitigation. In contrasting detached government knowledge with local knowledge, she pursues a phenomenological solution: We need programs embedded in people's lives because of the advantage of addressing likely victims in their own terms.

Changing the Minds of Managers

Environmental sustainability expert Nicholas C. Zingale, also an organization theorist and policy analyst, outlines a model for helping environmental managers change their mind in implementing regulatory policy by choosing among competing social paradigms for sustainability. A gap in Environmental Management Systems exists in the area of attitude change, and Zingale proposes ways of linking knowledge and know-how to the formation of attitudes. He proposes a model for change, taking managers from science to phenomenology by identifying stages of coping with work experience. He offers an explanation for how contemplation is a significant transitional stage from mere rule-following to developing a felt sense for the whole.

The reader may want to keep in mind the underlying theorem of the knowledge analytic:

The causes and reasons for modern organizations' failures are to be sought in conflicts between and within kinds of knowledges (plural) that produced the original success of such organizations.

The Innovation and Discovery in Factory and Bureaucracy: Theory, Art and Method of the Knowledge Analytic

David G. Carnevale and Ralph Hummel

It is the genius of the modern organization to function by integrating three kinds of knowledge: executive reason, management science, and working know-how. Trouble ensues when this integration fails. Then we look to innovation and discovery for solutions.

Heart Trouble: The Working Level

Organization redesign at the working level, however, is seldom a matter of great insights. Work itself is a moment-by-moment coping. The worker stays attuned to successful practices but must develop a sensibility, even before making the next working move, to obstacles and opportunities uncovered in the working itself. For work itself is not conveniently divided into our plans and their execution. Scientific management has attempted to separate the working from the planning, but it has had to pay a price: despite all external measures of control, no job description – no matter how empirically based – can fully define all the work that goes into the job. Any job description is a description of the surface of work, without getting to the heart of it. Scientific management can tell you all about the job, but it can know nothing of the work.

It is to allow the view from the inside to emerge that analysis of the knowledges active in the modern organization, while not setting aside science, focuses on methods that take into account the actual experiences of working. There are different ways of knowing – here we are inspired by a book entitled "Women's Ways of Knowing" that helped expose the systemic conflict of knowledges in organizations. These may include ethnography, ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism, philosophy of science, phenomenology, sociology of knowledge, and so on. But no matter what the approach, if it is to give an inside look at work, it must focus on knowledge conflict in spotting organizational troubles. The motto is to ask, "What kinds of knowledge are at odds here?"

Job vs. Work

No matter how tightly management defines my job, the work itself is always mine, and what I become is shaped by the work. Work is what I make of it. In this sense, I belong to the work just as the work belongs to me. The self of the worker is from the beginning immersed in situations, partly clear but obscure in the parts that are still emerging.

In actual work, the tools of seeing work from the outside, reason and science, do not directly apply. Actual working is a place where reason and science cannot fully work because the material they try to control has not yet congealed into objects and even the logic of relations between the worker and the work is not yet valid because both the worker and the work are still emerging.

Even time is bent back on itself as the worker typically and innocently indicates when he or she says, "I've lost all track of time," or, on emerging, "Where has the time gone?" Or, in less extreme situations, "That took no time at all."

Having a sense for what comes next requires what we as outsiders denigrate as merely a judgment call. The modern organization, it turns out, must rely on such calls to fill the gaps left by logic and science. Those of us seeking a complete picture of knowledge conflicts must rely on art as well as on reason and on science. Trouble can always be traced to a collision of reason, science, and working know-how – and to the power struggles involved in their synthesis.

Ironies of Knowledge and Power

To solve organizational troubles, or at least to expose their origins beyond the usual suspects, knowledge analytics studies knowledges (plural!) and power. It finds and pursues typical contradictions built into organizational knowledge structure as if by a designer with a great sense for irony. A key irony of modern design: The best place to discover solutions to working trouble is also the place of least power to implement them. Free worker/work relationships that would favor discovery, are relegated to the lowest level of the organization. The science-based organization, which separates planning of work and its execution, begins at the working level. It is there, and not in management concepts, that working reality is first found. There the work in a sense "speaks to us" – though only when properly addressed. Where management deals with abstractions detached from the working experience and tries to impose top-down job designs, the worker can never fully evade the realities that emerge between himself and the work.

Yet, to outline a second irony: Management knowledge, despite managers' inability to actually do the work, remains dominant over working knowledge.

The secret of modern organization lies in the concept. The concept contains an insight pointing to vast efficiencies: If at work we find out how to make *one* thing, we can use that knowledge to make *many*. All we have to do is discover the rule that governs the making. Similarly in providing a service: Once I know the rule as to what allows one student to learn, I can use that concept on all students of the same type (if there are such types).

Concepts are the tool of all science. Galileo pointed to the origin of the word when, formulating a law of motion, he wrote in Latin: "…mente concipio" – "I conceive in my mind" an object hurled into space that travels on in the same plane forever unless impeded. Concepts are formulated by management science with an eye not only to laws of nature but toward the "natural" imperatives of modern organization: efficiency, economy, productivity. It is no historical accident that a financier named Joseph Wharton sent the engineer Frederick Winslow Taylor to the Bethlehem Iron Co. to pursue efficiency goals. It is also no accident that the man later recognized as father of scientific management specifically prohibited any work system in which the worker would retain any remnant of judgment of his own. Science in the modern organization from the beginning meant not only taking advantage of the power of concepts but the concept of power.

Innovation, not discovery, is what is left to management in dealing with trouble. In technology or in techniques of managing human beings, new and imaginative redesign of the job is the tool of choice in mid-management's toolbox of controls. The result does not accrue to the benefit of workers simply because the energies of innovation are directed to comparative improvements in which one technique is sharpened in relation to another rather than being grounded in the working experience.

A final, though not last, irony is that mid-management itself is deprived of autonomy by the executive suite operating with numbers meaningful to financial markets or government budgets but not meaningful to either the science or the art of working. Pressed from above and below, mid-management increasingly turns artfully to the dodge of the new. But trouble persists because innovation from the top can only incidentally aid the emergence of truths emerging from the work itself.

Issues of power and knowledge persist also between the middle and upper levels of management. Early last century, economists celebrated the replacement of owner control by management control. How then did it happen that managerial knowledge itself was later replaced in the position of power by the numbers knowledge of the executive or administrative elite beholden to financial markets or government budgets?

Knowledge analytics focuses on the synthesizing role of the concept. The concept mediates between direct but pre-conceptual knowledge of work at hand for the worker. But is also is obedient to the economic categories – return on investment, quarterly reports, performance on the stock markets – i.e., obedient to the axiomatic categories that define what passes in economic terms for a rational mind. We are challenged by a *bon mot* of Immanuel Kant's that, in science, concepts without empirical content are empty, and organized perceptions without

concepts are blind. This view of science as a synthesis of categorical reason and empirical material signals a prophetic precognition of what it would take for middle management to take actual know-how of he worker and develop scientific knowledge. But this view also concedes that two things are out of our hands when engaged in modern management: Judging, ahead of any empirical test, which of many theories, rules or laws of nature applies to a specific problem situation is a matter of aesthetics, and the categories and logic within which concepts are formed may themselves be the result of what are from strictly scientific perspective irrational forces in the economy.

To the knowledge analytic eye, the rationalistic thinking done by executives and their staff at the top emerges as a kind of free-floating knowledge of its own, as is the slightly less abstract management science, and in contradistinction to the grounded hands-on know-how displayed by the lowest rank of the organization: the workers. We then need to consider how failure to develop all three kinds of knowledges explains the inability of the most sensible part of the organization, the workers, to organize themselves and their knowledge in challenge to the corporation or government agency.

We proceed in two parts.

Part I, Concepts, defines management knowledge as conceptual knowledge given form by executive authority and, filtered by science, given content based on working knowledge. We then attempt to explain how mid-management was forced into submission to numbers-oriented executive knowledge. How did the elite go from a regulative function over organizational reality to taking over and distorting mid-management's function of determining it scientifically? (*Cf.* Garrett, 2006; Hummel, 2006)

Part II, Consequences, develops the theoretical implications of the Knowledge Analytic© further by rethinking a familiar kind of labor organization under knowledge analysis and asks these questions: Why have unions in general failed to protect working knowledge as essential to worker interests?

Part I: Concepts

First, when it comes to accomplishing work, the concept is so much more powerful than the know-how of traditional crafts: Under the motto "I have seen this before; I can do it again" (*Cf.,* Schutz, 1966:92-132), a crafts worker may know a particular experience more fully than a manager. He knows not only working motions dictated by the job design, he knows the subjective moves that emerge from the work itself and are necessary to accomplish that work: a working-class hermeneutic. But when it comes to the factory or the bureaucracy, particular knowledge does not satisfy general knowledge needs. Know-how simply does not translate across the enlarged span of tasks needed to be performed on many repeated occasions. Here, working by recalling past experiences – knowledge by association – is relatively inefficient when compared to working by concept, which provides general rules

The concept captures in *one* thought what is true of the *many*. "Many" here refers to past experiences. Present-day concepts show how this past know-how of experiences can be mastered by a simpler set of methods once the concept has established their generic characteristics.

Experience can be manipulated. Jobs can be designed to force experiences to repeat themselves whether there is a contextual sense or not – i.e., mass production in the factory and mass processing in the bureaucracy. In that case, the quality of knowledge by association, though retaining its necessity in filling gaps not covered by rules, becomes less important. Management even begins to deny its existence. The price of course is that, separated from the larger social effects of service rendered or product produced, the work appears to the worker as specifically meaningless. Yet, particular working knowledge is in practice still silently tolerated if any work, as distinct from going through the motions of job performance, is to go forward at all. Specifically, workers are permitted to deal with subtle but still inescapable differences and uniquenesses that appear within small arenas ugly and crippled but leaving a gap to be filled between parts of products made in mass production or between parts of people in mass processing.

Assuming that both workers and managers live in a culture that values economy of effort in relation to profit in product, the limits and definition of the concept can easily be accepted by workers as standards for compliance – even if these dictate actions contrary to experience. In contrast to working knowledge, the concept is not only more efficient, but its very morphology commands obedience: "…knowledges in the plural …have intrinsic power effects." (Foucault, 2003:179).

The concept, from the beginning, conveys knowledge *and* power.

One reason is that working knowledge only vaguely and unsystematically recognizes similarities. We acquire know-how through associating one or several characteristics of an experience with another. But such knowing must be again and again rethought and retried to serve as truths about many experiences. Ultimately, the efficiency value accorded to conceptualization makes it possible to define and operate a work system in such a way that any knowledge outside the conceptualization is seen as non-legitimate: i.e., as not knowledge.

When we transfer the workings of the modern mind to the modern organization, we get the following picture.

Reprinted by permission from *Pyramids of Knowledge/ Pyramids of Power,*
forthcoming
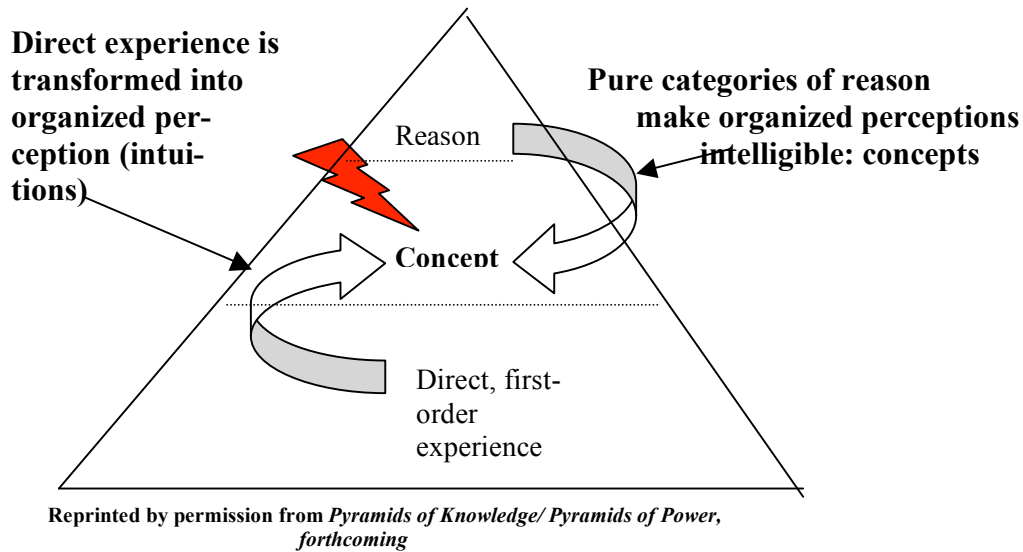
Knowledge formation inside a modern production organization

According to this superimposition, the organizational executives (and staff) would provide the purpose and reason and logic, the worker the raw material for intuition, and the mid-managers combine both into concepts. (Carnevale and Hummel 1996) (Note: Only *organized* perception can be treated by the mid-management conceptualizers as material for knowledge. Literally, this organized perception is an initial "beholding" *[Anschauung]* of a matter's magnitude in space and time that Kant calls intuitions.)

A valid picture of what is to be worked on [objects, people] can allow itself to be guided only by those principles and categories of reason that have not been corrupted by market or constituency considerations. I.e., top management can guide mid-management's attention to things but cannot dictate a valid determination of things.

But an organization is not a mind. To the degree that it is not a mind, it will never be able to perfectly mimic a mind. Even more seriously: All the faults into which a mind can fall will be exacerbated in a system that does not have the mind's architectonic integrity.

In trying to understand the modern organization as one that mimics the modern mind, everything hinges on seeing to what extent such mimicking can succeed. What can the modern organization adapt to its uses? What not? How can faults stemming from non-adaptation be repaired? These are our original questions of success, failure, and reform in the new context of knowledge acquisition. (Carnevale and Hummel, 1996) But since the key to

modern knowledge acquisition is the concept, everything hinges on understanding what a concept is.

What is a concept?

A concept is one unified consciousness of what many different things have in common. Its source is that without which the thing cannot be thought (For example, the roundness of a circle, the straightness of a line, the extension of a body in space, etc.). **The concept synthesizes reason and intuition by raising what intuition gives us into something that can be handled by reason; but it allows itself to be formed by reason only by reference to intuitions. The power of the concept lies in the fact that it shows the unity of what is common to many things that are otherwise different.** (Kant, 1965; Heidegger, 1997:152-153 ff.)

For example: In science's view, the individual caught up in everyday experience sees the world as an endless "Now this, now this, now this" –

This…   this…   this…   this…   this…
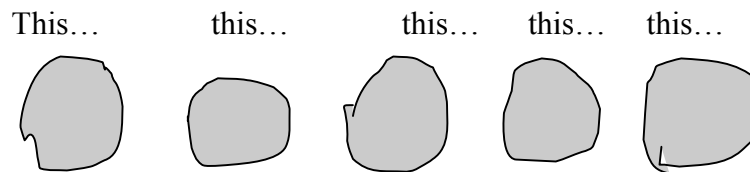
At best this produces a knowledge by association: each new object or task is compared to similar preceding ones. Lessons learned for making are applied again, but with reference to *this* problem at hand right here, right now. The principle is: We have done it before, we can do it again (Alfred Schutz: recipe knowledge).

Science proposes that we force nature to reveal the rule governing all these objects. This is done by asking: What is similar here? What is different? Without which attributes could none of the "this's" exist? The result is the concept.

Concept: All these objects are "circles"
Formula: C= Pi x diameter
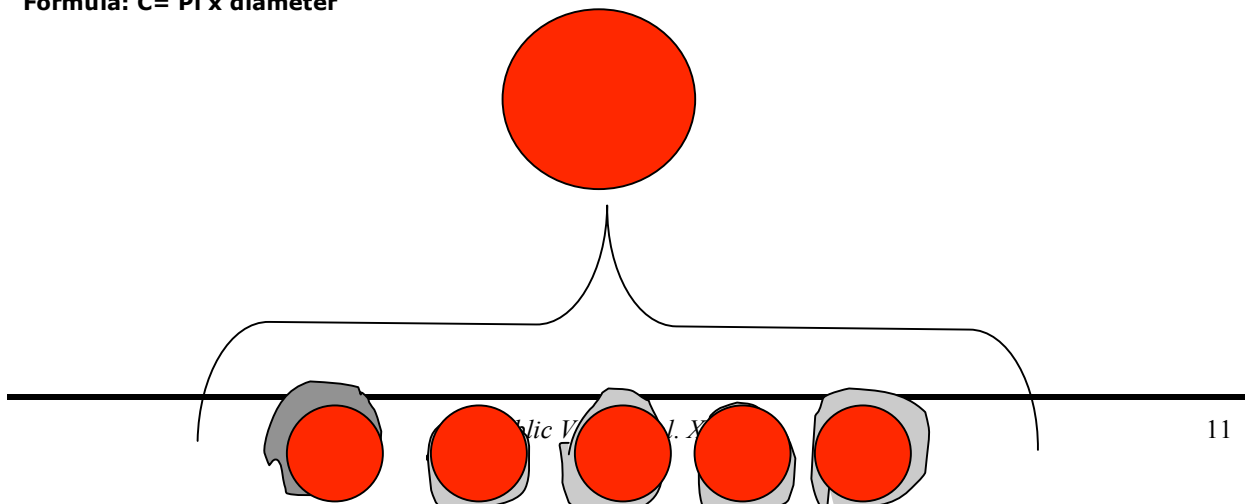
*Where C is the circumference; d the diameter, and Pi = ~3.14….
**Reprinted by permission from *Pyramids of Knowledge/ Pyramids of Power,
forthcoming***

Knowledge formation inside a modern production organization

The implications for production are obvious. The object to be produced is now subject to mathematical measurement and calculation. The concept applied in production becomes a standard. All production becomes calculable. At the executive level, calculation without reference to actual objects becomes possible, also calculation without reference to worker know-how. Workers can be instructed to approach as closely as possible the tolerances of the standard.

Example in manufacture: if I know the concept for dimensioning one locomotive-wheel tire, I know it – and can apply it – for all of that kind.

Example in personnel administration: If I know the job concept (job description) for who qualifies as a worker, I know the standard for all of that type.
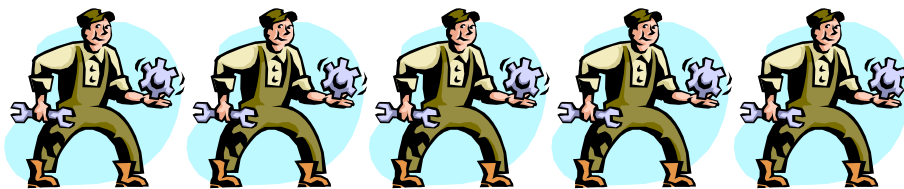
Example in sales and marketing: If I know the profile (concept) for what makes one consumer buy, I know them for all of consumers of that type.

Example in teaching: If I know what makes one student learn, I know it (conceptually) for all students of that type:
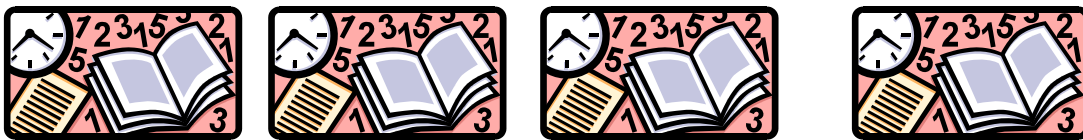
Failure in Success

The consequences for what the modern organization cannot know are apparent: All particular knowledge that does not adhere to the pure concept (e.g., the area between the background and the circle) is missing from the concept. What management does not know and cannot know is *this* experience of *this* task or object or person right here, right now. The general buries the particular.

Remove the original experience of an object at hand from the covering circle, and you begin to get an idea of the background against which the circle is applied as standard. This background is the context within which the worker actually works. He or she labors in the tension between knowing the object as actually encountered and as captured by the circle as concept.

More pointedly: In the worker's working, and only in this experience, does the light *that* something "*is*" still shine through, a light that is obscured by the concept. Only in the particular immediate and substantive experience are we still in touch with the issue of how experience – of things or others – is possible at all. When we deal with management science we enter a world of obscuring concepts. These create a veil around the fundamental experience we have of the being of being in the world.

We greet this scientific perspective and its concomitant technology as providing "short-cuts" without asking about the toll. On such a toll road, because it is not experienced as an issue, we lose the original sense of being engaged in a voyage of dis-covery, in the opening-up of the world to us. This sense of wonder is lost to us without our becoming aware of the loss. We now begin to think it as normal and natural that objects and others stand opposite us. Only gradually does it dawn on us that the condition of how we now *are* as human beings is a hard fate of our own making. For now, having lost the experience of everyday wonder, we are

caught up in the dark mystery of how to get from here to there, the mystery of the subject/object dichotomy, a mystery that enshrines in two opposed places an incurable division of a unity that once was self-evident. (*Cf.*, Heidegger, 1957, pp. 58-59)

The result affects not only the worker.

Definition of Modern Work

We are now able to come up with a definition of modern work adequate both to how work is experienced and how it is managerially conceived.

For the modern worker, working in the modern way means being forced to orient himself to the *concept* of the work rather than to *the work itself*. But it is precisely the work itself that is the way the human being expresses her-/himself. Working makes us human. Working things out is the fundamental activity of a being who needs to self-define him-/herself over and over again.

Today, the concept of the work is what is captured in "the job." Orientation to the job forces the denial of particular experience in favor of the general concept. All experience now is treated by those who possess the concept – management – as deviation from the concept, paying no attention to the direct handling of the whole of the work itself. The worker has to work him-/herself out of the background that is constructed around him or her and that surrounds him/her. That is to abandon his or her own full experience of what is going on – in order to meet job expectations.

For the manager, work is the perfect submission to the concept: ultimately expressed in the reduction of tolerances.

For the executive or administrator, whether in private business or public administration, the game to play becomes increasingly one of the magic of numbers, as if numbers had anything to say, of and by themselves.

Part II: Consequences

Know-How Must Be Defended: Work as Source of Knowledge

Knowledge analysis reveals the necessity of working knowledge even in the abstract confines of modern organization.

When we accept the concept as the coin of realm, we become forgetful of the differences in things and human beings that are covered by the concept. We are forgetful of difference when

we think of the short-cut to knowing and making things that is created by the concept's gathering of samenesses. In so forgetting, we lose touch with the arena of the particular working itself. We are disabled from further being in touch with the wonder that things *are* at all. And so we are estranged from the very source of discovery that is also the source of the raw material for the very narrow conceptual look that we take at things in science.

Repair work in the tension between concept & experience

vs..

Under the concept, from which all particular detail has been removed (circle), working knowledge of a thing seems to be a mere residue: a shadow (back-ground)

When difference between the general and the particular is recognized, working experience appears as the real background against which we establish similarities that make the circle (concept) possible. Work then must first of all be repair work to bridge the gap between concept and experience.

Reprinted by permission from *Pyramids of Knowledge/ Pyramids of Power, forthcoming*

Knowledge formation inside a modern production organization

There is both danger and hope in this.

Inevitably, as life goes on, situations will slip out from under their concepts. This fact should interest managers in maintaining contact with the ongoing experience of the workers. Even in a steady-state world, "…you know that action according to rules (concepts) always involves a certain misfit between yourself and your situation" (Collingwood, 1939, p. 104).

Organizations Protecting Working Knowledge: Unions

If working knowledge is necessary even in highly rationalized work processes that prescribe as many working rules as possible in the attempt to leave nothing to worker spontaneity, is there a way of saving its source? This question arises outside the usual claim to intellectual property, which asks whether a worker does not have the right to protect his investment in his skills just as the owner /investor has a right to protect his investment. Our analysis approaches such questions under the auspices of knowledge: What knowledges are required in the modern organization? Who gets power? Who pays for power? What are the unaudited costs?

Inside attempts to retain or revive working knowledge are called management reforms, and for the last twenty years it is possible to identify as many attempts at reform. These fail because of the very fact that conceptualizing has power effects that frighten most managers into fearing a reversal of such power effects.

Outside attempts to protect worker knowledge from the very beginning include unionization. But unions have traditionally engaged the interest of potential members not by appealing to them as experts in their substantive working knowledge but as human beings in need of protecting pay, health, and then pensions. Yet the often unspoken demand of workers addressed to management has been: "If you won't give us our money, give us our rights."

This begins to address what is really an issue of what it takes to get work done – namely working knowledge – and who controls it.

The management response is, "That's a management issue." Management in turn asserts management rights. But knowledge analysis shows this is mot initially a question of rights but of who knows what.

The claim to authority by management rests on the claim to possessing superior knowledge: the manager is assumed to know more or have a larger picture. Knowledge analysis questions this claim. Such claims may on the surface seem warranted, but at the same time conceptual knowledge itself is based on working experience. There may not be a knowledge justification for any absolute defense of management rights against worker challenge.

Some Examples of the Neglect of Working Knowledge

- **Fact:** When musicians of a symphony orchestra in a Southwestern State wanted to sit in on auditions for new members, management said, No. **Question:** Who is better qualified knowledge-wise to judge a French horn player – the man sitting next to him, management, or the conductor? Perhaps all?
- **Fact:** When state police officers in Connecticut demanded heavier weapons to be kept in police cars for emergencies, management said, No. **Question:** Who knows better what weapons might come in handy, the police officer who has years of experience or management officers whose street experience is years in the past?

- **Fact:** After the U.S. Army failed to provide adequate body armor to GIs in the Iraq occupation, and after private citizens bought superior armor for the soldiers, **[question:]** what knowledge base can justify an order by the Army forbidding the use of privately purchased armor?

Neglected Costs

Without control over work, people are hurt, production drops. Not only is safety impaired but improper tools may be damaged by their lack of fit with the work. The man is made to fit the tools (tool cribs) rather than the tools fitting the man. These are all examples of undue abstraction (idealism) vs. the work reality.

A Revised History of Unions and Knowledge

At the turn of the century, as the designers of organizations recognized, workers knew things about the job that management didn't.   In fact Frederick Taylor, the "father" of scientific management, found in his early contact with workers that "They knew, and he didn't" (Kanigel, p. 171).

Taylor solved the working-knowledge problem with a two-fold stroke of brilliance:

1. He developed on the factory floor the emergence there of a new kind of knowledge: conceptualization; and,
2. By restricting conceptualization to the scientifically trained he forestalled the possibility of the rise of a truly inverted pyramid of knowledge based on the power of worker know-how.

In the first step: He reduced work processes to their "elements." An element was the smallest repeatable activity to which a working process could be reduced. This he accomplished by unpacking and applying the mysteries of the concept.

A concept allows the capture, in one idea, of the uniformities contained in many experiences. In short, when it comes to knowledge, the concept captures many experiences in one idea. This is done by combing each experience for its commonality with all others. Immense gains are made through conceptualization in the power of those who use concepts.

Once you have made yourself a concept of many things or activities, you gain power of not having to think a working move over and over again. You determine the concept's content once and you then can apply its moves to all events, people, or things covered by the concept. In a sense, if you know conceptually what is common to all lathes, you can obviously operate all lathes of that kind. If you know the motivations of all students of a certain type, you can apply the motivators to all of that type, etc.

In applying the power of the concept, Taylor removed the human factor from the scene. Where once workers had "in their heads" knowledge that even their foremen did not know,

their heads were now emptied. Substituting conceptual knowledge for working knowledge as the prevailing language on the shop floor first denigrated mere experience and then replaced any demonstration of it by talk of the concepts "elemental" to any process of work. (Talk as communicating with others, however, requires exercise of another kind of "telling" – the ability to intuitively "tell" the difference, i.e. distinguish between, courses of action.)

Averting Labor Pyramids

In the second and more fateful move, Taylor suppressed working know-how. This once dominant knowledge and language of the shop floor was now replaced by formal knowledge expressed in formal language of the mid-management and the executive suite. This change served to avert an even worse danger (to management) than having to deal with workers who knew they knew what they were doing: the danger that these workers might organize. They might expand their repertoire of experienced know-how by learning the additional power of conceptualization. To prevent this, by assigning all study and planning of the work to management, Taylor established the idea that the science of management belonged to managers and that workers were too stupid to engage in it.

Why did any work-based intelligence have to be taken away? Because there was a serious danger that, were blue collar workers to combine working know-how with conceptual knowledge, they might actually know more than management. And they might decide to do the same with that knowledge that industry and business had already signaled industry and business could do: organize.

Facing the knowledge pyramids of industry and business, then, would be pyramids of know-how and knowledge combined. And in these pyramids, know-how, being the prime knowledge to which all others have to defer, would rule because of its direct linkage to human needs of consumers. Utility of product and service would be the prime concern and set the standard for what should be produced. Mid-management would become specialists in bringing scientific knowledge to bear on the problems of adhering to human goals as standards rather than serving Joseph Wharton's concern for return on investment. And the former executive elite would be reduced to the role of accountants: making sure the figures added up. Executive leadership would be less concerned with satisfying financial markets than with keeping the organization honest in pursuing society-wide cultural goals.

This would be the extreme inversion of the pyramid of power into an inverted pyramid of knowledges. Knowledge would do for first time what it had promised it would do: upset all power relationships by outing power in the service of knowledge.

Unions as a Diversion

How committed even the workers were to the scientific management system may be reflected in the fact that they in fact sought to set up no such inverted knowledge pyramid – but instead created another power pyramid: unions.

Unions are not based on either know-how or knowledge of the type used in the bargaining units they serve. The expertise of union leaders is not in the substantive work their members do, but rather in issue of power and justice….

Our thinking on this is that when you put the corporate pyramid next to the union pyramid, we see all three levels of the former are mobilized; but in the union, though its membership has experiential substantive knowledge (e.g., music making), none of this substantive knowledge can be drawn on for organizing purposes.

Take the mobilization of music makers in the orchestra and the union:

Rationalism

Mobilized · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · Mobilized

Conceptualism

Mobilized, BUT not experience-based in music or policing

Mobilized

Experience

Mobilized · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · Not mobilized

CORPORATION · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · **UNION**
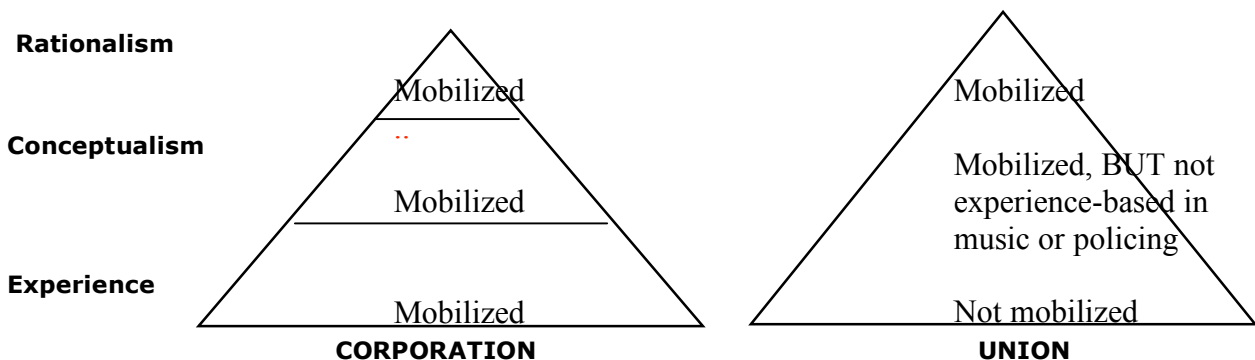
The union functions as a pyramid whose experiential knowledge is not fully mobilized because it does not use member knowledge as the foundation for mobilizing its own potential objective knowledge or numbers knowledge. This is so by design, and enforced by law: rights, due process a and procedures laid down in contract do not draw on experience of, say, bassoon players; cops wanting updated weapons are sidetracked into other tracks (pay, benefits) or into formalistic issues and away from what experience tells them they must have. When the union pyramid then confronts the production pyramid (left), the contest is an unequal one.

The case of body armor for the military requires a slightly different explanation. Instead of a union, we can anticipate formation of informal organizations; no one is going to suggest that such informal groups will be able to change command's tactics or strategy. The cost simply comes out of soldiers' hides.

- Unions are working with only two-thirds of the deck of knowledge.

- Members also do not have the time to be full trained to experience union problems as distinct from music or policing problems.

- Union representatives fail to give concepts in negotiations experiential content.

What does this say about a "knowledge analytic?" It is an easily recognized that people at work do different jobs and know different things which places them on some rung of the hierarchy. But something has gone amiss. Rung on the hierarchy is equated with intelligence or the worth of a particular type of work versus another. And, further still, the shaping of the psyche is impacted. The actions people value for themselves and others are constantly challenged. Individuation through work – the idea that people have a need to grow through their work – is denigrated or abandoned altogether. We are in existential boxes and the meaning of our work and our lives is shaped a good deal by the rules, roles, and regulations we encounter on the job. This is an ontological matter – an existential crisis. It is about choices, who has them, opposed to those who don't, and about what that does to everyone in the organization. Elite or middle or mass, all suffer the injuries of a knowledge system that obscures possibilities and extracts unaudited costs.

References

See also the related work of especially Terry Garrett. Mary Schmidt, and Nicholas Zingale.

Key words: knowledge, knowledge management, working knowledge, know-how, power.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1990. *The Logic of Practice*. Tr. Richard Nice. Stanford, California.

Carnevale, David G. and Ralph P. Hummel. 1996. "Why Management Reforms Fail: A Knowledge Analytic." Paper delivered at the annual conference of the Oklahoma Political Science Association, November, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

_____. Undated. "Why Management Reforms Fail," unpublished book MS.

Collingwood, R.G. 1978/1939. *Autobiography*. Oxford University Press.

Foucault, Michel. 2003. *Society Must Be Defended*. Tr. David Macey. New York: Picador.

Garrett, Terry. 2006. "Katrina, Rita, *Challenger* and *Columbia:* Operationalizing the
 Knowledge Analytic." Paper presented at the panel "Space Shuttles, Dams, Global Sustainability." Founders Forum of the annual meeting of the American Society for Public Administration, March 31 – April 4, Denver, Colorado.

Heidegger, Martin. 1957. *Identitaet und Differenz*. Pfullingen: Verlag Guenther Neske.

_____. 1962. *Being and Time.* Trs. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. New York: Harper & Row.

_____ . 1969. *Identity and Difference*. Tr. Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper &Row – Harper Torchbooks.

_____. 1997. *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant's* Critique of Pure Reason. Trs. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Hummel, Ralph P. 2006. "The Triumph of Numbers: Management and the Mismeasure of Man." *Administration and Society.* Vol. 38:1 (March 2006) pp. 58-78.

Husserl, Edmund. 1970/1936. *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy.* Tr. David Carr. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Kanigel, Robert. 1997. *The One Best Way: Frederick Taylor and the Enigma of Efficiency.* New York: Viking.

Kant, Immanuel, 1965. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Tr. Norman Kemp Smith. New York: St. Martin's Press.

_____, 1987 [1790]. *Critique of Judgment*. Tr. Werner S. Pluhar. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company.

Schmidt, Mary R. 2006. "Knowledge Analysis as Research." Paper prepared for the panel "Space Shuttles, Dams, Global Sustainability." Founders Forum of the annual meeting of the American Society for Public Administration, March 31 – April 4, Denver, Colorado.

Schutz, Alfred. 1966. *Collected Papers, vol. III: Studies in Phenomenological Philosophy.* The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Zingale, Nick. 2006. "From Novice to Expert: Operationalizing Kinds of Knowing in an Environmental Management Setting. Paper prepared for the panel "Space Shuttles, Dams, Global Sustainability." Founders Forum of the annual meeting of the American Society for Public Administration, March 31 – April 4, Denver, Colorado.

Dr. David Carnevale teaches conflict resolution techniques at Oklahoma University. He has published books in public administration, book chapters, and refereed journals. He does an

extensive consulting in organizational development situations. He served 14 years as a union leader representing public employees. He is active in veterans affairs.

Dr. Ralph P. Hummel is the son of a tool and die maker. He has taught political science at Fordham and SUNY-Fredonia, organization theory and public administration at Brooklyn College and the University of Oklahoma. He now teaches political and administrative theory and applied epistemology in the Department of Urban Studies and Public Administration at the University of Akron. He is a director of the Institute for Applied Phenomenology in Science and Technology, Canal Fulton, Ohio.

Katrina, Rita, *Challenger* and *Columbia:* Operationalizing a Knowledge Analytic in NASA and DHS Crises

Terence Michael Garrett

Introduction

The knowledge analytic is based on the reality of organizations that are clearly defined by the people who inhabit them: executives, managers, and workers. Each level of the organization possesses people who have a way of knowing how to do their work.   Problems in organizations arise when there is conflict, or incompatibility, of knowledges (plural). Hummel (2006) submits that those at the higher echelons of the organization, the executives, use numbers as power over subordinates. Problems are accentuated with the problem of "forced commensurability" where numbers become more real to the organization than the actual work experienced by the employees (61-2).   The higher the level occupied, the more abstract is "the work." Executives know their jobs in terms of mathematics, i.e., quantities, numbers, deadlines, budgets, and defining their work as such down the scalar chain of the organizational pyramid. Managers take the numbers and attempt to translate them into a usable form to dictate to workers what needs to be done using scientific management techniques. Workers know their work in terms of craftsmanship and first-hand experience that does not always translate into arithmetic form in turn usable for managers and executives (Hummel 2006; Garrett 2004). The knowledge analytic is depicted as…

> Executives know the ideal product
> Managers know the means as objects
> --
> Workers work (Garrett 2001; Hummel 2006).

Case studies of *Columbia*, *Challenger*, Rita and Katrina are useful for examination because the crises emanating from these important and notable events accentuate the organizational conundrum of the knowledge analytic. In the following sections, I will review and analyze

the NASA, DHS, and FEMA in their response to the respective crises in order to yield new insights for public administration organizations.

NASA Crises: *Challenger* & *Columbia* Briefly Explained

NASA has experienced several catastrophes since its inception, however, the *Challenger* and *Columbia* disasters merit extra attention because of the number of lives lost in each event and both were preventable. The *Challenger* space launch and explosion shortly after liftoff by O-ring failure of January 28, 1986 and the *Columbia* re-entry decision and loss due to structural failures caused by foam destruction of protective tiles (sixteen days earlier at liftoff) of February 1, 2003 are notable management failures in addition to their respective mechanical failings. Both tragedies could have easily been avoided had executives and senior managers listened to engineers lower in the organizational pyramid who had the best knowledge concerning their craft: in both instances the structural integrity of the space shuttle.[i]

Challenger is well known as a classic example where an engineer, Roger Boisjoly of government contractor – Morton-Thiokol, refused to sign off on the launch decision even after pressure placed on him by management within his organization and from the Marshall Space Flight Center. Management, in this case preoccupied with deadlines, costs, and numbers, wanted to launch the shuttle with a colder than normal ambient air temperature. Boisjoly responded that the cold weather would lead to the O-rings not sealing properly and he "was asked to support my position with data, and I couldn't support my position with data" (Presidential Commission on the Space Shuttle *Challenger* Accident, 1986, Vol. IV, pp. 664-667). NASA Management eight hours prior to the actual launch decided to go ahead with it anyway. Boisjoly strenuously objected and refused to sign the pre-launch paperwork citing concerns over the failure of the rubber O-ring to expand properly between the solid rocket booster segments in previous cool temperature launches that allowed "blow-by" of hot gases potentially causing an explosion (Garrett 2001, p. 69). Boisjoly's fears were realized the next day when the *Challenger* exploded immediately after liftoff.

Columbia offers further insight into the failings of the NASA organization, especially at the executive and management levels. The shuttle exploded upon reentry into the earth's atmosphere sixteen days after its launch. The mechanical cause for failure was from foam fragments that hit near the intersection of the wing and the main body of the craft that fatally weakened the surface area tile allowing for intense heat to burn through the structure. NASA engineers had repeatedly agitated in meetings, calls and email messages for management to examine via satellite the physical structure of where they believed the foam had struck. According to the Columbia Accident Investigation Board (CAIB), there were eight opportunities that management missed in order to deal with the tile damage (Garrett 2004, p. 393; CAIB Report 2003, p. 167). NASA managers such as Shuttle Program Director Ron Dittemore and NASA Mission Management Team Manager Linda Ham, feeling pressure from higher level NASA executives, refused to use scarce agency resources to examine the potential damage, citing cost overruns for the use of an Air Force satellite and a possible risky space walk. The agency managers: (1) did not have a contingency plan for a re-entry emergency, (2) thought nothing could be done in the event of such an emergency, and (3)

exhibited a lack of "safety-consciousness" where "bureaucracy and process trumped thoroughness and reason" (Garrett 2004, p.394; CAIB 2003, p.181). As in *Challenger*, management failure to recognize the importance of those who know the work best, the engineers, led to tragedy – the deaths, as before, of seven astronauts.

NASA Postscript: *Challenger, Columbia* Redux *Atlantis* and *Discovery*

The launch of *Discovery* brought about once again some of the worst fears from the NASA organization. Five pieces of foam, one piece weighed 0.9 pounds, fell at launch and if the largest piece had struck the shuttle, the result could have been the same as in the *Columbia* mishap (Schwartz, August 19, 2005). Over two years had passed since *Columbia* and "NASA engineers were surprised and disturbed when a one-pound chunk of foam broke free from this ramp area despite years of efforts to eliminate or reduce foam shedding" (Leary, December 16, 2005). The foam problem has not been resolved and the shuttle program has continuously delayed future scheduled flights of *Atlantis* and *Discovery*. NASA administrator, Michael Griffin, has asked Congress for more money as "the shuttle program will have to spend $3 billion to $5 billion more than planned to fly 19 more flights before the program ends in 2010" in addition to its annual budget in excess of $16 billion (Leary, December 16, 2005). Is this déjà vu' for the NASA organization?

The 2005 Hurricane Season: Katrina & Rita

The 2005 Atlantic hurricane season was one of the worst in history. Hurricane Katrina was one of the most disastrous with about 1,400 people dead,[ii] 3,200 still missing,[iii] and 2 million victims[iv] from the August 29, 2005 storm. The economic damages from the storm are still being tallied as the storm initially hit portions of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. Hurricanes are normal in the sense that the region has experienced them during "prime" hurricane season, which typically runs June 1 to December 1 each year. Increased technology and ability by the National Hurricane Center meteorologists have allowed for more early warning capability and predictability for the size and strength of hurricanes and where they may make landfall. By the time the storm hit New Orleans and the immediate Gulf Coast area, warnings had been issued several days before Monday, August 29, 2005.

The problem for public administration stems from the fact that government officials – federal, state, and local, and non-profit organizations (e.g., the Red Cross, etc.) were stymied by a lack of leadership, primarily from the federal agency that in the past usually heads and coordinates evacuation, relief and recovery efforts – the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This leadership void was further exacerbated by partisan differences between the president's administration, governors, and the mayor of New Orleans, respectively. States in the region tried to take the lead for aiding their respective citizens. Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco declared a state of emergency on Friday, August 26, 2005 and Governor Haley Barbour did the same the next day in Mississippi.[v] Both governors attempted to

mitigate the scope of the hurricane's impact but their efforts, and those of local government entities, were lessened by federal inaction and lack of initiative. The conflict between government officials is captured by this exchange in *The Washington Post*:

> Behind the scenes, a power struggle emerged, as federal officials tried to wrest authority from Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco (D). Shortly before midnight Friday, the Bush administration sent her a proposed legal memorandum asking her to request a federal takeover of the evacuation of New Orleans, a source within the state's emergency operations center said Saturday.
>
> The [president's] administration sought unified control over all local police and state National Guard units reporting to the governor. Louisiana officials rejected the request after talks throughout the night, concerned that such a move would be comparable to a federal declaration of martial law. Some officials in the state suspected a political motive behind the request. "Quite frankly, if they'd been able to pull off taking it away from the locals, they then could have blamed everything on the locals," said the source, who does not have the authority to speak publicly (Roig-Franzia & Hsu, September 5, 2005, p. A1).

The mayor of New Orleans, Ray Nagin, complained that the state and federal help he had requested was ridiculously slow in coming. In addition to the inept response to his request for help, Nagin lamented the fact that people who were basically trying to survive were being castigated as thieves and looters:

> I am telling you right now: They're showing all these reports of people looting and doing all that weird stuff, and they are doing that, but people are desperate and they're trying to find food and water, the majority of them.
>
> Now you got some knuckleheads out there, and they are taking advantage of this lawless – this situation where, you know, we can't really control it, and they're doing some awful, awful things. But that's a small majority of the people. Most people are looking to try and survive. (Robinette, September 2, 2005)

The governors and the mayor had to deal with the aftermath of Katrina without much initial help from the federal government. Rather, the feds were primarily concerned with obtaining power and embarrassing state and local officials – from the perspective of the governor and mayor of New Orleans' office. In addition to the lack of aid, the mayor of New Orleans had to deal with a caricature of victims who had become "looters" when the reality was that he, and the people in the city, saw people trying to survive an awful situation.

The reorganization efforts by the Bush administration after 9/11 led to FEMA being placed under the auspices and organizational control of the Department of Homeland Security. As such, there was confusion as to who would be in charge in the event of a national calamity the size of Hurricane Katrina. Unfortunately for all involved, the decision to appoint a "Principal Federal Official" was made by DHS Secretary, Michael Chertoff, who in turn appointed FEMA Director Michael Brown who was unsure of whether he was in charge, even after the memo was received from Chertoff.[vi] By the time Katrina hit the area, it was too late and thousands of residents were left stranded on their rooftops as the levees broke under the pressure of the storm surge of a category four hurricane. Thousands more residents evacuated to the Superdome and other city facilities only to arrive and find no food, water, transportation, or medical services available for several days after the initial landfall. All of this occurred despite the fact that federal, state and local officials engaged in a "preparedness exercise" the previous year dubbed "Hurricane Pam."[vii] By nearly every measure and analysis, the overall government response to Hurricane Katrina has been judged a disaster.

Hurricane Rita made landfall four weeks later on the border of Texas and Louisiana on September 24, 2005. Apparently the Bush administration was not going to allow a repeat performance of the debacle during Katrina. According to VandeHei and Balz (September 25, 2005), "Bush's government was on war footing for Rita's arrival: The Pentagon moved 500 active-duty troops to the region and put 27,000 National Guard soldiers on standby. Navy ships were positioned nearby, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, whose performance immediately after Katrina symbolized the federal government's mistakes, sent in helicopters, supplies and rescue teams" (A 20). Houston and Galveston, cities initially in the path of Rita, had been mostly evacuated though there was a tremendous problem of traffic jams with evacuees running out of gas and abandoning their vehicles on the interstates and other highways out of the cities. Rita had nowhere near the same impact as Katrina in terms of casualties (though there were a few as a result of the evacuation) but caused the Bush administration to take note of the importance of domestic natural disasters as compared to the impact of terrorist actions.

On the political front, material aid and support may have been more forthcoming in Texas because of the president's political connections and history with the state as its governor. Governor Rick Perry (R) was the Lieutenant Governor during George W. Bush's second term as governor of Texas. Partisanship has its limits as there is no way to prove that partisan political connections led directly to better agency coordination between the feds and the state of Texas for Hurricane Rita.

The Legacy of the Pyramid and Having It Both Ways: Executive Level Rational Detachment Leading to Disaster in Crisis Management

"Management decisions made during Columbia*'s final flight reflect missed opportunities, blocked or ineffective communications channels, flawed analysis, and ineffective leadership."*
– Source: The *Columbia* Accident Investigation Board *Report*, August 2003, p. 170.

"The [CAIB] board's conclusion that the present shuttle is not inherently unsafe is based on conjecture and not an objective investigation…. The shuttle launch system has an unacceptable catastrophic failure rate of one in 57 flights." – *Source*: Don Nelson, retired aerospace engineer at NASA, in the *Houston Chronicle*, Sunday, 9/21/03.
"Can I quit now? Can I go home?" – Michael Brown, FEMA Director, Monday, 9/28/05 – *Source*: *The Washington Post* 12/23/05.

"We are extremely pleased with the response that every element of the federal government, all of our federal partners, have made to this terrible tragedy." – *Source*: Michael Chertoff, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security -Wednesday 8/31/05.

"Brownie, you're doing a heck of a job." – President George W. Bush, Friday, September 2, 2005 – *Source*: White House 9/2/05.[viii]

One of the keys to understanding the knowledge analytic with regards to the executive/management separation of knowledge during Katrina is exemplified by the following exchanges between National Hurricane Center (NHC) Director, Max Mayfield, Michael Brown, ex-FEMA Director, Frances Fragos Townsend, Presidential Homeland Security Advisor, Michael Chertoff, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary and President George W. Bush regarding whether New Orleans was sufficiently ready to withstand a category four or five hurricane:

> "I don't think anyone can tell you with confidence right now whether the levees will be topped or not, but that's obviously a very, very great concern," Mayfield said.
>
> After the storm, Bush said, "I don't think anyone anticipated the breach of the levees," and Chertoff agreed…. Bush, who participated in the FEMA briefing on August 28, assured other officials that everything was under control. "I want to assure the folks at the state level that we are fully prepared to not only help you during the storm, but we will move in whatever resources and assets we have at our disposal after the storm to help you deal with the loss of property. And we pray for no loss of life, of course," he said (CNN.com -"Transcript Shows…," March 2, 2006).

We see here that the NHC Director told President Bush and DHS Secretary Chertoff that Hurricane Katrina could potentially be a huge disaster for the New Orleans Gulf Coast area. An interested "hands-on" president, seen publicly appearing to be attentive to the briefing he was receiving before the hurricane hit landfall, was the image that the White House wanted to project. However, the responsibility for the failed response presents another image that the president and his senior leadership wanted to shift to an underling, in this case, FEMA Director Michael Brown. DHS Secretary Chertoff seemingly accepts responsibility for the

mistakes that were made regarding the incident, but pinpoints most of the blame on Director Brown, with the help of the Presidential Aid, Frances Townsend:

> "It was the president who acknowledged the response to Hurricane Katrina was insufficient, and it was the president who first sought the lessons learned," said Townsend…. Responding to a draft House report that said the administration disregarded warnings of Katrina's threat to New Orleans and that Bush was slow to become engaged, Townsend said, "I reject outright any suggestion that President Bush was anything less than fully involved."

> … Chertoff acknowledged that the government waited too long, until after Katrina make landfall, to mobilize troops, vehicles and aid needed to rescue and remove victims from New Orleans, adding to deaths and suffering. He said that under his watch, federal emergency plans and command of the crisis that killed more than 1,300 people broke down. "I am accountable and accept responsibility for the performance of the entire department, good and bad."

> …Townsend and Chertoff condemned former FEMA director Michael D. Brown, who testified to the Senate on Friday that the administration mishandled domestic preparedness by overemphasizing terrorism. The result, he and state emergency managers have said, has taken money and focus away from natural disasters, FEMA and state responders.

> Taking aim at Brown, Townsend said one can learn from experience or "become bitter and lash out, trying to find someone, anybody, to blame, and unfortunately we have seen that already." She added: "We cannot attempt to rewrite history by pointing fingers or laying blame."

> Chertoff also attacked Brown, with whom he had feuded since becoming secretary six months before Katrina hit.

> Three days after Brown told senators that he went straight to the White House and did not call Chertoff the day of Katrina's landfall because it would "have wasted my time," Chertoff said: "There is no place for a lone ranger in emergency response." He added that the cost "is visited on too many innocent people."

> In [an] email statement, Brown called Chertoff's criticism "disingenuous" and said he saw vindication in vows to boost money and staff for FEMA. "Personal attacks on me by Secretary Chertoff are simply an attempt to ignore the information I gave to department leadership throughout my tenure regarding FEMA's marginalization," Brown said (Hsu 2006, A1).

These examples of discord exemplify the executive leadership style of the Bush administration regarding the Katrina disaster. Apparently sensitive to the poor response to Hurricane Katrina, President Bush used the subsequent Hurricane Rita event to demonstrate that he was in command of the situation. Arriving at the U.S. Northern Command post in Colorado on September 25, 2005, Bush explained, "I've come here to watch NORTHCOM in action, to see firsthand the capacity of our military to plan, organize and move equipment to help the people in the affected areas," placing Bush's government on a "war footing for Rita's arrival" in response to the poor showing of Hurricane Katrina (VandeHei and Balz 2005, A 20). Executive leadership is now being exhibited in a domestic national emergency on par with the leadership with the war on terrorism.

Discussion and Implications for the Knowledge Analytic

We have seen in these case studies a failure of executive level leadership by the NASA and DHS organizations. With *Challenger* and *Columbia*, executive level obsession with numbers and deadlines drove the NASA organization in the cases of *Challenger* and *Columbia* to launch and reentry, respectively, against the advice of those who know the most about the shuttle systems; the engineers. In both instances, the knowledge possessed by engineers at the working level was ignored and the result was the deaths of seven astronauts in each event. Ultimately, as a direct result of the *Challenger* disaster, Roger Boisjoly was eventually shunned and castigated by his employer, Morton-Thiokol, leading to his resignation. In *Columbia*, Linda Ham and Ron Dittemore were blamed by the CAIB for failing to heed the warnings of NASA engineers, though clearly pressure was being exerted from higher levels in the NASA organization for them not to take the advice from below. With hurricanes Katrina and Rita, executive level obfuscation, bureaucratic turf fighting, and indecision led public officials and administrators to neglect the affected areas of the Gulf Coast by not implementing a plan to help the people of the region to escape safely and securely in a timely manner, thus amplifying the magnitude of the disaster. FEMA Director Brown – and middle manager – took much of the blame for the colossal failure of Katrina.

The Bush administration and Congress's commitment to the "war on terrorism" meant the redesign of a whole new federal bureau – the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) – ostensibly to keep Americans safe from terrorists. The Federal Emergency Management Agency was folded into the umbrella of the 170,000+ member DHS in order to spend more scarce resources fighting al Qaeda, the Taliban, and other assorted terrorist organizations – as well as nation-states that supported terrorism such as Iraq. This action led to another bureaucratic layer and more inertia and indecisiveness on the part of policy makers. Once again, as in the instance of NASA, DHS and the Bush administration ignored the advice from lower level participants – for example, governors in the states, meteorologists, and their eventual scapegoat, Michael Brown.[ix] Besides the political machinations that occur in government especially exhibited in light of such a colossal failure as Hurricane Katrina, the organizational response led by the executives at DHS and FEMA demonstrate the obsession with power, control and its tool – numbers – that is key to the idealism of executive

knowledge in the knowledge analytic. The monetary cost of mobilization of resources to the Gulf Coast region, compounded by other governmental expenses such as the War in Iraq, gave pause to decision makers to go forward with evacuation and relief efforts.

With NASA the central problem was between the engineers and their managers. President George W. Bush and DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff, in the case of Hurricane Katrina, represent the executive level hindering FEMA Director Michael Brown in terms of allowing him to coordinate the FEMA organization and to mobilize resources. Bush and Chertoff were absorbed with numbers, deadlines and power – with the problem of DHS protecting the public and the fact that resources were shifted from potential domestic disasters to "terrorist" ones – and this led to FEMA immobility, in addition to the new layer of bureaucracy created by the reorganization. Obsession with numbers by the executives, in this case shifting scarce resources and reorganization, deprived FEMA and its director with the tools, authority and resources to take action that had been part and parcel of their mission prior to Katrina. State, local and nonprofit organizations were unable to help move people from affected areas prior to the hurricane's arrival and were prevented from doing so by federal authorities in charge when they ostensibly took command of the operations. Also, once it became clear that the disaster was going to be worse than President Bush and Secretary Chertoff imagined, i.e., the hurricane had already landed on August 29, 2005, FEMA Director Brown was put in charge of the relief and evacuation efforts after the fact. The organizational pyramid allows executives to get away with placing all the blame on Brown. Similarly, the CAIB placed the blame on Linda Ham and Ron Dittemore for failing to take action for the Columbia mishap, even though pressures came from above (the executive level).

The knowledge analytic captures the propensity of organizations, especially exhibited when managers have to really manage, to place pressure from the top of the organizational pyramid to the bottom. The victims of executive level ineptitude are rarely the executives themselves. Rather, those who pay exist in the bowels of the organizational structure and those who receive the government's services (or not).

Executives are clearly involved in the pressures of numbers and deadlines, even to the point of appointing some unfortunate manager or director to assume the brunt of public, government commission, or congressional criticism because of their own failure or causing a subordinate to be fired as a means for a sacrifice that the public demands as retribution for the failings of the bureau. One may reasonably ask whether this is the ultimate design for the organizational pyramid. Besides the obvious partisan divisions, the lack of concern for knowledge possessed by lower level participants, in this case the governors and mayor, was missed in the events surrounding Hurricane Katrina by the executive level – Secretary Chertoff and Director Brown and their primary concern over the numbers – i.e., how large should my budget be? How can I assume more power *vis a' vis* my opponents in the Bush administration? And after the incident, how can I blame the other guy for organizational leadership failure? These political issues, compounded by an obsession with numbers and power, constitute the loss of sense as to what the DHS and FEMA were ostensibly created to do in the first place – protect the public from domestic disasters and terrorist actions.

References

CNN.com. "Transcript shows governments underestimated Katrina." March 2, 2006. http://www.cnn.com/2006/POLITICS/03/02fema.tapes/index.html . Accessed 3/3/06.

Columbia Accident Investigation Board. (2003, August). *Report* (Vol. 1). Washington, D.C.: National Aeronautics and Space Administration and Government Printing Office.

Farmer, D.J. (1995). *The Language of Public Administration*. Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press.

Garrett, T.M. (2001). "The Waco, Texas, ATF raid and *Challenger* launch decision: Management, judgment and the knowledge analytic. *American Review of Public Administration*, (March 2001) 31(1): 66-86.

Garrett, T.M. (2004). "Whither *Challenger*, wither *Columbia*: Management decision making and the knowledge analytic." *American Review of Public Administration*, (December 2004) 34(4): 389-402.

Grunwald, M. and Glasser, S. "Brown's turf wars sapped FEMA's strength," in *The Washington Post*, Friday, December 23, 2005, p. A1. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/12/22/AR2005122202213_pf.html. Accessed 12/15/05.

Hsu, S.S. "Disaster response changes promised: Administration admits Katrina flaws, moves to retool Homeland Security," in *The Washington Post*, February 14, 2006, p. A1. http://washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/13/AR2006021300679.html. Accessed 2/15/06.

Hsu, S.S. "House Report Cites Hurricane Failures," in *The Washington Post*, February 16, 2006, p. A3. http://washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/15/AR2006021500279.html . Accessed 2/16/06.

Hummel, R.P. (2006). "The triumph of numbers: Knowledges and the mismeasure of management," in *Administration & Society*, (March 2006) 38(1): 58-78.

Jordan, L.J. "Pre-Katrina warnings not heeded," in *Yahoo News*, January 24, 2006. http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20060124/ap_on_go_co/katrina_levees.html. Accessed 1/24/06.

Leary, W.E. "NASA plans to remove some foam from shuttle," in *The New York Times*, December 16, 2005. http://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/16/national/16shuttle.html. Accessed 12/16/05.

Lipton, E. "Republicans' report on Katrina assails response," in *The New York Times*, February 13, 2006.

Nelson, D. "Columbia report contains errors space agency can't ignore," in the *Houston Chronicle*, Sunday, September 21, 2003, p. 4C.

Presidential Commission on the Space Shuttle Challenger Accident. (1986). *Challenger* accident. In *Report to the President by the Presidential Commission on the Space Shuttle* Challenger *accident*. 5 vols. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.

Roberts, M. "More than 3,200 still missing from Katrina," in *Yahoo News*, Wednesday, January 18, 2006. http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20060119/ap_on_us/katrina_missing.html. Accessed 1/18/06.

Robinette, G. "Mayor to feds: 'Get off your asses'" in *CNN.com*, September 2, 2005. http://www.cnn.com/2005/US/09/02/nagin.transcript. Accessed 3/20/06.

Roig-Franzia, M. and Hsu, S. "Many Evacuated, but Thousands Still Waiting," in *The Washington Post*, Sunday, September 4, 2005, p. A1. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/09/03/AR2005090301680.html?referrer=emailarticle. Accessed 3/20/06.

Schwartz, J. "NASA sets back date for next shuttle mission," in *The New York Times*, August 19, 2005. http://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/19/science/space/19shuttle.html. Accessed 8/19/05.

Think Progress. "Katrina timeline," at http://www.thinkprogress.org/katrina-timeline. 2005 American Progress Action Fund. Accessed 9/16/05.

VandeHei, J. and Balz, D. "Storm and Bush on the move: Chief executive refashions his readiness posture for Rita," in *The Washington Post*, September 25, 2005. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article2005/09/24/AR2005092401538.html. Accessed 9/26/05.

Endnotes

[i] See Garrett (2001, 2004) for a more thorough examination of the *Challenger* and *Columbia* crises.

[2] See Lipton's article in *The New York Times* -"Republicans' Report on Katrina Assails Response" February 13, 2006. At this point the number of deaths is an estimate with some victims still unaccounted.

[3] As of January 18, 2006 this many people were still not found. See Roberts "More Than

3,200 Still Missing from Katrina," in *Yahoo News*, Wednesday, January 18, 2006.

[4] See Hsu's *Washington Post* article "House Report Cites Hurricane Failures" February 16, 2006. In the House report, all levels of government were cited as "a failure of initiative."

[5] See "Katrina Timeline" at http://www.thinkprogress.org/katrina-timeline for a good synopsis and chronology of events.

[6] See the U.S. Department of Homeland Security "Memorandum for Distribution" dated August 30, 2005. DHS Secretary Chertoff "appoints" Michael Brown, Undersecretary for Emergency Preparedness and Response, as the Principal Federal Official (PFO) for the response and recovery operations of Hurricane Katrina under the "guidance" provided in the National Response Plan. The roles and duties of the PFO include:

- Ensuring overall coordination of Federal domestic incident management activities and resource allocation on scene;
- Ensuring seamless integration of Federal incident management activities in support of State, local, and tribal requirements;
- Providing strategic guidance to Federal entities and facilitating interagency conflict resolution, as necessary, to enable timely Federal assistance to State, local, and tribal authorities;
- Serving as a primary, although not exclusive, point of contact for Federal interface with State, local, and tribal government officials, the media, and the private sector for incident management;
- Providing real-time incident information, through the support of the on-scene Federal incident management structure, to the Secretary of homeland Security through the homeland Security Operations Center and the Interagency Incident management Group, as required; and
- Coordinating the overall Federal public communications strategy at the State, local, and tribal levels.

Secretary Chertoff goes on to state 'The PFO does not impede nor impact the authorities of other Federal officials to coordinate directly with their department or agency chain of command or to execute their duties and responsibilities under law. I am confident that Under Secretary Brown will provide the leadership necessary to ensure an effective and efficient incident response. I request that you provide him your fullest measure of support in the execution of these important responsibilities." The memo is then distributed, too, to all of the cabinet level department secretaries and the EPA Administrator. The memorandum is signed and dated *one day after* Hurricane Katrina made landfall.

[7] See Jordan's "Pre-Katrina Warnings Not Heeded," in *Yahoo News*, 1/24/06. The exercise assumed that a Category 3 hurricane would hit New Orleans that "would overwhelm the New Orleans area with flood waters, killing up to 60,000 people and destroying buildings and

roads. State and federal officials were concluding Pam's findings when Katrina, an actual Category 4 storm, roared ashore on Aug. 29."

[8] Farmer (1995) notes the importance of language and how Public Administration is portrayed to the public. These quotes were selected for the snapshot of time and space as they capture some of the essence of their thinking of the executives who uttered them, reflecting the reality of the situation as they perceive it.

[9] Brown was a former Arabian horse show manager in Oklahoma City and Republican partisan.

Dr. **Terence Michael Garrett**, our faithful contributor, is an associate professor at the University of Texas at Brownsville, Department of Government, Master of Public Policy and Management Program.

Knowledge for Natural Disasters

Mary R. Schmidt

The catastrophe of Hurricane Katrina and the flood in New Orleans in 2005 challenged the very authority of the federal government, which, as Max Weber pointed out, rests on the belief that a hierarchical order can command obedience and achieve control. Ralph Hummel describes different kinds of knowledges: numbers at the top, controlling abstract concepts in the middle, which control disaggregated know-how at the bottom.[x] Things may not be so simple when disasters strike.

Top down authority was little in evidence before, during, or after the hurricane and flooding in Louisiana. But seven months later a "flint-souled" "bean-counting" banker, Donald E. Powell, Chairman of the Louisiana Recovery Authority, had a learning experience and scrambled this pattern. The maid in his hotel room in New Orleans persuaded him to go see conditions in the city for himself, so he put on his boots, walked around, and listened to the voices of ordinary people, the victims. Then he combined their joint knowledge with his power and influence and convinced other bean counters in Washington to push through an $85 million aid package.[xi] He was an entrepreneur of sorts, who began to make things happen in the federal government. We will see more of this in the following story.

The Earthquake Hazard Reduction Program

In the early 1970s, a seismic research engineer in the National Science Foundation conspired with a geologic scientist in the United States Geologic Survey to work with a Congressional staffer in the legislative branch to design and build support for a new law creating a "whole" earthquake hazard reduction program. It would fund not just seismological research but also seismic safety programs throughout the country to protect ordinary people from damaging tremors. After lots of shenanigans, the conspirators achieved their goal with the passage of the Earthquake Hazard Reduction Act in 1977.[xii]

President Jimmy Carter's science office set up a committee of people from the small community concerned with earthquakes to plan for the use of the funds. The group had to defer its planning until the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), could be organized out of a raft of military, civil defense, and other agencies. Its goal was the prevention, relief, and mitigation of all kinds of disasters, natural and manmade. It was to plan using earthquakes as a prototype.[xiii] But only a report, not a plan, was done.

The seismic engineers and some social scientists on the committee had drafted the opening words of their document, "…virtually every level of society – the individual, family, firm, and community…" make decisions affecting seismic safety. "The achievement of a safe environment is basically a shared responsibility of all levels of government and the private sector." These planners had confidence that ordinary people would take care of themselves if they were adequately warned of hazards and knew what to do. Moreover, they believed that after a disaster, victims would cooperate and help one another, forging new bonds, and eventually building stronger communities.[xiv]

The final draft of the report emphasized a different perspective, that of those from civil defense. Experience had taught them that shared responsibility would not work, that preparing for disasters was useless. In the past, people could not be persuaded to act to protect themselves even in their own self-interest. It is "human nature" to live in the present, avoid thinking about future disasters, and assume that everything will be all right until events prove otherwise. Then they will expect government to save them. More frightening, after a disaster, when people are cut off from normal social controls, civil unrest, rioting, and looting will inevitably occur; government must be ready to bring in strong force to squelch the violence and restore social order. Some even thought that warnings of impending disasters should not be issued – people might panic – before plans were ready for what people should do. This was what I call the Hobbesian view.[xv]

When Carter was asked to approve the report and realized that his political rival Jerry Brown in California would benefit the most, he vetoed the whole idea of giving money to the states. His budget office concurred; such grants would open a Pandora's Box of demands from states wanting to plan protection from all kinds of natural disasters.[xvi] The funds went again primarily for scientific and engineering research.

FEMA found a new role after Mount St. Helens erupted. President Carter was persuaded that a major quake would decimate US military installations in California. A top-level military committee was set up and gave FEMA the job of planning protection for defense facilities. For security reasons the details of that plan remained secret.[xvii] This marked the start of FEMA's early romance with all things military.

The seismic engineers kept worrying about doing more than advancing theoretical knowledge. Their basic objective was to save lives. Finally a Chinese friend suggested that instead of analyzing policy problems into parts, hoping to solve them piece by piece, they join others,

find a consensus on the most immediate problem, and build a constituency for tackling that.[xviii]

All agreed that a demonstration program showing what could be done to prepare a metropolitan area for a major quake was essential; a constituency existed for that in Los Angeles (LA). Modest funds were required. So another conspiracy began. The California legislature, sure that Carter would never release any money, was tricked into passing a token bill appropriating funds for a prototype program contingent on a federal match. Meanwhile, the old conspirators in Washington cobbled together matching funds for a three-year program in LA. The state legislature was trapped into releasing the balance.[xix]

Jerry Brown had little use for FEMA's attitude of "Big Government against the Great Earthquake," which encouraged people to feel helpless. At first he tried to organize leaders in business and industry to create teams of firefighters and paramedics to step in after a quake and take advantage of the "window of opportunity" before FEMA arrived. His plans never took off but he did raise awareness among corporate executives.[xx]

At that time, in 1981, the state's Seismic Safety Council, after firing an autocratic director selected by FEMA, assembled its own dedicated professional staff. While FEMA was making elaborate plans for the army to control an area after a quake and tightly coordinate the response [69 FEMA], the state group was acting like a multi-disciplinarian team, improvising, and "learning to live with uncertainty."[xxi]

Under an energetic local director, the team encouraged flexible agreements among firefighters, policemen, and others in the many jurisdictions in the metropolitan area. It collected, nurtured, and publicized support for ways to prepare for earthquakes. It offered technical assistance to specialized groups, such as shop keepers and gas station managers. It gleaned and shared ideas for practical actions, such as letting school children play with doll houses on shaking tables to address their fears. Volunteers showed neighbors how to bolt down their houses, secure their contents, and then shut off utilities when the shaking began. Self help groups readied generators and ladders to rescue people after the shaking stopped. Everyone was getting into the "doingness" of earthquake protection, helping each other prepare for a major quake.[xxii]

By 1985 these projects had spread and culminated in a spectacular Earthquake Hazard Preparation Week throughout the state. The Governor and Yogi the Bear led the ceremonies, as helicopters rescued people from tall buildings, ham radio operators sent messages, local officials simulated responses, first aid teams dealt with mock disasters, and everyone watched TV as old Hollywood sets dramatically collapsed.[xxiii]

FEMA was there with its fire-fighting mentality – "wait 'til the crisis arrives and then send in masses of men and equipment" – showing off its new plane with a special pressroom, presumably to distract the media while troops charged in to stop the looting. FEMA officials were said to be bewildered by the success of the LA program and frightened by a popular movement that was perceived to be out of control. They just didn't get it.[xxiv]

Note that such public preparation did not require strong leaders, abstract concept, more bureaucracy, elaborate paper plans, detailed legal contracts, or lots of money. It did require – these distinctions are important – dedicated people willing to ignore the rules and improvise, "bureaucratic entrepreneurs" who sought every opportunity to advance their cause – saving lives. They were also team players working with others who cared. Rather than analyzing matters, they synthesized or combined ideas, modest resources, and support from various sources, under flexible arrangements. They built on what people already knew and knew how to do, then shared and distributed this knowledge into homes, schools, and businesses, generating a movement that grew into a network of know-how and preparedness throughout the state.

California still has had damaging quakes. In 1989, the Loma Pieta earthquake trapped people without warning on bridges and highways; within hours they were rescued by well prepared crews. In 1994, the Northbridge earthquake severely shook Los Angeles, killing 57 people and injuring 9000 more. Within 90 minutes emergency response teams were on the scene.[xxv]

Some of this success was due to FEMA. After bungling its response to Hurricanes Hugo in 1989 and in Florida in 1992, hurting George H.W. Bush in his bid for a 2nd term, President William Clinton brought in James Lee Witt to lead the agency. The son of a sharecropper and a high school dropout, he had headed up a small office of emergency services in Arkansas; he came in and turned the federal agency on its head. Money that had gone to nuclear survival now went, for instance, to hurricane preparedness.[xxvi]

Witt's "life cycle model of disaster management" began with planning and preparing far in advance and continued long after to prevent their recurrence. Programs were developed to combine intergovernmental and public-private efforts. "Project Impact" offered small matching grants to encourage local communities to take practical steps, such as retrofitting buildings, preventing settlement in hazardous areas, even using volunteers to secure library bookcases, to reduce the hazards of natural disasters. But after the bombing in Oklahoma City, Witt refused to yield to pressures to take on a large antiterrorist role, and after the Bush administration cut funds for the project in February 2001, Witt resigned.[xxvii]

At this point, we should note the differences between various kinds of natural disasters. In contrast to quakes, which unexpectedly trap people wherever they are, hurricanes offer warnings that allow people time to flee (if they can). But New Orleans got the worst of both; the hurricane gave warning but the failure of the levees acted like an earthquake in trapping people in their homes, apparently with little warning.

New Orleans and Hurricane Katrina

FEMA did try to plan and prepare for a hurricane. In July, 2004, it hired a consultant to carry out a five-day exercise in Baton Rouge – not in New Orleans – to respond to a fictitious

"Hurricane Pam." This would overtop levees and flood most of the city, leaving 60,000 people to fend for themselves until help arrived. Planners from fifty agencies at all levels of government spent five days in small sessions working out details of an action plan, using only the resources at hand. But time and funds ran out before plans were complete for evacuating 100,000 people without cars. The Superdome was designated the evacuation center of last resort, without plans for how to get people out or how to house returning residents.[xxviii] The discussions were taped, typed, and encased in large loose leaf binders, for revision, and then buried in the files at FEMA and other offices.

Mayor C. Ray Nagin's belated mandatory evacuation was a remarkable success, in the sense that over 80% of the residents left the city. But as Pam predicted, tens of thousands of people in the poorest neighborhoods, many ill, without cars, or with little faith in warnings, stayed behind. Some of the exodus was organized by the Mormon Churches and eleven congregation of the Church of the Latter Day Saints, which for over a year had been preparing, arranging rides for those who needed them and ensuring that people left with emergency kits, critical legal documents, and plans on where to go and how to keep in contact with family members.[xxix]

On the other hand, in the summer of 2004, the American Red Cross had started what was to be an elaborate three-year experiment, to enlist 90 churches to develop their own evacuation plans, in a decentralized effort called Operation Brother's Keeper. It was trying to invent a program for training people in the congregation how to inventory members, match those with cars to those needing rides, and manage this information to have it ready for the next hurricane alert, but the agency had found that "the complexities are daunting." When Katrina hit, it had enlisted only four churches.[xxx] I suspect it failed in part because it was organized by outside professionals; the independent locals, often suspicious of strangers, were told, not asked, what to do.

Many of the poorest neighborhoods were tight knit communities, defensive of their autonomy. A series in the *New York Times* after the disaster depicted the Lower Ninth Ward, for instance, as being a communal place, with the traditional gemeinschaft characteristics.[xxxi] In such areas, neighbors know each other well. They depend on one another. They have intimate knowledge of others, sufficient to know the meaning of unusual behavior on the street or odd noises in the night, which outsiders cannot possibly understand. They can predict how others will behave in a crisis and who they can count on. They know when to worry and not. But they may not trust strangers; their knowledge of them is limited, as is their broader social knowledge and feel for life outside their neighborhoods. In fact, many of the poorest had never left New Orleans.

They did have their own rich culture, in which they came together in communal action, eating and making music, united in a feeling of belonging to a proud traditional way of life. It is more than any one person or family alone can create or even articulate. It has helped them survive in an often hostile social and physical world.

People knew the levees were essential to their existence. Many who lived in the poorest sections were aware that the levees were vulnerable. After the disaster, widows of construction workers described hearing their husbands talk about how poorly some levees were built.[xxxii] These workmen, no doubt seasoned by years of labor on the river and canals did not need engineering training to recognize poor construction, ask sensible questions or level criticism as valid as any engineer's. When they described how inserting metal reinforcing sheets into the levee was like putting a knife through butter, they demonstrated an embodied, physical feeling for what they could not see. As engineers later discovered, what lay below was often not hard silt but loose peat, which allowed the levees to slide and buckle.

People who live near levees may develop an intimate knowledge of them and notice anomalies, new seepage at joints or a spreading base. Unless they know the meaning of these, they may see no reason to tell anyone, and assume someone else is in charge, or if they do speak up, no one will listen. After a while they don't bother.[xxxiii]

The Myth and the Reality

After the water filled New Orleans, knocking out communications and stalling vehicles, people in the city had little knowledge of what was happening, except what they saw and heard on TV. The media presented continuously repeated scenes of looting and talk about violent crimes. Rumors spread of armed gangs, men escaped from prison, raping, ready to shoot any white man on sight, roaming the streets and filling the Superdome, rumors that grew more hysterical day by day.

The rumors were spread by the mayor and the chief of police. People were fearful of volunteering to help. The police were told to stop rescuing people and go after looters putting protection of property above saving lives.[xxxiv] Rumors traveled up the government hierarchy to the Pentagon, validating the myth of civil unrest and chaos predicted by the Hobbesians years before.

The exaggerated reports not only delayed rescue attempts but also the delivery of manpower and supplies. In order to liberate the Superdome from murderous gangs, the Pentagon took extra time to prepare a more complicated military response, including heavily armed troops especially trained to deal with civilian uprisings because US soldier might have to be ready to kill great numbers of America citizens.[xxxv]

On the other hand, in reality, the television also showed some amazing rescues, and slowly the press began giving a more balanced perspective. Stories began to appear that looting and civil unrest were greatly exaggerated,[xxxvi] many stores were left untouched while others were pilfered only for food, diapers, or cigarettes, and some looting was even abetted by the police.[xxxvii]

The media paid less attention to the reality of people helping people, sharing food and water, patiently waiting. One FEMA official with 25 years experience, at the Superdome through the

disaster, said, "They were the most peaceful 25,000 people in horrid conditions, I have ever known. There was no way they were going to attack anybody."[xxxviii]

It is tragic that more accurate reports cannot erase the images of black people carrying goods from stores and of women in the Superdome screaming hysterically about rapes and violence. Such images are branded into the consciousness of so many who watched TV, reinforcing the reality of racial prejudice permeating this country.

Finally, after suffering hell in the Superdome and convention center, people were herded like cattle onto buses, in a giant diaspora, leaving federal troops standing guard, staring at each other in an empty city, enforcing a total evacuation to get rid of residual hoodlums, while the mold was taking over and filling vacant homes.[xxxix]

Those evacuated by bus were often separated from family members and dispersed to Houston and beyond, to search frantically for kin. Now roughly 200,000 people have not returned but are like refugees in foreign lands, without the social support of extended families and friends and neighbors, which once gave their lives meaning.

One exception occurred in a Vietnamese neighborhood, a tightly knit, independent community so far east of New Orleans that it did not even hear Nagin's call to evacuate. Versailles[xl] was led by a local priest, a charismatic man with imagination and energy, a kind of anti-bureaucratic entrepreneur. At Saturday Mass he urged his parishioners to leave and on Sunday collected stragglers and sent them off to be bussed to higher ground, where they were dispersed to a half dozen cities. He personally tracked them all down and resettled them temporarily with a few Vietnamese churches near New Orleans.

On October 5, when Nagin allowed former residents one day to come "look and leave," the pastor defied orders and brought in fifty of the strongest men, with chainsaws, crowbars, generators, and food, to stay and clean streets and create shelters. Three weeks later, the Archbishop brought in 3000 people to celebrate mass. The pastor used photographs of the crowds to pressure the Corps of Engineers to remove trash and the power company to supply electricity so that 4000 residents could return and repair their homes, months before such work started in more central areas.[xli]

In the rest of the city, people without cars or money could not even return to look at their properties or reclaim possessions. Little was done to reunite neighbors or rebuild old communities. Individual property owners are now on their own, with mountains of paperwork for limited funds, uncertain if they can ever rebuild their houses. These are often scattered in ways that hardly warrant rebuilding infrastructure and levees, unless mid-income in-fill housing is built. That will not restore the old neighborhood vitality.

In retrospect, by making paper plans for Pam in Baton Rouge, FEMA ignored opportunities to help ordinary people demonstrate what they could do, as was done in LA or under Witt. For instance, why couldn't a simple version of Pam been presented to small groups of respected elders and matriarchs in customary gathering place in the most vulnerable neighborhoods?

Trusted teachers or other local leaders could encourage them to talk about what they could do on their own with little outside help or funds, as the PAM planners did, but at a smaller scale. They could ask their neighbors to make a few house calls, to find those needing help in evacuating and persuading those who might be reluctant to leave. When hurricane season approached, children out of school might help, especially if FEMA supplied their schools with computers so they could map block data. Managers of bars and local watering holes could spread the word – word spreads fast in such places – and encourage people to talk and imagine: If the levees broke, where would they find boats? What else would they need? How would they get it all together in a crisis? How could people stay together and then help one another on their return. They might play out many scenarios but all of them would be their own.

Such self-organizing in densely knit places like the Lower Ninth is also a way of consciousness-raising, giving people power. Had more been done in this case, it could have reduced a lot of suffering by people trapped in attics, on rooftops, in the Superdome and later around the Civic Center, their homes – and their lives – in ruins or totally lost. It is too late for that now in the Lower Ninth Ward and other parts of the city, where the social networks and the knowledge within them have also been destroyed.

Conclusions

The knowledges analytic views the know-how of workers as disaggregated and then reassembled into concept for those above to use as controls, under usual conditions. But control failed to work under the unprecedented conditions in New Orleans and a Hobbessian model of man. The alternative is to aggregate, preserve, and enhance the knowledge at the bottom, within vulnerable communities, giving people power to speak up and protect themselves, as labor unions have done for workers.

Climate change, stronger storms, and rising seas force us to expect new natural disasters, from flooding rivers, failing dams, and inundated shores. Needed are plans for preparation, not just response, and practical programs embedded in peoples' lives.

The responsibility for protecting people from disasters lies with all of us, at all levels, in and out of government. Vital are entrepreneurs like the conspirators, Witt, the Vietnamese priest, and Powell, who use discretion and improvise and are able to turn bureaucracy on its head and make it work for ordinary people. The federal government may offer incentives and share information on what people can do as long as it doesn't prescribe "one right way." To face new threats, states should identify vulnerable areas and offer expertise and other resource, as long these are mediated by teams who know the local culture, speak the language, and in their particular knowledge are considered to be "one of us." States might even hold annual emergency preparedness events to raise public consciousness and encourage people to give voice to their knowledge and demonstrate their skills.

As an earth scientist once said, "We welcome big earthquakes as opportunities to advance our cause."[xlii] Katrina offers a fine opportunity to advance the cause of preparing for natural disasters in an effective manner consistent with our democratic system.

References

Gerth, H.H., and C. Wright Mills (1946). *From Max Weber, Essays in Sociology*. Oxford University Press, New York, esp. 228 ff.

Schmidt, Mary Richardson (1988, June). "Planning for the Management of Technological Risk," Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Perrow, Charles (1984). *Normal Accidents.* Basic Books, New York.

Weick, Karl E. and Kathleen M. Sutcliffe (2001). *Managing the Unexpected: Assuring High Performance in an Age of Complexity.* John Wiley & Sons, Inc. New York.

Endnotes

[x] Hummel, R. P. "The Triumph of Numbers: Knowledges and the Mismeasurement of Management," *Administration and Society*, March 2006, 38 (1):58-76.

[xi] Shaila Dewan, New York Times 3/20/06, quoting Walter Isaacson, vice chairman of the LRA,"He had a learning experience…It's the most amazing thing for somebody of his stature. It's because by himself he walked around. He walked around and talked to people," on Powell's coming to understand the plight of poor residents of New Orleans.

[xii] Charles C. Thiel, Jr., Dir., Earthquake Hazards Reduction Group, told the story of the two conspiracies during several conversations in 1982.His story was corroborated in interviews with others.

[xiii] The Earthquake Hazards Reduction Group, Working Group, Staff Notes, Oct. 1977.

[xiv] Ibid., "Issues for an Implementation Plan." 1977: 8. This issue emerged by comparing wording in sequential documents, a method suggested by Martin Rein.

[xv] Office of Science and Technology Policy. "Earthquake Hazard Reduction: Issues for an Implementation Plan." Executive Office of the President, Washington DC 1977: 9.

[xvi] Frank Press, Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, in correspondence with James McIntyre of OMB, May 18, 1978.

xvii Cooper, Christopher and Robert Block (2006). *Disaster: Hurricane Katrina and the Failure of Homeland Security.* Time Books, New York, 50.

xviii Charles C. Thiel, Jr., in conversation, 1982.

xix Joseph Lang, Staff member of California State Legislature, in November 1982.

xx William W. Whitson, Director of Governor's Emergency Task Force, in 1982.

xxi Richard A. Andrews, Director, California Seismic Safety Council, Nov.1982 in extensive interviews.

xxii Paul J. Flores, Director of the Southern California Earthquake Preparedness Project, in a series of interview with him and his staff, in November 1982.

xxiii Sandra Blakeslee, "California at the Ready for Big One." *New York Times,* April 14, 1985.

xxiv Robert E. Olsen, former director of the Seismic Safety, in an interview in 1985.

xxv Cooper, op. cit. p.56.

xxvi Cooper, op. cit. p.61.

xxvii Cooper, op. cit. p.68.

xxviii Bruce Nolan, *Times Picayune*, typed.com.9/12/05.

xxix Cooper, op. cit. p.13.

xxx Deborah Sontag, "Delery Street: A Tight Community Remains Neighbors." *New York Times*. October 12, 2005.

xxxi Christopher Drew, "Inquiry to Seek Cause of Levee Failure" *New York Times*. Nov. 5, 2005.

xxxii Mary R. Schmidt, "Grout: Alternative Kinds of Knowledge and Why They are Ignored," in *Public Administration Review*. (53) 1993: 525-530.

xxxiii David S. Cloud, "Navy Pilots Who Rescued Victims Reprimanded." *New York Times* 11/7/05.

xxxiv David Carr, "More Horrible than Truth: News Reports." *New York Times* 9/1/05.

xxxv Cooper, op cit. pp. 206-207

xxxvi Michael Lewis, "Wading Toward Home." *New York Times Magazine*. Oct. 9, 2005.

xxxvii Cooper, op cit. p.168.

xxxviii Cooper, op. cit. p.197.

xxxix Cooper, op. cit. p.216.

xl Versailles is a place in Saint Bernard Parish, Louisiana. It is along the East Bank of the Mississippi River, about 3 & 1/2 miles below the lower limit of New Orleans. While for governmental and postal address purposes, the community is considered to be part of Chalmette (and by some designations, in part also into neighboring Meraux, the name "Versailles" as a place designation continues in local use.

Versailles was founded by a plantation owner Peter De La Ronde in the second half of the 1810s and named for the famous Versailles in France. De La Ronde proclaimed that his Versailles would soon overtake New Orleans in size and importance. Such major development never happened. Versailles remained just a small town for the rest of the 19th century. In the last quarter of the 20th century, a number of immigrants from Vietnam settled in Versailles, many working in the shrimp boat industry.

xli Cooper, op cit. p.250-254.

xlii Robert L.Wesson, Senior Scientist, US Geological Survey, in conversation in1982.

Dr. **Mary R. Schmidt** has been a sociologist/planning consultant, most recently affiliated with the Department of Urban Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Her current interest is in knowledge around chronic illness in the health care system.

From Novice to Expert: Operationalizing Kinds of Knowing in an Environmental Management Setting

Nicholas C. Zingale

Introduction

When faced with competing alternatives, how does an Environmental Manager know what to do? In the field of environmental management substantial attention has been directed toward organized process interventions for imposing change in an organization. These interventions are referred to as Environmental Management Systems (EMSs). The EMS intervention literature is quick to suggest processes, methods, and procedures designed to achieve admirable voluntary goals. However, a significant gap exists in the literature regarding the impact these interventions may have on influencing social paradigms in the form of attitudes. This research begins to explore the relationship between enhanced ecological paradigms and Environmental Management Systems.

The paper begins by discussing the theoretical perspectives of a science and phenomenology using a model to describe stages of engagement in the world. It goes on to explain this model using data from a qualitative research project that consisted of interviewing environmental managers from within the private sector who have been involved with a voluntary EMS. The paper concludes with an interpretation of the research findings by suggesting that managers involved with voluntary environmental management systems are more prone to be experts in navigating the internal processes of the companies they work for, while having lesser understanding of how deep ecological issues are conceptualized as a part of their decisions.

References

As one interpreter has said of Martin Heidegger, "being is that which makes everything else possible" (Ralph Hummel, personal communication, May 10, 2002). Human beings cannot escape engagement with "being" and must reckon with it on a conscious and unconscious

level at all times. Therefore, to understand "being" it is important to first acknowledge that being is something more than knowing. It is more than a referent for a process of analyzing our charge; it is a way of understanding who we are by carefully observing our engagements with the world and letting these tell us about us. The focus is not merely what "is," but what it means to our ability to imagine it being otherwise. When the determination of what "is" reduces our possibilities of "being," it warrants questioning.

"Being" is not self evident and not a thing. The phenomenologist sees it as making possible the formation of the background of life. It provides a platform for how we know ourselves in the world and correspondingly believe and behave. To recognize "being," we have to be willing to question the basis of everything known to be in the world and accept that it has schematically emerged through evolving references. The use of references (signs, pointers, symbols, archetypes) is a way of picking up partly-formed cues to understand and make sense of how things fit in life. Following these cues brings us closer to not only an understanding of how things are within the world, but what it means for us to be in the world (Polt, 1999).

In our being in the world then, we understand that there is a constant enframing that guides work through the understanding of references. If we want to challenge the frame, it means shifting the frame of references and accepting that the world continuously adapts and evolves by revealing and orienting us to the function of new references and therefore new meanings and purposes. It is this process of reference adaptation, evolvement and revealing that is of most interest because it provides a direction for changing beliefs within a complex system by abandoning the existing system – "we always did it this way" – and undermining the "always" in a move toward negative entropy.

Making and Letting

> "The question of knowledge always depends on being in the world" (Polt, 1999, p. 48).

> "Is it possible for environmentally sustainable language and behavior to evolve in society by going beyond science to a place where science and insight interact?" (Ralph Hummel, personal communication, May 10, 2002).

The process of shifting existing references and revealing new ones for environmental protection is slow and incremental. What is desired to be important is balanced through careful judgment on what is allowed to emerge on its own. Therefore, tracing commonly understood and accepted references using rational, empirical and explicit knowledge is constantly filtered across non-rational (arational), implicit and tacit knowledge that emerges through such deeply held capabilities as desire, selected memory, identity, and the will to change (Dreyfus, 1986). The processes of making knowledge within a preset framework (science) and letting knowledge emerge on its own (phenomenology) are intertwined in everyday life pragmatically in the form of judgment. Judgment taken apart is the precursor to attitudes and the basis for actions (Hummel, 2004). Figure 1 illustrates this relationship.
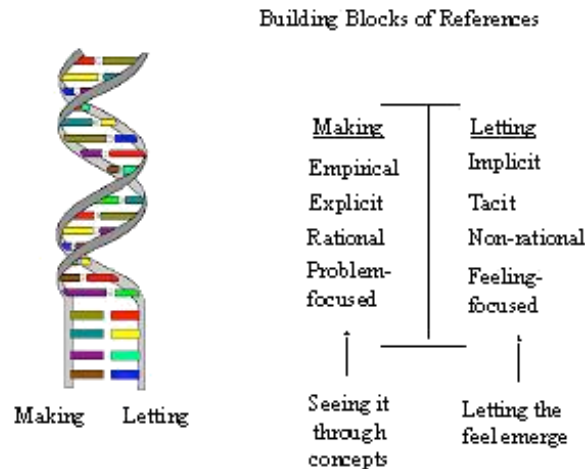
Figure 1: Reference formation

The making knowledge strand represents issues perceived to be capable of being empirically known and controlled mainly by the engaging of existing scientific paradigms. The problems and solutions that evolve from Making exist within an established framework of rational/scientific theory and knowledge. This strand represents ways of thinking that are designed to control and influence subjects on a scientific and rational basis. Conversely, the intuitive side (letting) [of the double helix] represents knowledge revealed phenomenologically. In this approach, the knowledge develops through insight and contemplation by submerging oneself in the midst of the situation and allowing the situation to speak for itself. In this sense there exists a focus on how one finds him or herself in a situation (Dreyfus, 1986).

The different forms of knowledge interact unpredictably, yet in highly complex ways as they form new references by adapting and changing the meaning of existing references. Acting as the constant, "being" stands in the background of this code providing the link between both forms of knowledge (Dreyfus, 1991; Heidegger, 1977).

Consider the following illustration of the relationship between science (making) and phenomenology (letting). During a professional American baseball game there are certain rules that apply that are learned through experience and are expected to be practiced by the players during the game. These rules are not the written "rule of play," but rather commonly known procedures that contribute to the greatest chance of winning. For example, a "left-fielder," (the person who plays in the farthest left position of the outfield) knows through experience that if a right-handed batter is at the plate and the wind is blowing from right field

toward left field, there is a greater probability that the ball, when struck by the batter, will travel to the farthest left side of the field. In response to this, the "left-fielder" may slightly shift his position to the left side of the outfield.

In this case, the "left-fielder" has organized the "facts that matter" specific to the situation and made a decision. It may appear that the "left-fielder" has used scientific reason in the form of probabilities as the exclusive input for this decision, but something more complex has occurred. The player chose to contemplate this situation because of his desire to make the "right" decision, his memory of what it means within a larger context, his deeply held willingness to change based on the identity of who he is. All of this is done within the best interests of himself and in winning the game. The desire to succeed provided the insight that contributes to the scientific process used as part of the decision process. The player's decision was based not only on scientific reason, but also experience, tacit knowledge of the game, ingrained in a deeply held intuitive desire to succeed within a broader context of the game. In this way, the player was being-in-the-game. Failure to make the necessary adjustments and properly field the ball would indicate not being-in-the-game.

The "facts that matter" expand beyond scientific reason and reveal the influence of references on judgment; which in turn shape our attitudes and behaviors. In ecology, this process provides the basis for reference formation, adaptation, and change by allowing a common dimension for the vectors of reason-based knowledge and intuition to connect and form the foundation of what should be done next. Without the resulting facts of what is already there and the pointers to what is still possible (references) we would, in our work, not know what to do next (Ralph Hummel, personal communication, March 10, 2004).

Why Are Attitudes Important?

When individuals find themselves in difficult situations, they are forced to confront their beliefs, attitudes and behaviors (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988; Lee & Holden, 1999). It is necessary to understand that broad social paradigms in the form of attitudes affect individual coping behaviors to create an opportunity for a change in references that influence the way we are in the world (Heidegger, 1977). These attitudes are developed both from knowledge and informed know-how gained through science and experience, and they shape how judgments are made. This model of how attitudes interact with behavior can be best understood first figuratively and then descriptively.

Stages of Engagement in the World
Model taken from phenomenology to illustrate differences between a science paradigm and a phenomenological paradigm

Mode of Being	Conspicuousness	Obstinacy	Obtrusiveness
		Handy	
Resources	Availableness	Unavailableness	Unhandy
Disturbance	Malfunction	Temporary Breakdown	Total Breakdown
Coping	Absorbed	Deliberate-Deliberation	Theoretical Reflection
Epistemology	Expert	Competence Proficient	Novice Advanced Beginner

Phenomenology

Science

Contemplation

Intentional Psychological Desire Knowledge

Making   Letting

The Zone Know How Being-In There

Phenomenology

New Paradigm

Figure 2: Science and phenomenology diagram

Heidegger states that we change what we do when we encounter disturbances. He describes three modes of disturbances when routine actions fail – conspicuousness, obstinacy, and obtrusiveness. Each mode is affected by the types of resources that are available, the degree of disturbance, the level of coping applied and the epistemological axioms evident to the individual. Furthermore, the phenomenological and science paradigm are separated by a break in the modes of being. This break can be best described as a change in the way a person addresses a situation. The first two columns of the table describe the phenomenological paradigm. In these modes, the person is submerged in the work. The resources range from handy to unhandy, but yet are available. Disturbances exist as minor malfunctions or temporary breakdowns. In either case, the person remains focused on the task at hand without breaking out of an absorbed or deliberate coping state. According to Dreyfus, most experts and/or individuals that are competent or proficient in their task find themselves operating most often in this mode (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986).

The science paradigm (third column), is indicative of a mode of being that is obtrusive, in which the individual tries to explain underlying causal properties (Dreyfus, 1991). In this state, work is permanently interrupted to take a new detached theoretical stance. The individual intentionally separates himself or herself from the situation in an effort to explain the disturbance. This is the typical approach to knowledge development and learning can be

stopped at this point. However, an opportunity for phenomenological learning is present as references of what the person knows or understands to be true--and can be easily explained (knowledge) – are learned and thrust spontaneously into an area from which the learner is experiencing new "tacit facts." These "tacit facts" provide the learner a more comprehensive "feel" (know-how) for what needs to be done next and what he or she is capable of doing. This is depicted in the diagram as a contemplation stage. Strict adherence to a science paradigm disallows the important transition that occurs during contemplation from knowledge to know-how (and vice-versa) and forecloses opportunities for epistemological shifts beyond novice or advanced beginner.

In other words, adhering exclusively to a science paradigm limits the potential for experiencing the feel for the whole and therefore new ways to view the world. It is only when the individual begins to allow a "feel" for the situation to take over, that an opportunity occurs for a shift from a science paradigm to a phenomenological paradigm. It seems that the science paradigm requires the person to let go in order to truly experience something new – what newly appearing phenomena have to say about themselves in their own terms.

A classic example of this is illustrated in learning how to a ride a bike and is best described by David Stern in *Essays in Honor to Dreyfus*:

> Most of know how to ride a bicycle. Does that mean we can formulate specific rules to teach someone else how to do it? How would we explain the difference between the feeling of falling over and the sense of being slightly off-balance when turning? And do we really know, until the situation occurs, just what we would do in response to a certain wobbly feeling? No we don't. Most of us are able to ride a bicycle because we possess something called "know-how," which we have acquired from practice and sometimes painful experience. That know-how is not accessible to us in the form of facts and rules. It if were we would say we "know-that" certain rules produce proficient bicycle riding. (Wrathall Malps, 2000, p. 63)

After having ridden, we all know what it feels like to ride a bike and allowing that sense of balance to be ingrained in the know-how of the activity. One simply knows how to ride a bike. The phenomenologist gives attention to this know-how as the product of interaction between self and world. The scientist, on the other hand, would be able to describe the technique of bike riding from a motor skill and observer's prospective, but would be void of the "feel" for riding. It is unlikely that bike riding could be learned from a book based on science.

Dreyfus and Dreyfus Epistemology

Because attitudes have a direct connection to knowledge and know-how it is necessary to exhibit a method to analyze what knowledge means within the context of this research.

Consider that as many great thinkers believe an underlying principle to knowledge exists and can be discovered, there are an equal number that will call this type of knowledge into question. According to Dreyfus and Dreyfus even Plato's famous protégé, Aristotle, while accepting a great deal of Plato's argument (on empirical/objective knowledge), pointed out that there had to be "a kind of judgment that enabled experienced practitioners to apply their principles" (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986, p. 2).

Dreyfus and Dreyfus argued that this kind of judgment is arrived at while evolving from a state of "knowing that," meaning having information about and the ability to "know-how," meaning having an intuitive sense or feeling of how something works (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986). This means that there is something else at play.

The feeling of knowing-how – the sense that one is capable of – is so much a part of everyday experience that its availability is often taken for granted – we just know-how without thinking about what to do. For the most part, walking is an activity that we do every day, yet the best engineers and physicist have been unable to recreate the action of walking with robots – (to the same level of grace and ease as shown by humans). In fact, it appears that as much as knowing-how is a part of everyday living, getting to that point is not always as simple. Take for example the process of learning to walk. At an early age the activity involves a series of successes and failures with new and different challenges that are learned from experience. This process not only involves the concept of walking, but the feeling of walking. The process becomes even more complex when adding the skill needed to walk on different surfaces, up and down inclines, steps, directions, backwards, pace, comfort, etc.

To illustrate this, Dreyfus and Dreyfus consider a five-step course of moving from a novice to an expert. These stages are needed for transitioning from a state of knowing to that of knowing-how (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986). The steps can be summarized as follows.

Steps	Description	Car Driving Example
Stage 1: Novice	• The practitioner follows context-free elements by following context- free rules. • Judges performance by how well the learned rules are followed. • Feel little responsibility for outcome.	Shifting gears based on car speed without regard to the situation – context free. Measure: successfully shifting to the next gear at the correct speed.
Stage 2: Advanced Beginner	• The practitioner, through experience, begins to realize that situational elements arise that require new rules for behavior that may now refer to both situational and context-free components. • Judges performance not only on following rules, but also incorporating situational knowledge.	The car driver begins to use situational engine sounds as well as context-free speed in gear-shifting.

Steps	Description	Car Driving Example
	• Feels little to no responsibility for outcome.	
Stage 3: Competence	• The practitioner becomes overwhelmed with the number of recognizable context-free and situational elements present in the real world. • A sense of what is important is missing from the rules. • Judges performance by identifying a goal and working a plan intuitively. • Feels responsible for, and thus intensely involved in the outcome.	The car driver no longer focuses on shifting, but instead drives with a goal in mind – getting from point A to B. However, still drives with little concern for driving conditions, scenic beauty or passenger comfort.
Stage 4: Proficiency	• The practitioner is deeply involved in the task and experiencing it from a specific perspective. • The practitioner's perspective influences salient features of a situation. • No detached choice or deliberation occurs – the activity just happens, but changes in the activity are analytically and consciously evaluated.	The car driver intuitively understands the speed of the car (feel for driving) in relation to driving conditions and consciously decides what to do next – i.e. shift gears or apply brake, or speed up.
Stage 5: Expert	• Knows what to do based on a mature and practiced understanding. • An expert's skill has become a part of who they are. • Experts don't solve problems and don't make decisions; they do what normally works. • Deliberation does not focus on calculative problem solving, but rather reflecting on one's intuition.	The car driver is no longer driving the car, but is completely immersed in the essence of driving. Speed adjustments take place without thought and multitasking with other activity is probable.

Figure 3: Dreyfus and Dreyfus stages of knowledge

The learning that results in "know-how" is antithetical to science, which requires conscious reflection. Once learned and maintained through practice, "sudden reflection upon what you are doing and the rules for doing it is accompanied by a severe degradation of performance" (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986, p. 17). Consider the golfer who begins to think about the rules and processes needed for a successful swing during the swing or the painter who thinks about the technique needed for each stroke of the brush while attempting to create the masterpiece. In either case, anticipated outcomes will most likely not be the result because performance is hindered by actually thinking about the activity rather than letting oneself move toward the end result.

Therefore, it would seem that the end goal should be know-how and once obtaining this state of know-how, one would never want to return to a state of merely knowing-that. However, in many cases, experiencing mental reflection, although perceived as a feeling of discomfort and negative, is necessary for shifting paradigms and for obtaining a "new," and comprehensive way of feeling about a thing.

Method

Following a survey administered to environmental decision-makers at industrial manufacturing companies in the State of Ohio, a qualitative study was completed to gain insight into how environmental managers would begin to understand their own data. Individual managerial decision-makers were criterion-based selected and interviewed. The subjects were asked specific questions in four categories: (1) general description of their work and company support, (2) questionnaire related interpretation, (3) hypothetical situations, and (4) theoretical. Questions for the interview followed an interview guide procedure for qualitative research (Patton, 1987). The content of the interviews was analyzed and interpreted by identifying coherent and important examples, themes, and patterns to the data.

Criterion sampling allows the researcher to choose cases that meet predetermined criteria of importance (Patton, 1987). For this portion of the research, selection of key managerial decision-makers, identified as upper management and above within the organization, will be the primary criterion. The rationalization for this approach is based on the widely held belief and understanding that decision-making power and influence of companies rests with key decision-making managers that have responsibility for making environmental decisions for their respective companies. In addition, to be considered as a possible subject for this phase of the research, the subject had to be employed by a company that had international presence, meaning that the company had manufacturing operations in two or more countries outside of the United States; the company was publicly traded; and the proximity of contact was within a 4-hour driving distance from Akron, Ohio.

The initial screening involved proximity analysis. Following this process, the remaining companies were searched for on the Web to determine if they had operations in two or more countries and were publicly traded. Once the list was reduced by the criterion screening, the companies were separated into ISO 14000 (EMS) and Non-initiative categories. Telephone calls were made to contacts to describe the interview process and request face-to-face meetings.

Questions for the interview followed an interview guide procedure for qualitative research (Patton, 1987). This approach required that an interview guide be prepared to make sure that essentially the same information is obtained from the subjects (see Appendix C). The guide included the foundation questions for each of the four categories described above. In addition, the guide had a coding system to record nonverbal responses for each foundation

question categorizing the subject's nonverbal body language as passive, aggressive, or noncommittal. The interview guide also included a coding system to categorize the each response to the foundation question according to the Dreyfus and Dreyfus scale as Novice/Advanced Beginner, Competence/Proficient, or Expert (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986). The interview guide was pre-tested and a series of predetermined and screened questions was created by a small focus group of environmental consultants familiar with environmental management systems to assist in the interview guide development procedure. The purpose of this activity was to flush out inappropriate language and to re-affirm the types of questions necessary to explore conditions under which environmental management systems effect change.

The interview guide included at least one question in each of the following categories taken from Patton's work (Patton, 1987):

1. Experience/Behavior Questions to inquire about what a person does or has done.
2. Opinion/Belief Questions aimed at understanding the cognitive and interpretive process of the subject and what the subject thinks about the world.
3. Feeling Questions aimed at understanding the emotional responses of the subjects to the experience and thoughts.
4. Knowledge Questions aimed at finding out what factual information the subject has on a given topic.

Data Collection Procedure

Observations in the field included looking and listening, observing and interviewing. In an effort to triangulate the data, field notes were gathered via note taking and recordings. In addition, subjects were observed during the interview process to gather vague and over-generalized information. The following example is used to illustrate this approach:

Typical Depth Interview Question: The data show that there is no statistical difference between views on global warming between companies that have an EMS and those that do not – why do you think that is?

Vague and Over-generalized Notes	Detailed and Concrete Notes
(1) The subject appeared uneasy when asked a specific question on their opinion of global warming.	The subject's response to global warming was "I don't know enough about the subject to provide you an answer on that question. Besides, our company doesn't contribute to global warming. If people are so concerned about global warming they should look at the how they get to work each morning."

A tape recorder was necessary to allow the interviewer to be more attentive to what was being said without becoming distracted by the fear of missing critical information. All tape-recorded sessions were fully transcribed.

Data Analysis

The content of the interviews was analyzed by identifying coherent and important examples, themes, and patterns to the data. This was accomplished by looking at quotations or observations that went together. An inductive analysis of specific quotations or observations was completed using a cross-classification procedure designed to "flesh-out" categories. This provided categories for discussion and evaluation by crossing one typology or dimension with another.

Interpretation of the data applied a four-step phenomenological analysis procedure as taken from Moustakas (1994) and further described by Patton (2002). According to Patton (2002), "phenomenological analysis seeks to grasp and elucidate the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of a phenomenon for a person or group of people" (p. 482). The four steps are as follows:

Step 1 – Epoche. In the Epoche, the everyday understanding of judgments, and knowing are set aside in order to allow a wide-open sense of the phenomenon. The Epoche is "the process of removing, or at least becoming aware of prejudices, viewpoints, or at least assumptions regarding the phenomenon under investigation" (Katz, 1987, p. 36). The purpose of this step is to allow for the noema and noesis of the situation to emerge. The noema as described by Patton (2002) is the process of "discerning the features of consciousness that are essential for the individuation of objects (real or imaginary) that are before us in the consciousness." While the noesis "is explicating how beliefs about such objects (real or imaginary) may be acquired, how it is that we are experiencing what we are experiencing" (Patton, 2002, p. 484).

This phase is accomplished in the research by attempting to look at the investigated experience in a different way by moving beyond natural attitude to search for deeper meaning. The subjects were asked questions to ascertain the noema and noesis. For example, a subject was asked a question regarding a hypothetical environmental situation and how he or she would respond. After the subjects describe how they would act in the situation, they were then asked how they knew that was the right thing to do. The purpose of this follow-up question is to uncovering deeper meaning in relation to the phenomenological and science paradigm model.

Step 2 – Phenomenological Reduction. Husserl used the term bracketing to describe how a researcher "holds a phenomenon up for serious inspection" (Patton, 2002, p. 485). As applied by Denzin (1989), bracketing involves the following steps:

1. Locate within the personal experience, or self story, key phrases and   statements that speak directly to the phenomenon in question.

2. Interpret the meanings of the phrases, as an informed reader.
3. Obtain the subject's interpretation of these phrases, if possible.
4. Inspect these meanings for what they reveal about the essential, recurring features of the phenomenon being studied.
5. Offer a tentative statement, or definition, of the phenomenon in terms of   essential recurring features identified in step 4 (Denzin, 1989).

Step 3 – Imaginative Variation. Once the data were bracketed, they were assembled into meaningful clusters. Then a delimitation process took place to eliminate irrelevant, repetitive, or overlapping data. The data were then assembled into themes to perform an "imaginative variation" on each theme. The process of imaginative variation is to work around the theme to see it from different views in order to develop an enhanced or expanded version of the theme (Patton, 2002).

Step 4 – Synthesis of Texture and Structure. Once the themes were determined a textual portrayal of that theme was developed. According to Patton (2002), the textual portrayal "is an abstraction of the experience that provides content and illustration, but not yet essence. The structural synthesis looked beneath the affect inherent in the experience to deeper meanings for the subjects (Patton, 2002). In this research, this meaning was described in terms of the phenomenological and science paradigm diagram.

Findings

The following is a summary of the qualitative findings from the interviews as well as statements regarding the relationship to the Phenomenological/Science paradigm model.

> "First and foremost, the thing we need to do is make sure we are following the rules…" (Vice President, Environmental)

A recurring theme from the subjects in doing their job was a focus on achieving regulatory compliance and attaining company support. This seemed to apply whether or not that meant compliance with external or internal policy and rules. The subjects viewed themselves as "go-betweens," responsible for balancing the demands of management with pragmatic and practical solutions to reduce risk. As one environmental manager stated, "My job is to make sure that our company is not at risk." Subjects who were satisfied with their job appeared to believe that management understands their predicament (as go-betweens) and offers support throughout the process. "Our management is not participative. . . . I get what I need as long as I justify what I am doing. . . . It's pretty basic we justify what we are doing so that we stay out of trouble and they pretty much leave us alone to do our thing" (Director, Environmental Operations).

Those unsatisfied with management support feel there was limited management involvement or even awareness of environmental issues. In addition, these subjects also seemed to feel

that upper management has little regard for the environment and is therefore insensitive to the subject's role within the organization and the types of goals, objectives and job duties that emanate from that role. "Our company does not offer so much support, there is almost no understanding of what needs to be done unless there is a crisis and even then I'm not sure we go beyond the minimum…even keeping compliant is a struggle" (Environmental Manager).

All of the subjects appeared to be in a continuous struggle between knowing what is "right" and finding a way to get it done without losing credibility and support from their peers and management team. This often meant finding tangible justification for their course of action, which is the reason why compliance with internal and/or external policy was a major mindset toward their job. When the subjects were faced with a difficult hypothetical situation, their initial response was to behave as a rule-based novice and/or advanced beginner in an effort to search for an established formula to solve the problem. When asked a question on global warming one respondent stated, "we need to first find out what contributes to global warming, then evaluate the impact . . . what's the impact on the company if we do nothing . . . we must be smart and decrease cost, but do what is in the best interest of the company" (Director, Environmental Operations). This meant that in most cases they would prefer the decision to be simply based on following the rules, context-fee and requiring almost no deliberation; once again, framing the argument for the compliance-driven mentality. " . . . most of these peer reviewed assessments are not something you just do based on whatever is in your head, it's something that is needed to achieve compliance. Most projects we do we have a ranking system and it should be no difference . . . if we can't rank it how do you justify why you are doing this. You need to come up with a rational approach to get the most bang out of your buck" (Environmental Manager).

On the whole, the subjects appeared comfortable with someone else providing the roadmap of what needed to be done, thus requiring little effort on the part of the subject to think about the process or intended ecological outcome. Instead the emphasis was placed on working within the internal politics and management culture in an effort to find necessary resources to accomplish the task and solve the problem exclusively within the context of a well-defined problem. Therefore, the subjects were mostly inclined to incorporate a scientific model of analysis of gathering empirical forms of data in an effort to satisfy an intuitive sense of what needed to be done to solve a problem.

In this regard, the subjects had a strong sense of what it should feel like to be an expert.

> Before we wanted to go the 14000 route, we brought some consultants in here to talk to us about and to educate us on the standard. You could tell that they didn't know anything other than what the standard says. To me, that's a novice thinker, they are not giving you any insight into the interpretation of what's going on. An expert is someone who knows the standard or regulation and also knows what it means to us and how it should be interpreted (Environmental Manager).

With few exceptions, most agreed that being an expert is not something that can be empirically measured, but is an innate and intuitive sense of knowing how and what to do and when to do it.

The subjects seemed to almost always respond as experts and/or proficient and competent performers when asked business-related questions. However, when faced with ecological questions, outside of their traditional framework, they almost always deferred to methods and procedures indicative of a novice and/or advanced beginners. This was indicated by their desire to engage a scientific approach in an effort to uncover a self-evidential solution that could be empirically supported and rationally justified.

One environmental manager put it this way, "In some areas I consider myself an expert in the sense of working within our company organization . . . when it comes to some environmental stuff that I'm not familiar with I am not an expert, but I know enough about what to do internally to avoid being a novice."

Heideggerian Interpretations

Heidegger, being a critic of the human condition, specifically in regard to the influence of technology, provided the basis of the framework for building the conceptual design for this paper, which was to confront science from a phenomenological perspective. The bulk of this argument was discussed in terms of paradigms and the "stages of engagement in the world." The conceptual framework explains that change needed for a more sustainable ecological outlook must occur at the ontological level, which requires confronting how we understand things to be from within the scientific paradigm. As a result, the puzzle of environmental sustainability cannot be solved from the science paradigm, exclusively. It requires a felt-sense or know-how (phenomenology) of how we identify with who we are and what we do in nature.

To analyze this construct, Heidegger and Dreyfus were useful in providing the foundation for developing the types of interview questions needed for looking at environmental issues from a phenomenological perspective. The main focus of the qualitative analysis was to bring home the difference between "knowing-how" (phenomenology) and "knowing-that" (science), while exploring where environmental managers stood within this spectrum. The interview questions were designed to stimulate the subjects to not only discuss what they know about their job, but to get a sense of how they know it. In an attempt to express how they know what to do, the environmental managers routinely offered a clear picture of where they stood on environmental issues within the science and phenomenology spectrum.

As discussed in previous sections, the environmental managers did not express an experienced sense of know-how when it came to dealing with ecological challenges. Instead ecological phenomenology existed at a distance, while science was used almost exclusively when determining how to solve an environmental problem. It may be understood in this way: An

Environmental Specialist, with over 20 years experience at a large hydro-electrical energy supply company stated : "They [meaning people concerned about a river that is impacted by a hydro-electric plant] want a natural flowing river that mimics what nature can do. What they don't understand is that by doing this millions of people will pay more for electrical power or may begin to use dirtier sources of power" (Environmental Specialist at Energy Conference, September 2004).

When we encounter nature in terms of a resource, nature is relegated to the status of being available only by what makes sense to protect our pre-defined interests. (In this case, the river has been relegated to a standing reserve for electrical generation). In other words, if the river is seen to exist as a resource for hydro-power, it becomes available within a certain economic condition. Anything outside of this threatens to disturb that which we protect. What we protect is life as we know it and have come to understand and accept it. At the deepest level, however, a question can be raised on what makes life meaningful.

A meaningful life is that which is full of a felt sense of purpose, connectivity, and interdependency. It cannot be defined in scientific rational terms; instead it stands in the background as a primary influence on who we are and what we do. Those things that we find most meaningful have little value because they cannot be bought or sold in the economy, nor can they be created and dealt with in power politics or managed and controlled by technology. These things are deeply imbedded in us and have a direct influence in our purposive actions at a level that is rarely thought about. Dreyfus commenting on Heidegger states:

> Phenomenological examination confirms that in a wide variety of situations human beings relate to the world in an organized purposive manner without the constant accompaniment of representational states that specify what the action is aimed at accomplishing. This is evident in any skilled activity such as playing the piano or skating. . . . Take Boston Celtics basketball player Larry Bird's description of the experience of the complex purposive act of passing the ball in the midst of a game: '[A lot of the] things I do on the court are just reactions to situations. . . . A lot of times, I've passed the basketball and not realized I've passed it until a moment or so later. (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 93)

This phenomenon is an essential part of both our physical and intellectual coping with situations. The often "non-deliberative action shows that we often experience ourselves as active yet are not aware of what we are trying to do" (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 94). The action is deeply imbedded in a phenomenological understanding of the situation emanating from a felt sense or know-how that pre-determines the range of our decisions and actions. When we encounter situations from this perspective – we show in our actions who we are and what is important for constructing a meaningful life. The outward displays are an extension to this meaning, rendering other types of analyses as inconsequential superficialities that take away from what we understand to be essential.

What I have discovered in conducting the interviews is that the environmental managers may not only be defining their professional responsibilities within the context of novice superficialities from an ecological perspective – it has become a way of life. They simply do not have a felt sense of what it means to be environmentally sustainable. Therefore, any ecological decision must be justified in rational terms, such as a cost-benefit analysis, risk management and/or supporting company image. This process of rationally and scientifically determining what should be done before "just doing it" is an indication of the chasm that exists between a phenomenological understanding of environmentally sustainability and how it should fit into a meaningful life.

References

Denzin, N. K. (1989). Interpretive biography. In *Qualitative research method series* (pp. 55-56). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Dreyfus, & Dreyfus, S. E. (1986). *Mind over machine - The power of human intuition and expertise in the era of the computer*. New York: The Free Press.

Dreyfus, H. L. (1991). *Being-in-the-world: A commentary on Heidegger's being and time, Division I*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Folkman, S., & Lazarus, R. S. (1988). *Ways of coping Questionnaire review set* [Brochure]. Redwood City, CA: Author.

Heidegger, M. (1977). *The question concerning technology and other essays*. New York: Harper & Row.

Hummel, R. P. (2004). *Judgment.* Unpublished manuscript, Annual Conference American Society of Public Administrators, Portland, OR.

Katz, L. (1987). The experience of personal change. Unpublished master's thesis, The Union Institute, Cincinnati, OH.

Kuhn, T. S. (1970). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lee, J. A., & Holden, J. S. (1999). Understanding the determinants of environmentally conscious behavior. *Psychology and Marketing, 16*(5), 373-392.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Polt, R. (1999). *Heidegger an Introduction*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Wrathall, M., & Malps, J. (Eds.). (2000). *Heidegger, coping and cognitive science - rssays in honor of Hubert L. Dreyfus*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Dr. **Nicholas C. Zingale** is Associate Professor of Public Service Technology at University of Akron, President, Institute for Applied Phenomenology in Science and Technology, and President/CEO of Affinity Consultants, Inc.

Participatory Practices in Community Services for the Unemployed Poor

Carmen Mathijssen and Danny Wildemeersch

This article is an adapted version of the paper presented at the International Conference "Ethics and Integrity of Governance: A Transatlantic Dialogue." This first dialogue between the US and Europe on ethics and integrity of governance was organized in Leuven, June 2-5, 2005. Since the conference aim was to strengthen co-operation and exchange between European and US scholars, and particular attention was given to the similarities and differences, both in theory and practice, we would like to contribute further to this exchange.

In this article we want to focus on families in poverty. This article goes deeper into a fairly new form of activation of the poor, namely community services. These new initiatives are situated in the social economy sector in Flanders (Belgium). After the introduction of the basic concepts, we formulate arguments in support of a competence approach and a participatory approach in those community services. Then we touch on the problematic of the translation of this approach into policy criteria.

Families in Poverty: Special Attention Required

Our current society is characterised by mechanisms and processes of exclusion. Particular groups of people and entire categories of the population have difficulties to participate in the mainstream activities of social, economic and political life. As families in poverty are more dependent and have less power to change their situation and to influence their living conditions than the average citizens, specific strategies and instruments are needed. In the region under study—Flanders in Belgium—the public services and academic institutions distinguish several disadvantaged groups, such as the long term unemployed, the immigrants, single mothers, low-skilled workers, (former) psychiatric patients, (former) prisoners, etc. These diverse groups have a few characteristics in common. Most important: many of them live in poverty. They mostly have no jobs, they live in poor housing conditions, and they often have weak social networks. Social isolation is a continuous threat. They have a hard

time finding a place in the labour market, or in society at large (Vranken, a.o. 1998). For this reason they have been the object of the Belgium welfare policy.

The "Workfare" Discourse:
Activating and Sanctioning the Unemployed Poor

The current "workfare" discourse includes all kinds of measures to activate, and if necessary, to sanction the poor. The aim is to enhance the autonomy of the unemployed, while dependency on welfare as organised by the state is discouraged (Snick, 2002; Jacobs & van Doorslaer, 2000; Rosanvallon, 1995). Governments on all levels increasingly use the discourse of "workfare," meaning that only so-called "active citizens" are entitled to the organised solidarity of the welfare state. An important argument for this is that some welfare structures are said to be destroying incentives and making people passive and uncreative. People who are not able or not willing to take responsibility for their employability will lose their rights to welfare benefits in the long run. The responsibility to remain "employable" on the labour market is nowadays increasingly labelled as an individual responsibility. A transition in this matter from collective responsibility to individual responsibility can be observed. When an unemployed person cannot prove that he or she has been actively looking for a job or following a suitable training or education, he or she will be sanctioned. His or her welfare benefits can diminish or eventually be eliminated entirely. Social rights are nowadays increasingly linked to the duty to look for a job or to engage in an educational trajectory that will improve one's chances on the labour market. This is in line with an increasing criticism of the passivity inducing nature of the welfare entitlements in the "traditional" welfare state. Merkel (in Giddens, 2001, p. 52) argues as follows, "… it leads to privatism, dependency, a loss of discipline and a lack of motivation to adapt oneself to the new educational challenges of the changing labour market." In reaction to this, measures are undertaken aiming to prevent abuse and to better distribute social security and welfare to "those in real need." As a consequence, criteria for assessing needs are tightened. In policy measures self-help, personal responsibility and employability obtain a more prominent place.

Policy makers begin to consider the usefulness of "workfare" concepts and practices. They are increasingly urging excluded groups to become more active and take their empowerment process in their own hands. In several European countries, also in Belgium, there is an increased pressure on welfare beneficiaries to enter the labour market, to accept suitable jobs or to participate in training programmes. Activation practices are mainly aimed at participation in the regular labour market. Giddens (2001) – one of the main architects of the "third way" – refers to the need to link welfare rights to employability responsibilities. Welfare rights are linked to responsibilities for one's own employment. The freedom to pursue individual life projects should be balanced by the responsibility to contribute to the maintenance of public welfare. Therefore, in the "third way" discourse the continuation of welfare benefits is combined with measures stimulating the activity and disabling the alleged passivity of the beneficiaries. Several states nowadays apply such "third way" policies in one

way or another, thereby trying to reconcile the objectives of social justice and economic competitiveness.

Critical observers of this policy discourse are sceptical about its hidden agenda. They fear it promotes a new kind of flexible and mobile worker while it simultaneously discourages him to make use of his welfare rights. These policies tend to problematize the socially excluded rather than the process of social exclusion. Critics of these new policy measures claim that the excluded groups are increasingly blamed for their own misfortune. This results in further stigmatisation. The unemployed sometimes feel treated as "second class" citizens who yet (or again) have to learn to become "full" citizens through engagement in trajectories of education and training. Fulltime employment on the formal labour market increasingly is seen as a precondition for "full" citizenship. This shows how such practices of activation are no neutral operations.

Paradoxes of Activation

The activation strategies in various policy domains are currently being criticised in multiple ways. Snick (2002) summarises a few key points. Activation practices are no neutral technical operations: they often define people who lack the necessary skills and values to participate in society as deficient. The cause of the problem is located in the features of the excluded groups, while the underlying mechanisms, which create social exclusion, remain unproblematized. The activation discourse overlooks the fact that there are currently not enough jobs available for the category of the lowly skilled members of our society. Activation of the unemployed doesn't change much about the structural limitations of the labour market. The consequence of such discourse is that it tends to "blame the victim." Their exclusion is in the first place interpreted as a lack of the right personal attributes and capacities. A repeated emphasis on these shortcomings inevitably results in a negative identity construction.

The activation discourse is not a new phenomenon. Various researchers have analysed its long historical tradition (Lis & Soly, 1986; Foucault, 1965; Lis & Venthemse, 1995; Snick, 2002). They also point to its paradoxical character. On the one hand, activation aims at emancipation. Efforts are made to include disadvantaged groups by supporting their struggle against their underprivileged situation. On the other hand, the activation discourse simultaneously functions as a disciplining and moralising reaction to the dependency on welfare. It is also inspired by a certain fear for the "underclasses." The "elite" reacts to poverty and the existence of a growing underclass because it fears public disturbance, diseases, criminality, and insecurity. Policy makers want to avoid what they perceive as a threat to the social and political stability by promoting a strong work-oriented system of moral values and principles. What the elite defines as a social problem often isn't poverty itself, but a few specific consequences of it (like rising crime or prostitution).

Most of the present day measures of activation contain elements of both policy rationalities, emancipatory and disciplining. They refer to traditions of welfare statism and combine it with

more neo-liberal understandings of policy making. This is definitely the case of the "third way" discourse. Rights and duties are to be brought more into balance, as argued in the article by Latham (in Giddens, 2001, p. 27):

> The third way sees politics as an exercise in conviction and the teaching of values. …A revitalized welfare state has just two purposes: to move people into work and into new skills. …Unless welfare recipients are willing to take responsibility for improving themselves and the society in which they live, they have no right to permanently live off society.

In line with this it is important to realise that also community services are no neutral instruments. As all practices of education and activation, also community services are both emancipating and moralising or disciplining. Community services can create empowering learning opportunities through participation, while at the same time their actions inevitably discipline the (un)employed participants. Participation doesn't offer neutral opportunities, but rather determined or conditioned opportunities. People are stimulated to think and act in specific ways. Power is even more effective when it is internalised, when people regulate themselves through self-discipline. This way "participation" in neighbourhood services can also be seen as a form of self-disciplining. Inspired by Foucault, we ask the question how community services come to terms with these ambiguities. Education and activation cannot only be associated with enlightenment, personal development, and economical growth. All education and activation practices entail a paradox: they empower while they disempower. While they enable people, at the same time they also limit their freedom and reduce their options. All pedagogical interventions are always double edged – they have an inevitable paradoxical nature (Weil, Wildemeersch, & Jansen, 2005).

The Case of Community Services

The focus of this article is on community services, a new phenomenon in the sector of the Belgian social economy. This emergent practice of activation of long-term unemployed is rapidly growing and offers a wide variety of services ranging from social restaurants, to aid for senior citizens (transportation, reading help…), and even projects for the maintenance of green spaces. Community services claim to combine three functions: services, employment, and participation. These functions were recognized in the first policy texts on community services by the Flemish Minister of Social Economy (Van Brempt, 2004), and were inspired by the advice of the umbrella organisation of community services (Koning Boudewijn Stichting, 2003).

1.   A community service delivers <u>services</u> in order to improve the viability of the consumers by responding to relevant collective and individual needs. Community services aim at meeting (new) individual and collective needs. Those needs often weren't acknowledged before, or the services weren't adapted to the specific target group of people in poverty. A community service

can be a concrete solution for a particular challenge, for example the need for a tailor made child care centre.

2.   Community services aim at creating <u>sustainable employment.</u> Therefore at least 50% of the employees are recruited from the target group of families in poverty.

3.   Community services want to accomplish the two above mentioned functions by working in a <u>participatory</u> way. They presume that such an approach has several advantages. They try to take into account the needs and wants of many different stakeholders, like employees, clients, volunteers, people who live nearby, and other local (social) actors. The ambition is to let both the clients and the employees participate in the whole process of getting the community service started and further developed. Even after the community service has started, they want constant feedback to make sure the service can be improved and adapted to fit the ever-changing life circumstances of the disadvantaged people involved. Community services claim that a participatory approach is necessary to make sure that the service is tailor-made to the specific way of life of families in poverty. The particular way in which the first two functions (services and employment) take shape is influenced by this participatory process.

There are two different forms of community services: on the one hand there are <u>neighbourhood services</u> and on the other hand there are <u>proximity services.</u>^{xliii} A specific form of a community service is a neighbourhood service. Neighbourhood services do not deliver services to the wider public in the first place, but rather focus on the needs of the people in poverty on a local base. These services are expected to improve the viability of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Additionally they should increase the quality of life of the people that live in those neighbourhoods, and they should strengthen the social cohesion. The neighbourhood services want to combine the struggle against poverty, the creation of work for the unemployed and the development of the available economical and cultural potential in the neighbourhood. Other community services that are not linked to a specific neighbourhood are referred to as proximity services. They deliver services to the wider community.

We translate the definition of "being active" some families in poverty in Leuven constructed throughout a three-month reflection process on "activation" in Leren Ondernemen vzw (2002), a neighbourhood service in Leuven.^{xliv} When constructing activation measures it seems important to pay attention to the informal definition of the target group itself:

> Being active is to use as much as possible your talents, to engage yourself
> to claim your rights, and to mean something for others and for society. It's
> important that it isn't obligatory or mandatory, but something you like to
> do, something that gives you pleasure. Essential is the social aspect:

working in group, having fun together and learning to cope better with
each other.

The community services want to reinforce the competences of the people in poverty they work with. The starting point is said to be the capacities that people already have. Therefore they create labour opportunities in line with the competences that are available. Challenges are created and/or made visible through work. The process of labour aims at supporting the wishes and possibilities of the employees. The work that is created is said to be sustainable, it has to bring certainty in the often-uncertain living conditions. The community services hope to empower the most vulnerable groups in a variety of ways. They want to foster material empowerment through a higher income, in combination with improved security and a better social esteem. They also want to stimulate personal empowerment. People are expected to build self confidence (the feeling of being a competent actor) through their engagement in activities, which they consider socially relevant. Especially neighbourhood services claim that the work created, is adapted to the experiences and competencies of the people in the neighbourhood. The employees get sufficient training and support to deliver quality services.

Competency Approach versus Deficit Approach

Community services espouse a competence approach, enabling experiences of actorship. They emphasise that people in poverty also dispose of competences and qualities (for example inventiveness, self-will, perseverance, care, and courage), which can be relevant in a variety of situations. They try to connect, use, and work with the available potential. Learning processes start from the competencies that people already possess. This acknowledgment of the strength of the knowledge, experiences, and competencies of people forms the breeding ground of a participative approach. This positive attitude results into the belief "that everybody can make a difference" in his or her own way. Many community services also aim to develop further the survival competences and qualities which their clients are claimed to possess: inventiveness, self-will, perseverance and courage. The acknowledgment of the strength of their knowledge, experiences and competencies forms the breeding ground to look at the support activities differently. This approach is also said to be used for clarifying the desirability and value of particular learning and training paths. Community services want to look for the meaning and usefulness of knowledge, capacities and practices and claim that this happens in a dialogue between social workers and the people in poverty themselves. Several other arguments are used to promote this competency approach. Through positive experiences in a familiar environment people are said to learn to define themselves as problem-solvers. In this way they would develop the feeling of having a grip on their lives and leave their role as "victims" behind. Especially in neighbourhood services people can see results of their commitment in a very concrete way in their own neighbourhood (Mathijssen, Wildemeersch, Stroobants, Snick, 2003).

During our observations we immediately noticed that paid employment is not the only way to be engaged in a community service. There is also attention for less labour oriented forms of

participation and volunteering. Community services want to give meaning to social commitment in various ways. They want to create opportunities to actively participate in society. One of the recurring themes is "breaking down barriers," for creating low and accessible thresholds. People can start with a limited engagement, even for a few hours a month, and grow at their own pace, according to their possibilities and restrictions.

Relevance of the Participatory Approach

According to Reason (1998), participation involves peoples' right and ability to have a say in decisions, which affect them. Therefore, participation is a political imperative. Educational processes linked to participation need to open up a space in which participants are invited to engage in work or study, which is important and meaningful for them. When they reflect on the manner in which they perform, together they can learn how to move toward a more genuine collaboration. Reason (1998) insists on defining the boundaries of participation on the one hand, and to open up a space in which creativity is demanded on the other hand. He advises facilitators to create democratic structures and relationships, and behave in ways that invite reciprocity and dialogue. Facilitators need to take authority, but with the aim to enhance the self-directing capacities of others. People are invited to take greater responsibility for their own development and education. This can be severely challenging for the facilitators, because at times it will be required to revitalize their own vision to create space for the multiple visions that the participants may develop.

Also in the writings of Lave and Wenger (1991) on situated learning, "participation" plays an important role. They describe participation as:

> the stage on which the old and the new, the former and the unknown, the established and the hopeful, act out their differences and discover their commonalities, manifest their fear on one another, and come to terms with the need for one another (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 116).

In the vision of Lave and Wenger (1991), learning is situated in certain forms of social participation. Learning is a process that takes place in a participation framework. People learn because they already participate, not because they have been prepared to participate at a later stage. "Conceiving of learning in terms of participation focuses attention on ways in which it is an evolving, continuously renewed set of relations. This is consistent with a relational view of persons, of their actions, and the world" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 50). Learning can be seen as a dynamic relationship between people and the context in which they participate. "Learning is a way of being in the social world, not a way of coming to know about it" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 24). "It combines personal transformation with the evolution of social structures" (Wenger, 2000, p. 227). Participatory practices are assumed to offer opportunities to people to determine themselves and their context, to express their feelings and interests, to gain self-esteem, and to enhance one's well being.

We want to point out the importance of considering the learning process itself as a democratic process. To quote Benn (2000, p. 241): "Participatory democracy is learned through practice and therefore the adult education experience should itself be and experience of participatory democracy". It is difficult to stimulate participation in a society or in an organisation that does not function democratically.

Community services, and in particular neighbourhood services, don't want their activities to be reduced to mere employment schemes. Rather than exclusively focusing on the activation of people towards the labour market, community services want to develop a more complex, integrated and holistic activation strategy, involving people as producers and consumers of services they urgently need. They want to enable experiences of actorship, of solidarity, and of commitment to a joint project that is related to, but simultaneously, transcends their everyday survival strategies. Next to the mainly economical activation initiatives (for example, recycling centres or bicycle and car repair shops), community services want to construct a broader definition of activation. Community services want to be open places for participation in society and a way to involve people in shaping community life (Mathijssen & Wildemeersch, 2003).

Community services want to stay close to the issues that concern families in poverty. Field workers in community services proudly tell that their starting point is the systematic exploration, together with their target groups, of needs, necessities and possible solutions. Rather than introducing themes and issues from a top-down perspective, community services say to take as a point of departure the issues that keep people busy and that appeal to them. They try to put these topics on the agenda and look for ways to take them further and to link them with more abstract and global issues. Daily life concerns of people related to food acquisition, waste disposal, mobility, a shortage of playgrounds in the neighbourhood can be taken seriously as life political issues. In this way community services assume to answer to needs that beforehand weren't (sufficiently) acknowledged (Mathijssen & Wildemeersch, 2003).

Problematic Implementation of Policy Criteria

An important problem is that this competency and participatory strategy has not yet been translated into policy criteria. The policy criteria are mainly based on product outcomes, while the community services report a need for criteria based on the quality of the process, not in the least the participation processes. Policy makers are said to attach too much importance to product outcomes (the number of people that acquire a job or the quantity of the delivered services). For example, activation initiatives are rewarded once they have proved that they are effective in activating the unemployed towards the formal labour market. It is becoming increasingly difficult to get funding when there is no guarantee of success in terms of employment. With a participatory approach you cannot prove in advance what the outcomes will be. It is difficult – even impossible – to predict beforehand what kind of service will be developed. A participatory approach is to a certain extent at odds with a linear output oriented

strategy. Community services require more freedom, openness and opportunities for experimentation. Community services want to obtain structural support from the government, while at the same time they want to safeguard their freedom to operate as laboratories in which new social-economic experiments can take place.

In the Flemish context, the community services are part of the "social economy." This sector tries to operate on a market of new services. Yet, it needs the support of the state for the employment of a major part of the lowly skilled employees. This position creates a tension between the social and the economical objectives of the community services. Practitioners in community services are worried about the new policy developments who strongly emphasize the link between "services" and "employment." "Participation" is under threat of becoming empty rhetoric. They fear a future where community services will only be rewarded (receive funding) for the service and employment function. They feel this will ruin the very essence of community services. When asking for funding, all criteria stress the priority of creating employment. It is difficult to take into account aspects like wellbeing, safety, and social cohesion. An important question arises: What will happen to the volunteers, when formal employment is the most important criterion for receiving funding? A big worry for the future is that on the account of "hard figures" policy makers will choose for the most cost-effective community services. This almost certainly means that the space for proximity and social cohesion will suffer due to pressure to deliver more services in less time. Community services want to show the consequences of this "cost-effectiveness" for the most vulnerable groups in society.

We found that it was more fruitful to consider community services as practices of active citizenship and participation rather than "participatory employment bureaus." Providing services and creating employment should rather be seen as mere instruments to support the goal of opening ways for participation and citizenship.

Cleaver (2001, p. 37) sees a difference between participation grounded in efficiency arguments and participation grounded in equity and empowerment arguments. While the latter sees participation as a process that enhances people's capacities to improve their lives, the first sees participation merely as a tool for achieving better project outcomes.

In their aspirations community services describe "participation" as a tool for providing better services and creating tailor-made employment. It is considered an instrument for taking into account the needs and wants of different stakeholders, aiming to build a broad social base. Through receiving feedback, the community services want to be able to continually improve and adapt themselves. We suggest calling this "participation for cost-effectiveness."

Nevertheless, there is more than only this form of "participation for cost-effectiveness" to be found in community services. We also observed "participation for active citizenship" grounded in empowerment arguments. In a presentation previous to this research project, the community service professionals invited us to conduct a lecture on the ETGACE-research on active citizenship (Holford et al., 2003), since they found some of the insights of this research

inspiring. In ETGACE, active citizenship is seen as "a variety of ways to take up social responsibilities and engagements, with the aim to make an active contribution to the building of a democratic and inclusive society" (Mathijssen, Wildemeersch, Snick, & Stroobants, 2003, p. 1). The community services under research all stress the importance of stimulating active citizenship in different forms. Both forms of participation can be found in the community services involved in this research. Participation for cost-effectiveness is easier to legitimate due to its direct influence on improving project-outputs. Community services can deliver better tailor-made services due to the participatory involvement of clients and employees. They can create tailor-made employment due to the participatory involvement of employees and volunteers. On the other hand, it is far more difficult to legitimise the time and efforts spent on "participation for active citizenship". The earlier mentioned discussion on the problem of "measurability" is relevant in this context. While it is possible to measure the added value of "participation for cost-effectiveness," it seems impossible to measure the added value of "participation for active citizenship." The practitioners stress that this aspect of their work is under constant threat of budget-cuts.

As Cooke and Kothari (2001, p. 14) argue, the language of participation can mask a real concern for managerialist effectiveness. What is seen as participation, and what is seen as positive outcomes from participatory processes, depends on ideological positions (Cooke, & Kothari, 2001, p. 119). When inspired by a "workfare" discourse, "participation" mainly refers to inclusion in the formal labour market. Sometimes also participation of clients in the decision making process is mentioned. Yet, in this case, the participation remains limited to issues of "choice" on behalf of the employees and the customers. Positive outcomes are mainly framed in terms of increased labour market participation rates, and decreases in social security expenditures. Cost-effectiveness is a major concern, marginalising other perspectives on participation. There is a promise of emancipation for the employees involved, but emancipation is defined here as inclusion in the formal labour market. Yet, "participation" can also be seen to enhance active citizenship. Positive outcomes in this discourse are more diverse. Not only engagement in the formal labour market, but any involvement giving shape to a democratic community is considered important.

In a manual on the learning of active citizenship (Mathijssen & Van Raak, 2003)[xlv] which we developed in the context of another research project, we argued that it is important to create room for different forms and levels of participation, keeping in mind several risks attached to such a strategy. This manual aims to stimulate and facilitate policies and learning strategies, which encourage tolerant, inclusive, and accountable approaches to governance and active citizenship. The chief aim is to support professionals and policy-makers involved in various branches of citizenship learning to reflect on – and improve – practice in the field. Professionals are invited to reflect on their work and practice, to develop new and critical perspectives, to identify a more diverse range of opportunities for active citizenship, and to review and modify their practice. Particular forms of participation can be demotivating and should be avoided. First, there is the so-called "playground participation." This would-be participation takes place in isolation from the real public debate and decision-making processes. Second, there is "compulsory participation." When there is an obligatory

participation structure following predetermined rules and conditions, the ongoing participation of people and their needs and aspirations can be overseen. This is the case especially when the outcome is defined beforehand. Participation is inevitably a risky activity. The ambition to control the whole process from beginning to end is at odds with the open-ended character of participatory processes. Participation can lead to structures tending to instrumentalize free initiative and informal participation by the urge to control and foresee everything.

Some points of attention may help to overcome such problems. In an open and flexible atmosphere, creating space for a continuous dialogue, the (informal) definitions, experiences, meanings, and activities of partners can be taken into account. In this way, the actors can decide together what challenge they go for, how they want to make a difference, what participation means, and what the limits are. Concrete examples on how to create a wide range of opportunities for participation can be found in the following toolkit for participatory methods. To facilitate practical knowledge sharing, the King Baudouin Foundation (2005) and the Flemish Institute for Science and Technology Assessment decided to edit a publication with the ambition to create a hands-on toolkit for starting up and managing participatory projects. This incorporates 50 methods and techniques. Per method there is a description of when to use, the different steps, best practices and budget.

The Relevance of "Participation" in Public Administration

Blumberg (1996) recommends cooperation as one of his humanistic guidelines for public administration professionals. We agree with this author that the most effective decisions are not made in isolation. He also recommends openness and encouragement of input from others. "Citizens will have more trust and confidence in our public organisations if they believe that public officials and public employees are truly behaving with openness as one of their guiding principles" (Blumberg, 1996, p. 74). We recommend participation and input from people in poverty in matters that are relevant for them.

There seems to be a general concern about the increasing democratic deficit – the feeling that established mechanisms of government no longer work effectively, and that people no longer trust them. In recent years, most European countries have wanted to encourage citizens to participate more in political and social affairs. Citizens are encouraged to become more committed, active, and responsible, at work, in society, and at home. Also Roberts (2004) suggests citizen participation in decision-making is becoming an imperative of contemporary society. For the first half of the 20th century, citizens relied on administrators to make decisions for them. Nowadays we see a shift towards greater citizen involvement, not only in decisions that directly affect their lives, but also in public policy and its implementations in general. Roberts (2004) expects this trend to grow as democratic societies become more centralised, interdependent, and challenged by so-called "wicked problems." More specific, Rice (2004) states that promoting social equity in public service delivery requires citizen input and participation. Future public administrators, managers, and public service delivery

personnel "must be taught that a traditional bureaucratic culture can be modified to reflect a citizen-oriented or social equity-oriented service delivery culture" (Rice, 2004, p. 147). Korten, Mander, Cavanagh and others (2003, p. 40) ask the following questions:

> Will ordinary people have a democratic voice in deciding what rules are in the best interest of society? Or will a small ruling elite, meeting in secret, far from public view, be allowed to set the rules that shape the human future? If the concern of the decision makers is only for the next quarter's corporate profits, who will take care for the health and well-being of the world's people and the planet?

Kasemir (a.o., 1999) stresses that the nature of the democratic processes asks for taking into account views of a diversity of actors. Kasemir (a.o., 2000) claims that participatory techniques for the involvement of stakeholders are needed, ranging from ordinary citizens to business people. Cooper (1998) wonders whether it is essential for administrators to understand the perspectives, problems, perceived needs, and priorities of citizens. "Are they not obliged to reach out beyond their clientele groups and political allies to help cultivate a public conversation?" (Cooper, 1998, p. 62). "Should we not agree that the administrative role also carries with it a central obligation to stimulate this conversation among citizens and to learn from it?" (Cooper, 1998, p. 63). Bilhim and Neves (2005) point out that the New Public Management stresses the importance of citizen participation. According to them, the widening of ideas of governance includes democratic and participative values. They articulate a demand for decision processes that are more thoroughly participatory. This requires a stronger appeal to the active participation of citizens.

References

Benn, R. (2000). The genesis of active citizenship in the learning society. *Studies in the Education of Adults, 32* (2), 241-256.

Bilhim, J., & Neves, B. (2005). New ethical challenges in a changing public administration. Paper presented at conference *Ethics and Integrity of Governance: The first transatlantic dialogue,* 2-5 June 2005, Leuven.

Blumberg, S.K. (1996). Humanistic guidelines for public administration professionals. *Public Voices (2)*, 1, 69-81.

Cleaver, F. (2001). Institutions, agency and the limitations of participatory approaches to development. In: B. Cooke, U. Kothari (Eds.). *Participation: The New Tyranny?* London: Routhledge.

Cooke, B., Kothari, U. (Eds.). (2001). *Participation: The New Tyranny?* London: Routhledge.

Cooper, T. (1998). *The Responsible Administrator: An approach to ethics for the administrative role.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Foucault, M. (1965). *Madness and Civilisation: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason.* New York: Pantheon Books.

Giddens, A. (2001). *The Global Third Way Debate.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Holford, J., et al. (2003). Lifelong learning, Governance & Active Citizenship in Europe. Final report of the ETGACE Research Project: Analysis of Adult Learning & Design of Formal, Non-Formal & Informal Educational Intervention Strategies. Supported by the European Commission (Directorate General for Research) Framework Programme 5. Guilford: University of Surrey.

Jacobs, R., & van Doorslaer, J. (2000). *Het Pomphuis van de 21ste Eeuw: Educatie in de Actieve Welvaartsstaat.* Antwerpen: EPO.

Kasemir, B., Van Asselt, M., Durrenberger, G., Jaeger, C. (1999). Integrated assessment of sustainable development: Multiple perspectives in interaction. *International Journal of Environment and Pollution, 11* (4), 407-425.

Kasemir, B., Dahinden, U., Swartling, A., Schule, R., Tabara, D., Jaeger, C. (2000). Citizens' perspectives on climate change and energy use. *Global Environmental Change – Human and Policy Dimensions, 10* (3), 169-184.

King Baudouin Foundation (2005). *Participatory Methods Toolkit. A Practitioners Manual. New Edition.* Free electronic publication, http://www.kbs-frb.be/code/page.cfm?id_page=153&id=361&lang=EN

Koning Boudewijn Stichting (2003). *Buurt- en nabijheidsdiensten: Beleidsaanbevelingen. Het resultaat van de ronde tafelgesprekken georganiseerd door de Koning Boudewijn Stichting in het kader van het experimentenfonds*. Brussel: Koning Boudewijn Stichting.

Korten, D., Mander, J., Cavanagh, J., Anderson, S., Barker, D., a.o. (2003). Alternatives to economic globalization. *Tikkun, 18* (1), 39-41.

Latham, M. (2001). The third way: An outline. In: A. Giddens (Ed)., *The Global Third Way Debate.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leren Ondernemen vzw (2002). *"Activering" en "actief zijn" volgens Franz Kafka en wij, gezinnen in armoede uit Leuven*. Brochure bij de kortfilm voor het toekomstverkennend congres over de bestijding van armoede en sociale uitsluiting, 17 oktober 2002, Brugge.

Lis, C., & Soly, H. (1986). *Armoede en Kapitalisme in pre-industrieel Europa.* Antwerpen: Standaard Uitgeverij.

Lis, C., & Vanthemse, G. (1995). Sociale zekerheid in historisch perspectief. In M. Despontin, M. Jegers (Eds.). *De Sociale Zekerheid Verzekerd?* Vlaams Wetenschappelijk Economisch Congres, Brussel, 20-21 oktober 1995. Brussel: VUB Press.

Mathijssen, C., Van Raak, J. (Eds.) (2003). *Becoming Active Citizens: Europeans reflect on their practice. A manual with materials for analysis & discussion on learning governance & citizenship.* Unpublished Framework 5 funded project report, Guilford: University of Surrey.

Mathijssen, C., Wildemeersch, D., Stroobants, V., Snick, A. (2003). Activeren tot actief burgerschap: De casus van buurt- en nabijheidsdiensten. *Vorming (18),* 2, 77-102.

Mathijssen, C., Wildemeersch, D. (2003). Reflexive and restrictive forms of activation: Negotiating the meaning of activation in neighbourhood services. In: *Proceedings of the Connections Conference, Leuven*, 4th-6th September 2003.

Merkel, W. (2001). *The third ways of social democracy.* In A. Giddens (Ed.), *The Global Third Way Debate.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Reason, P. (1998). Political, epistemological, ecological and spiritual dimensions of participation. *Studies in Cults., Orgs. and Socs., 4*, 147-167.

Rice, M. (2004). Organizational culture, social equity, and diversity: Teaching public administration education in the postmodern era. *Journal of Public Affairs Education, 10* (2), 143-154.

Roberts, N. (2004). Public deliberation in an age of direct citizen participation. *The American Review of Public Administration, 34* (4), 315-353.

Rosanvallon, P. (1995). *La nouvelle Question Sociale: Repenser l'Etat-providence.* Paris: Seuil.

Snick, A. (2002). Word opgenomen! Activering ter bestrijding van armoede en exclusie: Grenzen en mogelijkheden. In Vlaamse Overheid en Koning Boudewijn Stichting (Eds.). *Van Straks ... en Nu: Bestrijding van Armoede en sociale Uitsluiting: Reflecties over Activering en Solidariteit.* Verslagboek van het toekomstverkennend congres van 17 oktober 2002, Brugge.

Van Brempt, K. (2004). *Beleidsnota Sociale Economie 2004-2009* (Zitting 25 oktober 2004) ingediend door Kathleen Van Brempt, Vlaams Minister van Mobiliteit, Sociale Economie en Gelijke Kansen.

Vranken, J., Geldof, D., & Van Menxel, G. (1998). *Armoede en Sociale Uitsluiting: Jaarboek 1998.* Leuven/Amersfoort: Acco.

Weil, S., Wildemeersch, D., & Jansen, T. (2005). *Unemployed Youth and Social Exclusion in Europe.* Aldershot: Ashgate.

Wenger, E. (2000). Communities of practice and social learning systems. *Organization – Interdisciplinariy Journal of Organization Theory and Society, 7* (2), 225-246.

Endnotes

[xliii] These are translations from Dutch. The official terminology in Dutch for "community services" as used by the Belgian and Flemish government, by the umbrella organisation of community services, and by the community services in the field of practice is "Buurt- en nabijheidsdiensten." The translation of "Neighbourhood services" is "buurtdiensten," and the translation of "Proximity services" is "nabijheidsdiensten."

[xliv] In Dutch: "Actief zijn is zo veel mogelijk gebruik maken van je talenten, je inzetten om op te komen voor je rechten, en iets te betekenen voor anderen en de samenleving. Belangrijk is dat het niet opgelegd of verplicht is, maar iets wat je graag doet en waar je plezier aan beleeft. Onmisbaar is dat het sociaal is: werken in groep, samen plezier hebben en beter met elkaar omgaan is belangrijk."

[xlv] More information on the ETGACE-research can be found at: http://www.surrey.ac.uk/Education/ETGACE/. The manual can be downloaded at: http://www.surrey.ac.uk/politics/ETGACE/SEC3-D2.htm.

Carmen Mathijssen completed her initial Master-level studies in adult education at the K. U. Leuven. Previously to her current Ph.D. research, she was engaged as a coordinator in a network of development education. She was involved in several social economy projects with various disadvantaged target groups, in Belgium as well as in Mali, West Africa. She is a member of the platform and umbrella organisation of neighbourhood services on the Flemish level. As a member of the ETGACE research team, she did research on the learning of active citizenship in Europe. Her current Ph.D. research investigates the activation of people living in poverty in neighbourhood services. Her publications include articles on social movements, active citizenship and neighbourhood services.

Dr. **Danny Wildemeersch** is a full professor of Social and Intercultural Education at the University of Leuven in Belgium. Before, he was a full professor of Social Pedagogy and Andragogy at the University of Nijmegen in the Netherlands. He is head of the Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning and Participation. His research focuses on a variety of themes such as intercultural learning, learning and social participation, intercultural dialogue, learning and citizenship, environmental learning, transitions from school to work, participation in development cooperation. He has coordinated both national and international research projects funded by the European Union, the Belgian government, the Belgian (Flemish) Research Foundation, the Flemish Government and the Flemish University Council. He has published widely and in various languages, in books and papers on subjects like Experiential Learning, Learning for Social Responsibility, Learning for Inclusion, Learning Citizenship and Social Learning. His teaching includes subjects such as: adult education, comparative education, intercultural education and social-cultural education. He has been teaching internationally as visiting professor in several universities in Italy, Canada, Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands and South Africa.

Office Space as Hyperreality— Using Film as a Postmodern Critique of Bureaucracy

Steven Kochheiser and Robert Alexander

Synopsis of *Office Space*

Set in the cubical maze of a generic firm known as Initech, the film *Office Space* is a satirical comedy portraying the journey of computer programmer Peter Gibbons as he is worn down by the daily grind of bureaucracy in the 1990s. Disgruntled and disenchanted by the rigors of endless morning commutes, paper-jammed fax machines, and routine harassment from eight micromanaging bosses, Peter spends his days modifying computers so that they will be compliant in the year 2000. He is subject to multiple, redundant critiques about his use of the old "TPS Report cover letter" from his eight separate bosses, particularly Bill Lumbergh, a smug manager that hovers throughout the office sipping coffee. He is surrounded by the nuisances of cubicle-neighbors such as the mumbling hermit named Milton who constantly rambles about plots to take his beloved red *Swingline* stapler from him. Desperate to flee these trappings of a meaningless existence, he seeks to escape the shackles of bureaucracy by shunning his bureaucratic responsibilities.

His transformation occurs during a visit to an "occupational hypnotherapist" at the urging of his unfaithful girlfriend. After the hypnotherapist has a heart attack while Peter is in mid-hypnosis, he experiences a revelation causing him to no longer care about work. Among the changes he experiences, Peter no longer shows up to meetings, ignores his boss, tears down his cubicle, and even guts a fish on his desk. His remarkably cool and carefree attitude puzzles his co-workers and forces his bosses to unsuccessfully address his behavior.

In the meantime, in an effort to downsize and outsource, Initech brings in two "efficiency consultants" known as the two "Bobs." Each employee is interviewed by the Bobs to determine whether they should remain with the company. Showing up in a t-shirt and jeans, Peter provides a straight-forward critique of the company to the Bobs as well as his problem with simply not caring. His candor impresses the consultants and Peter is recommended for promotion to a management-level position while his two friends, Michael Bolton and Samir Nagheenanajar, are recommended for termination. Although both are dedicated employees, the former fantasizes about being a "gangsta rapper" while subsequently being questioned about his relationship to the pop-singer of the same name. The latter has his name butchered by everyone in the workplace.

In spite of the fact that Peter retains his position and is promoted, he works with Michael and Samir to launch a computer virus into the company's accounting system in an attempt to slowly divert fractions of cents into Peter's bank account. When the scheme encounters a glitch and more money is diverted than expected, the men panic and Peter decides to turn himself in to take the fall for the group. In a twist of fate, Milton, in response to his red *Swingline* stapler being stolen, burns down the Initech building along with Peter's confession letter. In the end, with Initech no longer in existence, Peter finds himself happier than ever no longer working at Initech, but as a simple laborer working on a construction site in the fresh air.

Office Space as Hyperreality—
Using Film as a Postmodern Critique of Bureaucracy

"Work Sucks" is the tagline found on nearly every poster, DVD, and videocassette of the film *Office Space*. No other two words could more accurately summarize the overall theme of the film. *Office Space*, released in 1999 and directed by Mike Judge, portrays the main character, Peter Gibbons, and his co-workers as they navigate the perils of office-bound bureaucracy. The film has become a cult classic, especially among college-aged viewers. Testament to its status is its re-release in 2005 as a special edition DVD.

The indication of cult film status reveals how much the message of *Office Space* resonates with the viewing population, especially those that work in offices and bureaucracies of a similar nature. This popularity was not due to a large advertising campaign, but simply by people sharing enthusiasm about this film with others. Viewers were able to find this comedy funny and relevant as they could directly relate to the problems faced by the characters as they endured each day at work.

Many scenes in the film illustrate postmodern critiques of bureaucracy. We believe the film can serve as a useful pedagogical tool to examine these critiques. Although *Office Space* portrays a private sector organization, many, if not all of these critiques, certainly have direct implications for the public sector. Given the ever increasing emphasis on efficiency and modeling of the private sector, the critiques found in *Office Space* can fairly be applied to many criticisms waged against public organizations.

A number of scholars have documented how politicians and the media have targeted bureaucracy as a point of criticism (Goodsell, 2004; Hall, 2002; and Hubbell, 1991). Many suggest such criticism makes the job of public administrators more difficult. In a recent study, Garrett, Thurber, Fritschler, and Rosenbloom assess the damage done to public managers by bureaucracy bashing (2006). They find that bureaucracy bashing has many negative effects among senior managers. Attacks on bureaucracy have engendered frustration, fostered low morale, and have made recruitment difficult (p. 232). Likewise, managers believe that bashing has fostered "an overall environment of suspicion and hostility toward bureaucracy" (p. 234). Thus negative portrayals of bureaucracy have real effects upon managers who perceive bashing as having negative consequences on the implementation of public policy. This essay seeks to use an invaluable resource to gain a better understanding of the public perception of bureaucracy—American popular culture. While scholars have evaluated bureaucracy bashing from candidates and the media, few have examined how bureaucrats are portrayed in motion pictures.

Popular Culture-an Untapped Resource

Charles Goodsell explains that from its inception, the field of public administration has not fully taken advantage of the enrichment that the arts could provide (p. 4, 1995). While the field is interdisciplinary with respect to social sciences and business administration, Goodsell argues that it could benefit significantly from the inclusion of various aspects of the arts. This paper answers his call by utilizing the film *Office Space* to gain insights into cultural perceptions of bureaucracy.

We are particularly interested in evaluating the film as a teaching tool for students and practitioners of administration. Possibly the most significant link made by *Office Space,* is to what Goodsell calls the "teaching bridge". As classrooms become more technologically advanced, movies and other forms of entertainment are being used to teach students about different parts of society. Using film to gain understanding of bureaucratic life signifies pedagogy within the postmodern condition. As there are multiple paths to knowledge, we believe the use of films such as *Office Space* serve as excellent insights into the life of a bureaucrat. Films can reflect and expand a student's recognition and understanding of postmodernism. *Office Space* works to maintain the viewer's attention through the use of humor. Consequently, students may be particularly receptive to lessons taught by examining the film. While it is nearly impossible to enable an entire classroom to observe the daily functions of a bureaucracy, films such as *Office Space* allow students to connect theories of public administration and organizations to a familiar aspect of popular culture.

Other scholars have recognized the utility of studying the interplay between films and public administration. In one study, Mordecai Lee uses the film *Office Space* as an example of how films have depicted efficiency experts. While instructive, we believe the film can be used to analyze bureaucracy in a more robust fashion. Although we limit our analysis by focusing on one film, the cult status of *Office Space* (especially among the young) suggests its importance as an artifact of the popular culture of the late 1990s and beyond. Thus, we extend Lee's analysis by examining the film in relation to several postmodern critiques of public administration.

Office Space presents bureaucracy in a negative fashion. In the film, bureaucracy has a negative effect on the values of employees. The pressures of bureaucracy cause them to retaliate or escape through deviant behaviors such as stealing money from the company, attempting suicide, or burning down the company building. As depicted in the film, such behaviors reveal the consequences of bureaucratic life. McCurdy surmises that popular culture can "become part of the cognitive base for making decisions about public policy and administration (p. 499, 1995). Thus, negative portrayals regarding the effects of bureaucracy on individuals can result in the general public having a negative perception of bureaucracy. More important, perceptions generated from the world of art can manifest into real world policy decisions aimed to placate voters.

Several scholars have shown how policymakers react to these negative perceptions by increasing regulations on government bureaucrats or public administrators as well as reducing

funding (see for instance, Goodsell and Murray, 1995). The bureaucrat bashing of both the Reagan and Clinton administrations followed the mantra that government either was broke or was in need of reinvention. Because feature films are reference points for the citizenry, the values articulated in them can carry great weight. This is especially true given the postmodern appetite for entertainment. Greg Smith contends that "examining a movie can give us clues about the meanings and assumptions shared by members of a culture" (p. 132, 2001).

Hyperreality

The significance of the entertainment media relative to the understanding of public administration can be understood by examining what has been described as *hyperreality* (Baudrillard, 1994). Hyperreality is part of the postmodern condition itself and consists of the symbols or signs that simulate reality in our society. Baudrillard's work suggests that reality has been replaced by fantasies of what we believe to be reality. Our expectations of what we think are real or wish to be real creates and adds to a simulated reality. Under these conditions, reality ceases to exist and only simulations of the real remain. Vivid imagery through media and film contribute greatly to our sense of what is real. Inspired by Baudrillard's work, the film *The Matrix,* captures the essence of hyperreality.[xlvi]

John David Farmer's work examining the language of bureaucracy (1995) and his polemic aimed at expanding the parameters of administrative theory (2005) recommends examining administrative theory along a number of fronts. In particular, Farmer finds that a more open and playful approach to studying organizations may generate breakthroughs in our understanding and application of bureaucracies. He contends that imagination in the world of public administration has led to significant advances in the understanding and extension of public administration. He suggests that imagination is to the postmodern condition what rationality has been to the modern condition (1995, p. 158). The use of images, symbols, and narratives has taken on great significance within the postmodern condition (p. 158-159). Narratives, such as that manifest in films, may extend the fantasies and images we have about ourselves, our society, and our culture. *Office Space* represents one film's depiction of bureaucracy. We argue that the success of *Office Space* speaks to the resonance its themes, fantasies, and images have with viewers. While the film is fiction, it nonetheless fosters a version of reality which its audience can readily relate.

In their application of hyperreality to the study of public administration, Fox and Miller (1998) explain how technological reproductions of reality have replaced the need for reality since "hyperreality is more real than real" (p. 430). For this reason, the depiction of bureaucracy in films and on television can be more real than interactions with bureaucracy actually experienced by the viewer. At a minimum, the negative portrayal can reinforce those real world problems directly experienced by citizens relative to bureaucracy. Fox and Miller (1995) demonstrate that there is no root or control for this hyperreality and it increasingly uses shrillness, violence, and humor (as in *Office Space*) to attract viewers in the postmodern

condition where "behavior is influenced by this hyperreality" (p. 54). These brief, momentary statements and stories get carried off in the hyperreality of society. Thus in the postmodern condition, the broader perception of public administration and bureaucracy can be interpreted and better understood by examining the source of this hyperreality—the media. The emergence of soft news (e.g., Bill O'Reilly, Hannity and Combs, Keith Olbermann, etc.) has particularly blurred the line between entertainment and news and represents a further continuance of hyperreality for an increasing number of Americans.

Fox and Miller (1995) describe simulacra in hyperreality as an "endless proliferation of copies for which no original actually exists" (p. 53). Although not directly referencing simulacra, Hunter (2003) notes the persistence of this phenomenon in his study of "Office Movies" from the 1990s. He cites *Office Space* as one film among many where the characters all look like copies of one another—with their white shirts and dark ties. Additionally, he notes a scene from the film *Fight Club* where the narrator is standing over a copy machine noting that *everything* to him seemed to look like a "copy of a copy of a copy" (Hunter, p. 76, 2003). In *Office Space*, the copy machine itself is a constant source of aggravation in the film. Ultimately, the protagonists act out against the machine by absconding with it and beat it to a pulp. They do this in slow motion to the tune of a gangsta rap song (with the chorus "Die Mother F**ker, Die Mother F**ker"). The "beat down" on the copy machine is reminiscent of a gangland hit. That the object is a copy machine symbolizes simulacra. Metaphors and simulacra are often used in the media and tend to influence the state of politics and public administration.

Office Space represents a manifestation of the postmodern impulse many scholars have addressed. The film relies on the audience's knowledge of popular culture. The characters in *Office Space* refer to elements of popular culture that would require the audience's knowledge of films, celebrities, music, or video games in order to "get the joke." For example, the characters in *Office Space* recreate a scheme used in the film *Superman III* to embezzle money from their employer. To validate the plan, one of the characters states: "it's just like in *Superman III*." The referencing of a film within a film, represents a prime usage of hyperreality, which in turn adds to hyperreality.

Stories of scandals, poor service, and wasted tax dollars tend to headline the news and become part of the hyperreality of the public's perception of bureaucracy and public administration. Similar arguments have been made regarding the presence of a "culture war" between red states and blue states in American politics (Fiorina, 2004). Although such stories attract viewership, they do not wholly depict the truth. Instead, the mass media emphasize conflict and neglect cooperation leading viewers to believe friction pervades American society. In the end, the public comes to believe a reality that is communicated to them on a consistent basis over time. This hyperreality becomes especially tangible when little conflicting evidence is presented. In a study of popular films depicting bureaucrats, Lee and Paddock (2001) found all of 20 *positive* depictions of bureaucrats from a universe of nearly 24,000 movies! This underwhelming display of positive portrayals is likely to convey a reality to viewers where bureaucrats are rarely seen as individuals worthy of esteem.

Office Space uses characters, stories, and companies as simulacra to create a depiction of bureaucracy that emphasizes organizational pathologies associated with bureaucracy. These pathologies thus become the reality for citizens looking to evaluate bureaucracy. Even though the depiction is a brief staged interpretation of what bureaucracy is like, it becomes part of our hyperreality as a society. Thus, in the postmodern condition the fear, suffering, and dehumanization portrayed in films such as *Office Space* become part of the hyperreal expectation of bureaucracy.

The perception of bureaucracy is nearly always negative since negative stories are best able to compete with the rest of hyperreality. The result is a public perception of bureaucracy that is overwhelmingly negative. This has an additional effect on government agencies because policymakers react to negative public perceptions through funding cuts and limitations on administrators. Fox and Miller (1998) discuss how anecdotal evidence can steer policymakers toward eliminating valuable programs and thereby making the job of public administrators more difficult or even impossible (p. 434, 1998). Terry also claims these perceptions have deleterious effects upon the job of the public administrator (p. 58, 1997). We suggest that government bureaucracy is often seen as a villain in film and is thus punished by policymakers in the "real world". In short, government (the villain) is broken and representatives (the heroes) are there to fix it. Such imagery reinforces unrealistic expectations of representatives and fosters a lack of accountability within the public sector.

Negative Stereotypes in Films

Holzer and Slater (1995) contend that a paradox exists in America where citizens demand the world in the form of services from bureaucrats, yet constantly assault the people and institutions that deliver these services (p. 81). Much of this behavior can be attributed to the negative fashion in which the media portrays bureaucrats. In short, negative stories are usually brought to the forefront because they sell newspapers or attract higher ratings (Holzer and Slater p. 82, 1995). *Office Space* feeds off the same rationale, as the film uses the stereotypical negative depiction of bureaucrats to produce humor. Consequently, Holzer and Slater assert that the public is presented predominately with images of mediocre and unprofessional bureaucrats which is then perceived as reality (p. 84, 1995). Such imagery is then carried off into hyperreality. Negative stereotypes or simulacra become the "reality" of bureaucracy and public administration. A prominent example of this in *Office Space* can be seen with its treatment of the efficiency expert.

Mordecai Lee's (2002) examination of efficiency experts in film suggests that they are usually portrayed as harmless white males who serve as a source of humor. However, in the 1970s this depiction changed (likely mirroring the public's lost confidence in government in the wake of the Watergate and Vietnam debacles). Over the past 30 years, efficiency experts have been portrayed as dark if not evil figures that are to be feared and despised. Since the mid-1970s, Lee suggests films have viewed efficiency as bad and professionals as sinister

villains. The public, especially in the 1990s, with the trend toward devolution and downsizing in the public sector, equated efficiency with layoffs, whereas previously efficiency meant progress. All in all, the goals of the efficiency expert have remained the same, but are now depicted in a negative manner.

Lee refers to *Office Space* as an example of the negative treatment of efficiency experts in the 1990s. The two consultants Bob Slydell and Bob Porter, also known as the two "Bobs," are called in to interview employees and produce layoff recommendations. They are two figures who serve as a source of fear and disillusion for many of the employees. Consider the following exchange from the film:

Tom Smykowski: I've been looking all over for you guys. Have you seen this? I knew it. I knew it.

Michael Bolton: What? It's a staff meeting. So what?

Tom Smykowski: So what? We're all screwed, that's what. They're gonna downsize Initech.

Samir: Now, what are you talking about, Tom? Now, how do you know that?

Tom Smykowski: How do I know? They're bringing in a consultant, that's how I know. That's what this staff meeting is all about. It happened at Initrode last year. You have to interview with this consultant. They call them "efficiency experts." But what you're really doing is interviewing for your own job.

Michael Bolton: Tom, every week you say you're going to lose your job, and you're still here.

Tom Smykowski: Not this time. I bet I'm the first one laid off. Just the thought of having to go to the state unemployment office to stand in line with those scumbags!

Although no evidence of layoffs had yet been suggested, the mere existence of the efficiency experts signaled as much to a long-time employee, Tom Smykowski. Later, Tom unsuccessfully tries to commit suicide.

Throughout the film, we find the Bobs' decisions to be out of touch with reality. In fact, Lee (2002) cites Peter Gibbons, the main character who hates his computer programming job, as he arrives to work late, dresses inappropriately, and ignores his bosses. However, this behavior in the distorted view of the efficiency experts, serves as reasoning to give him a *promotion* to management while laying-off his two co-workers, Michael and Samir. The Bobs believe Peter's lack of professionalism and productivity is because he has not been adequately challenged. They are clearly addressing Peter as a "Theory Y" case, when in fact Peter is a classic "Theory X" employee. The efficiency experts are subsequently clueless as to Peter's lack of motivation.

On the other hand, Peter's dedicated colleagues are viewed as expendable by the efficiency experts. Consistent with other treatments of the efficiency expert, *Office Space* promotes the

notion that these individuals are irrational and something to be feared—determining promotions and firings with their twisted and erroneous logic. In the hyperreality of the postmodern condition, the public thus perceives the role of efficiency experts in bureaucracy as negative. Even though efficiency is desired, the disconnect between the efficiency experts and front-line employees suggests that management decisions are sub-optimal, irrational, mean-spirited, and in the end inefficient and ineffective.

The Mythology of Villains, Heroes, and Victims in *Office Space*

To further understand the perception of bureaucrats by the public, three other types of bureaucrats portrayed in cinema are important to address. The villain, hero, and victim are all bureaucratic types who appear in *Office Space*. Larry Terry addresses the use of these characters as part of the theater metaphor which has pervaded American politics from its inception. He argues that the metaphor is often used to signal a crisis and show the citizenry how leaders intend to deal with the crisis.

Terry posits that the theater metaphor was adroitly used by the Reagan administration to craft his vision in the reformation of bureaucracy. Terry notes Reagan's oft used slogan that "government is not the solution to the problem, government is the problem." Others have also employed mythology to the study of public bureaucrats (see, for example, Bellavita, 1991 and Hubbell, 1991). The use of metaphors as simulacra further emphasizes the importance of the portrayal of the bureaucrat in popular culture.

Bureaucracy as the Ultimate Villain

Terry discusses how President Reagan used the theater metaphor to portray bureaucracy as a villain. He described bureaucracy not as the solution to the nation's problems, but as the problem. This portrayal of bureaucracy as a villain continues to resonate with the American people. This is evident in the portrayal of bureaucracy in *Office Space*. The firm Initech is described as "wrong" and an "evil corporation" by the main character Peter Gibbons as he justifies his scheme to steal money from the company to his girlfriend. Incidentally, the viewer is led to believe that Peter is a good guy who has been driven to such debauchery by the villain we know as bureaucracy. Thus, bureaucracy makes good people do bad things. Worth noting is the fact that Peter seeks the counsel of an *occupational* hypnotherapist, rather than simply a hypnotherapist. His job has taken precedence over the rest of his life.

Another scene suggests that bureaucracy is tantamount to the Nazi regime. Peter equates a restaurant chain's policies regarding the mandatory wearing of buttons (or "flare") to Nazi policies of forcing Jews to wear symbols. It is in this way that bureaucracies are considered evil--so evil that they are compared to Nazis. So when Peter determines that he will steal money from these evil corporations, he is justified by viewing himself as a Robin Hood type figure, especially after it appears that bureaucracy has stolen his soul. Once again, it is bureaucracy that has driven him to deviant behavior.

Terry suggests that the villain metaphor is dangerous to use, as it not only denies the positive attributes of bureaucracy, but also leads to the belief that it is an evil force which must be destroyed. Just as *Office Space* condemns Initech as evil, this evil is conquered when the character Milton determines to burn down the office building. While this is a harmless act in the film, Terry cites not so harmless acts against bureaucrats such as the Oklahoma City Bombing that can be a result of portraying bureaucracy as a villain.

The Bureaucratic Hero

Terry also describes efforts by supporters of the administrative state to undermine the villainous portrayal of bureaucracy by the Reagan administration. Such treatments have focused on the administrator as a hero or as an innocent victim. However, *Office Space* offers a different and disturbing type of hero. The characters Milton and Peter both fulfill the role of hero in *Office Space*. Milton stands up to bureaucracy by burning down the office building. As we note above, such strong anti-bureaucracy sentiment can and does find its way into the real world.

Peter, on the other hand, overcomes bureaucracy as he fights to regain his soul after bureaucracy stole it. Along the way, he steals money from the company, alienates his girlfriend, and gets promoted for shirking his responsibilities at work. These are hardly noble behaviors. Ultimately, Peter breaks free of his job and leaves the office in favor of a job as a "simple laborer". Both Milton and Peter represent heroic figures that perform "virtuous" acts *against* the evil of bureaucracy. This reveals the public's criterion for determining a hero within bureaucracy, which consists of fighting *against* bureaucracy. Neither fights to change the bureaucracy. Instead, they either seek to destroy it (in Milton's case) or steal from it (in Peter's case). Thus, in each instance we see no redemption of bureaucracy. Bureaucratic organization does not change and Peter's colleagues, Michael and Samir find similar jobs at a similar office. Such ambivalence contributes to the general public's perception of bureaucracy as negative as well as society's predisposition of hostility toward bureaucracy.

The Innocent Victim of Bureaucracy

In *Office Space* virtually every front-line employee is portrayed as a victim in some manner. The disillusionment that Peter Gibbons feels spreads from his problems at work to his personal life. Bureaucracy takes over his life. He is forced to go to an occupational hypnotherapist to deal with the fact that "every day is the worst day of his life." This causes the audience to sympathize with the plight of a worker that has been victimized by bureaucracy.

Although similar sentiments are exhibited by other workers in the office, the ultimate victim of bureaucracy is Milton. He lacks basic social skills and is often heard mumbling about rules of the office or his precious stapler. He suffers from a complete sense of vulnerability. Milton is completely impotent against the forces of bureaucracy that threaten to take what is

important to him—especially his red swingline stapler. The portrayals of Peter and Milton convey bureaucrats who are innocent victims. The real enemy is bureaucracy.

Portrayals of bureaucrats and public administrators in films reveal the influence these types (i.e., heroes, villains, and victims) have in influencing hyperreality. The impact of this phenomenon upon public policy has been revealed in recent government studies into the state of bureaucracy. One such example is the National Performance Review (NPR). Given the proximity of the film with the implementation of the NPR, it is useful to analyze the film relative to the NPR.

The NPR and Red Tape

The NPR's admonition of red tape and regulation was among its featured criticisms of government administration. Similarly, red tape and regulation are portrayed in *Office Space* as a constant source of problems in bureaucracy. A recurring theme in this film is the idea of the "TPS report" which hounds Peter throughout the film. He apparently neglects to put a cover sheet on a TPS report. Although the audience is never told what a TPS report is, we see Peter is persistently reminded and harassed by coworkers for his failure to simply put a cover sheet on his TPS report. The total count of direct reminders regarding the form including fellow employees, bosses, memos, and an anonymous phone call totals *six* in one morning. The TPS scenario speaks to the NPR's admonition that workers are inhibited from exercising creativity which results in "paralyzing inefficiency."

The reliance on paperwork is emblematic of the postmodern condition. According to Fox and Miller (1998), simulacra in the form of scores, reports, and paperwork have come to *indicate* performance rather than *actual* performance (p. 435). Public administration within hyperreality relies on these bits of information to judge performance rather than the actual performance of a task or accomplishment itself. The NPR discusses this problem by stating: "They fill out forms that should never have been created, follow rules that should never have been imposed, and prepare reports that serve no purpose…" (in Shafritz, Hyde and Parkes, p. 557, 2004). The problem of TPS reports in *Office Space* displays a problem with both the abundance and redundancy of red tape.

Conflict in Modern/Postmodern Organizational Structures

Another concern regarding the hyperreality of bureaucracy with the problems identified in both the NPR and *Office Space* demonstrate a conflict between modern and postmodern organizational structures. Fox and Miller explain that conflict occurs as a result of the change of production from goods (in modern society) to information (in postmodern society.) Conflict in bureaucracy is a direct result of a system that benefited largely from the modern era. Watson explains that modernity brought about a number of the laws, theories, administrative practices and procedures' associated with public administration (p. 405, 1998).

Reliance upon management principles and social science further contribute to this condition. Thus, the Weberian bureaucratic structure of public administration has proved to be a powerful paradigm.

Fox and Miller demonstrate that this structure is a "system of power" in postmodern society (p. 434, 1998). These systems can be used to socialize and control who gets to provide input (through language) into the organization. Hierarchy is used for control or domination and continues to be endorsed by many public administration bodies of knowledge (p. 434). Fox and Miller believe that the modern paradigm will not change as the best response for these "inmates" is neutral indifference. They might agree with the response to the domination of the employees in *Office Space*.

Peter: What if we're still doing this when we're fifty?
Samir: It would be nice to have that kind of job security.

While talking over coffee, the preceding conversation took place between the employees in the midst of a discussion about how bad their jobs were. Even though they are being dominated by a hierarchy imposing eight separate bosses, they are indifferent and unwilling to challenge the status quo.

This seems to bring up a conflict in postmodern bureaucracy as one would believe that with the advent of the information age, bureaucracy would become less controlling and more of an "adhocracy." Adhocracy is a term used to illustrate the transformation from organization structures in the modern age of Weberian hierarchies to postmodern adhocracies. Other forms include modes of production transforming (from modern to postmodern) from mass assembly/production of goods to postindustrial/information and ethics to transform from utilitarian, deontological (based on idea that decisions should be made considering one's duties and the rights of others), and syllogistic to situational and contextual.

Two of the three applicable illustrations seem to have made the transition in *Office Space* to postmodernism. The mode of production in Initech is technology and very closely related to the transfer of information via software. The ethics present in *Office Space* are very much situational and contextual. The decision of Peter and his coworkers to rip off the company is based solely on aiding themselves, not the rights of others or their duty to the company. The transition of the organization, however, seems to be much like the hierarchy established by modern thinkers such as Weber. This ultimately reveals the conflict between the postmodern ethical and production values versus the modern system of organization based on hierarchy. We contend that the conflict found in *Office Space* speaks a great deal to those concerned about the negative effects examining the psychology of bureaucracy.

The Psychology of Bureaucracy

"Is this good for the company?"

One of the most strident critiques of modern organizations is that bureaucracy dehumanizes relations among people. According to Ralph Hummel, bureaucracy demands behaviors that have the ability to change the "psyche's processes" of acquiring knowledge and feeling emotions (p. 111, 1994). This deprives the individual from making ethical decisions and assessing when "work is done right". This condition forces individuals to leave their emotions out of their work while accepting an identity defined by the organization (p. 111). In short, individual identity is determined by the organization in which one works.

Office Space provides this critique in the form of Initech's Mission Statement. Upon his own liberation from the control of bureaucracy, Peter tears down a banner with the company mission statement reading *"Is this good for the company?"* This mission statement, mentioned earlier by Division Vice President Bill Lumbergh, reveals the organizational mantra that encourages employees to process every decision through the filter of whether it would be beneficial to the company. Right and wrong, good and bad, are no longer determined based on common societal norms, but on their impact on the well-being of the organization. Individuals cease to exist and bureaucracy is left triumphant.

Bureaucratic organizations deprive individuals from functioning psychologically as they would in normal situations. This deviation from the norms of non-bureaucratic human society raises concerns regarding bureaucracy. According to Hummel, bureaucrats react to this imposition of reality through bureaucratic structures by creating their own reality or fantasy (p. 111, 1994). While this is not necessarily an escape from reality, it is more of a coming to terms with the realities faced within a bureaucracy. *Office Space* portrays this by the fantasy world of the programmer Michael Bolton. This character has escaped into a "gangsta" rap hyperreality, speaking of how much power he and other programmers have over the company in terms similar to those used by a gangster. Throughout the film, Michael listens to rap music, yet turns it down when he is around African-Americans. Showing off his bravado, Michael states: "In fact, they're [Initech] going to find out the hard way if they don't start treating us software people better. They don't understand, I could program a virus that would rip that place off big time." When Michael launches the virus that diverts money from the company, rap music is played during the sequence and the sound of the computer's keystrokes mimic the sounds of a jail door being closed. When the computer forces Michael to wait, he looks at the camera (the audience) with a look of ineptitude. The characters celebrate their scheme by breakdancing to hip hop music.

The fantasy world of Michael is significant because rather than recognizing that work is a choice or that he could voice his concerns, he seeks to escape from his reality and ultimately falls into the morality instituted by the company's mission statement. He does not look at his own happiness. Instead, he would rather retaliate by doing what is *bad* for the company. His ethical compass has been set by the company. His sense of good and bad has been calibrated with that of the company's rather than what would be considered typical in normal society. This suggests the psychology of this individual has been trumped by that of the bureaucratic structure.

Neurotic Types and Bureaucracy

Hummel contends that bureaucracy "takes over basic functions of the self-reliant and loving individual" (p. 145, 1994). Consequently, it attracts those in society with "neurotic responses to challenges of self-reliance and love." He introduces three types of neurotic responses to bureaucratic hierarchy (p. 145, 1994). Each of these is found in *Office Space*.

The first type is that of "people who turn away from people" (p. 145, 1994). These people tend to be top administrators in organizations (p. 145, 1994). They do not have the time to deal with other people and their reality is focused toward facts and figures. Hummel labels the self-loving personalities as the best fit for this withdrawn role. Peter's boss, Bill Lumbergh typifies this neurotic type. He has an expensive car, well-coiffed hair, and appears to be meticulous with his clothes. More important, in his dealings with subordinates, he demands rather than asks that they will work on weekends and he often does so while avoiding eye contact. He clearly is not interested in the responses his subordinates give him. His reply to employee requests is always . . . "Yeeaahh, right . .." He then proceeds to sip his cup of coffee and continue about his business—oblivious to the desires of employees. It is clear he is most interested in what *he* has to say, rather than what employees have to say.

The second neurotic type is that of "people who turn against people" or middle managers. While they have the role of nurturing their subordinates, they must possess the ability to turn against them when it is required by the organization. They possess the trait of dominance, needing other people only to dominate them. This type of bureaucrat is portrayed extensively in *Office Space* with the eight different mid-level managers found in the film. The following exchange between Peter (front-line employee) and the Bobs (mid-level managers) is instructive.

Peter Gibbons:	You're gonna lay off Samir and Michael?
Bob Slydell	(Consultant/Efficiency Expert): Oh yeah, we're bringing in some entry-level graduates. Farm some work out to Singapore, that's the usual deal.
Bob Porter	(Consultant/Efficiency Expert): Standard operating procedure.
Peter Gibbons:	Do they know this yet?
Bob Slydell:	No. No, of course not. We find it's always better to fire people on a Friday. Studies have statistically shown that there's less chance of an incident if you do it at the end of the week.

This exchange illustrates a number of negative stereotypes of bureaucracy. Important to our analysis is that these mid-level managers turn against employees when circumstances dictate such behavior. Little concern is shown by the managers for the welfare of employees. Rather, they are most interested in efficiency and reducing the likelihood of conflict in the workplace.

The final neurotic type discussed by Hummel is that of "people turning toward people" or front-line bureaucratic employees. He explains that since bureaucracies require close adherence to commands and rules, organizations select and nurture individuals that tend to depend on others. Hummel suggests that these individuals need to be guided as to how to get work done, how to interact with others, and receive satisfaction for personal emotional needs (p. 145-146). The following exchange between two front-line employees illustrates this neurotic type.

[*Peter, Michael, and Samir standing around*]

Peter Gibbons: Our high school guidance counselor used to ask us what you'd do if you had a million dollars and you didn't have to work. And invariably what you'd say was supposed to be your career. So, if you wanted to fix old cars you're supposed to be an auto mechanic.

Samir: So what did you say?

Peter Gibbons: I never had an answer. I guess that's why I'm working at Initech.

This statement reveals a dependency on others by front-line employees on the bureaucratic culture. While Peter and his colleagues may discuss leaving the company for better careers, they are stuck in their positions because they cannot really see themselves apart from the organization to which they belong. Even though they do not find their work particularly enjoyable, they function well within it as they are dependent on it for many aspects of their lives. In this way, the film demonstrates how bureaucracy exploits this type of individual so that the organization may have reliable, obedient employees dependent on the organizational structure because it provides meaning for them.

Anxiety in Bureaucracy: The Existential Approach

Bureaucracy is frequently characterized by a feeling of anxiety. Hummel contends that bureaucracy creates an existential crisis for the individual by creating the bureaucratic personality which supplants the social personality. This phenomenon makes the individual reliant on bureaucracy to resolve the crisis of existence (p. 148-149, 1994). The individual is now at the ultimate mercy of the bureaucracy to fulfill their needs. This creates awe over the power of bureaucracy. Hummel argues that this goes beyond simply the fear of firing, but is a constant "vague feeling of dread" of "the general and ever present possibility of having the essential nullity of their importance in the values hierarchy of the organization exposed to themselves and to others" (p. 149, 1994). Workers are anxious about the power of bureaucracy over their very own existence. This is demonstrated vividly in *Office Space* when Peter Gibbons meets with his occupational hypnotherapist.

Peter Gibbons: So I was sitting in my cubicle today, and I realized, ever since I started working, every single day of my life has been worse than the day before it. So that means that every single day that you see me, that's on the worst day of my life.

Dr. Swanson	(Occupational Hypnotherapist): What about today? Is today the worst day of your life?
Peter Gibbons:	Yeah.
Dr. Swanson:	Wow, that's messed up.

This illustrates the constant anxiety experienced by bureaucratic employees. The fact that such a thing as an occupational hypnotherapist exists speaks volumes. Moreover, that Peter must meet with one to discuss his work issues reveals how critical the bureaucratic personality has become. Once again, we see that work has invaded his personal life. Even though his relationship with his girlfriend is going sour, his first priority is to improve his work related problems. The existential crisis is evident in this ranking of priorities evident in Peter's life.

Discussion

We set out to demonstrate how an artifact of the popular culture, the film *Office Space*, could serve as a valuable resource to better understand popular perceptions of bureaucracy as well as point up several postmodern critiques of bureaucracy and public administration. We believe utilizing aspects from the popular culture is imperative as they often provide common frames of reference and speak to publicly held beliefs regarding certain elements of society. In this case, we are concerned with what resonates with citizens relative to bureaucracy. The importance of the media in the formation of the postmodern concept of hyperreality cannot be overlooked. Heeding the call to incorporate the arts into a broader understanding of public administration, we have sought to deepen our knowledge of how a feature film resonating with so many people (especially young people) depicts bureaucracy.

The stinging portrayals of bureaucracy articulated in films such as *Office Space* cultivate a negative hyperreal version of bureaucracy within the minds of many citizens. The resonance of *Office Space* reinforces negative stereotypes associated with bureaucracy. This in, turn, validates a hyperreal vision we have of bureaucracy. We believe the public perception of bureaucracy demonstrated here works to encourage bureaucrat-bashing among elected representatives. Bureaucracy is a villain to be conquered by heroes. It is worth noting that the heroes in *Office Space* never succeed in changing bureaucracy. Instead, they either 1) opt out (Peter) or 2) physically destroy the organization (Milton). Given the popular animus toward government bureaucracy, the failure to ultimately change the organization is significant.

Office Space has shown itself to be an excellent tool for understanding many pathologies of bureaucracy. Consequently, we suggest its use as a teaching tool for both students and practitioners. We offer a number of questions that viewers may consider below. As others have demonstrated, a great deal can be learned through the critical analysis of films. We hope to have contributed to this emerging literature. Some key factors revealed in *Office Space* include understanding the various criticisms relating to the psychology of bureaucracy as well

as the establishment of a hyperreal depiction of modern bureaucracy. Although the film is a comedy, its use as a tool to understand various critiques of public administration should not be overlooked.

Questions to Consider

We suggest viewers of the film consider several questions as they analyze the film. These questions are not exhaustive, but serve as starting points for further analysis of the film.

While we discuss several common pathologies of bureaucracy, many more appear in the film. What pathologies of bureaucracy are displayed in *Office Space*? Are these pathologies more likely to occur in the public or private sector? Why?

A great deal of literature has examined how organizations can work to motivate employees. What does *Office Space* say about theories of motivation? What does this say about organizational theory? What does this say about personnel management?

While the essay focuses on postmodern critiques of bureaucracy, in what ways are other perspectives of organizational theory (classic, structural, humanist, behavioural, etc.) reflected in the film?

In what ways does the film represent management philosophies of the 1990s? In what ways is the film an artifact of its time? In what ways is it timeless?

How does Milton represent the consequences of modern paradigms associated with bureaucracy?

Is Peter Gibbons a hero? Why?

What does the film say about ethics and honour?

In Charles Goodsell's *The Case for Bureaucracy* (2004) he argues that media portrayals of bureaucracy unfairly produce images of organizations that endure in the minds of citizens. Do you believe films such as *Office Space* add to these negative images or are they "just movies"? Why?

References

Bellavita, Christopher. 1991. "The Public Administrator as Hero." *Administration & Society*, vol. 23, (2): 155-185.

Baudrillard, Jean. 1994. *Simulacra and Simulation: The Body, in Theory*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Farmer, John David. 1995. *The Language of Administration: Bureaucracy, Modernity, and Postmodernity*. Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press.

Farmer, John David. 2005. *To Kill the King: Post-Traditional Governance and Bureaucracy*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

Fiorina, Morris. 2004. *Culture War?: The Myth of a Polarized America*. New York, NY: Pearson Longman.

Fox, Charles, and Hugh Miller. 1998. "Postmodern Philosophy and Public Organization." *Handbook of Organization Theory and Management: The Philosophical Approach*. Ed. Lynch, Thomas, and David Dicker. New York, NY: Marcel Dekker, Inc. 415 – 437.
Fox, Charles and Hugh Miller. 1995. *Postmodern Public Administration: Toward Discourse*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Garrett, Sam; James Thurber; Lee Fritschler and David Rosenbloom. 2006. "Assessing the Impact of Bureaucracy bashing by Electoral Campaigns." *Public Administration Review*, vol. 66, (2): 228-240.

Goodsell, Charles. 2004. *The Case for Bureaucracy*. 4th Ed. Washington D.C.: CQ Press.

Goodsell, Charles and Nancy Murray. 1995. "Prologue: Building New Bridges." *Public Administration Illuminated and Inspired by the Arts*. Ed. Goodsell, Charles, and Nancy Murray. Westport, Conn.: Praeger. 3 – 21.

Hall, Thad. 2002. "Live Bureaucrats and Dead Public Servants: How People in Government are Discussed on the Floor of the House." *Public Administration Review,* vol. 62, (2): 242-48.

Holzer, Marc, and Linda Slater. 1995. "Insights into Bureaucracy from Film: Visualizing Stereotypes." *Public Administration Illuminated and Inspired by the Arts*. Ed. Goodsell, Charles, and Nancy Murray. Westport, Conn.: Praeger. 75 – 89.

Hubbell, Larry. 1991. "Heroes in the Public Service." *Administration & Society*, vol. 23, (2): 194-200.

Hummel, Ralph. 1994. *The Bureaucratic Experience: A Critique of Life in the Modern Organization*. 4th ed. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Hunter, Latham. 2003. "The Celluloid Cubicle: Regressive Constructions of Masculinity in 1990s Office Movies." *The Journal of American Culture*, vol. 26, (1): 71-86.

Lee, Mordecai. 2002. "Management History as Told by Popular Culture: The Screen Image of the Efficiency Expert." *Emerald Insight*, vol. 40, (9): 881-894.

Lee, Mordecai and Susan Paddock. 2001. "Strange But True Tales From Hollywood: The Bureaucrat as Movie Hero." *Public Administration & Management: An Interactive Journal*, vol. 6, (4): 166-194.
McCurdy, Howard. 1995. "Fiction and Imagine: How They Affect Public Administration." *Public Administration Review.*, vol. 66, (6): 499-506.

National Performance Review. 1993. "From Red Tape to Results: Creating a Government that Works Better and Costs Less." in Jay Shafritz, albert Hyde and Sandra Parkes, *The Classics of Public Administration,* 5th edition. Wadsworth: Belmont, CA.: 556-564.

Office Space. 1999. Dir. Mike Judge. Perf. Ron Livingston, Stephen Root, Gary Cole, and Jennifer Aniston. 1999. DVD. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, Inc.

Smith, Greg. 2001. "'It's Just a Movie': A Teaching Essay for Introductory Media Classes." *Cinema Journal*, vol. 41, (1): 127 – 134.

Terry, Larry. 1997. "Public Administration and the Theater Metaphor: The Public Administrator as Villain, Hero, and Innocent Victim." *Public Administration Review,* vol. 57 (1): 53-61.

Watson, Robert. 1998. "On the Language of Bureaucracy: Postmodernism, Plain English, and Wittgenstein." *Handbook of Organization Theory and Management: The Philosophical Approach.* Ed. Lynch, Thomas, and David Dicker. New York, NY: Marcel Dekker, Inc. 389 – 413.

Endnotes

[xlvi] The film, *The Matrix*, is in part inspired by Baudrillard's work on simulacra and hyperreality. In the film Baudrillard's text, *Simulcra and Simulation* (1984) appears briefly as a hollowed-out book containing goods the protagonist Neo (Keanu Reeves) stashes away for safekeeping.

Steven Kochheiser is an Ohio Legislative Intern.

Dr. **Robert Alexander** is Associate Professor at Ohio Northern University.

Bree Michaels Becomes a Professor: Fictionalizing Lived Experience in Order to Learn from It

Diane Ketelle

When we last encountered Bree Michaels (Ketelle, 2006, *PV* VIII-2), she was an elementary school principal. Since that time, she has become a professor teaching in a school leadership graduate program and we pick up with her as she teaches a graduate seminar focused on writing creative nonfiction as research.

I accepted a professorship after finishing my doctorate and then entered the mysterious world of the academy. Many of the skills that made me a successful elementary school principal – strong people skills, a collaborative style and a process orientation, seemed to work against me as I tried to develop an academic identity. Self-interest seems to be the cornerstone of the successful academic career, and I am forever being told by well meaning colleagues to "avoid meetings" and to "carve out time to write alone," both things I would never do as a school principal.   In this foreign world I began making sense of my administrative experience through fictionalizing aspects of it and, after taking a deep breath, I decided to teach my students to do the same.

I walk into my graduate leadership seminar which is full of school leader types and write on the board "Communicating through creative nonfiction." Glancing around the room I notice anxiety in many students' faces. They realize that tonight we will discuss that strange assignment on the syllabus – a fictionalized narrative based on real lived experience. Although the group has already been together for ten weeks, tonight I feel a sense of exhilaration and anxiety, as I begin to explain how creative nonfiction can be used as a powerful form of self-study. I had debated before class about whether to refer to the assignment as a personal narrative, a self-ethnography, autoethnography or self-study. I had decided on self-study because I thought it was the least intimidating for the group.

The week before I had passed out two articles in class both by Ketelle. The articles were *Writing Truth as Fiction* and *Bree Michaels: A Glimpse into the Life of an Elementary School Principal*. I began class with a discussion of the articles and asked students for comments and questions on the readings. Jerry asks, "Is Ketelle saying stories need to be truthful, but they don't have to be accurate? Wouldn't you say this form of self-study is a lot like writing fiction?"

"Truman Capote catapulted nonfiction to the status of literature with his novel, *In Cold Blood*. He recounted a true story, but took license with details," I respond and continue, "Capote's novel forever impacted journalism, but some social science researchers write fiction as social science. Angrosino, for example, wrote fictional stories based on his ethnographic work about adults with mental retardation and Clough used fiction to document his work with special education students. Ketelle is fictionalizing aspects of real lived experience, as a form of self-study, in order to learn about her administrative experience which is a little different."

"Why do they do that?" Tod asks.

"I think they feel that fiction allows them to get at the truth of their participants' experiences without revealing their identities or, in Ketelle's case, a personal kind of truth. They want to show experiences and readers can draw their own conclusions. Angrosino, after all, purports to convey the truth of experience."

"How do you think the decisions of Angrosino or Clough or Ketelle differ from the decisions a fiction writer makes?" Lana asks.

"That's a really good question. Typically, autoethnographers, or those who study self, limit themselves to what they remember happened. They don't tell something they know to be false – although that isn't clear cut. That seems to be what Ketelle is doing. Agrosino and Clough are creating composite characters and using fiction to mask identities and tell the story of their research."

"What do you mean?" Tod asks.

"Say you create a composite character by combining qualities of several people or change some identifying information such as a person's age. This is done all the time in the name of "good" research. You might collapse events to write a more engaging story and doing that might create a more truthful story in a narrative sense, but not in an historical one."

Lorraine chimes in, "In one of the Ketelle articles the author creates composite characters in order to revisit professional experiences. She's reconsidering her experience in order to learn from it - right?"

"Yes. She focuses on difficult experiences from her administrative experience and in order to do so she changes some information, but the goal is to get to the core problem and the core

problem is what made it hard. By creating composite characters she is able to depersonalize the situation and move through it in a new way. She is seeking a new perspective in order to learn from her experience."

I see a look of understanding on Mary's face and continue, "Even ethnographers who claim to play by the rules often use devices such as making composites or collapsing events to tell better stories and protect their participants. Yes, those researchers claim to capture 'the truth' and would recoil at the thought of putting words into participants' mouths, but they do it all the time. Laurel Richardson reminds us that fictionalizing can capture the emotional truth of an experience. We can make cognitive connections after we reveal emotional understanding."

June says, "I just don't get this. It just doesn't seem to have anything to do with research. Last semester I took *Introduction to Research Design* and Professor Ramon taught us a lot of other stuff."

"Everything you learned last semester matters, but remember qualitative research is a label for inquiry that takes place in the social world across a spectrum. If we think of a spectrum extending from science to art, this assignment is closer to art, but no less 'real' research."

Angie has been very quiet and now asks, "But what is the usefulness of this assignment? Maybe my question is really what is the usefulness of stories?"
"Art Bochner and Carolyn Ellis argue that the real question is what do narratives do, what consequences do they have? Narrative stories give us a way to remember the past and turn our lives into language. Roland Barthes believed that narratives play two important roles: 1) on an individual level they help us understand who we are and where we want to go; 2) and on a cultural level narratives give cohesion to shared beliefs and values. The narrative I am assigning is a call to reveal or disclose yourselves to your experience. How much you choose to reveal is your choice."

Jane says, "When this course started and I saw this assignment on the syllabus I thought it was going to be easy, but now I'm not so sure."

"I think you are nervous because this assignment is a call to reveal," I note and continue, "Ruth Behar would tell us that self exposure can lead beyond self examination into the social world full of social issues. Remember what we've talked about in class. We seek greater self understanding in order to connect with others. We go in to go out."

Fred asks, "How will we know if we do a good job? How can we judge our stories?"

"That's a really good question. Art Bochner and Carolyn Ellis believe this sort of writing inspires a different way of reading. This work isn't meant to be "consumed" as knowledge or traditional research. However, this kind of writing doesn't allow a reader to be passive. The writer wants the reader to fully engage – to think and feel. Perhaps this kind of writing more

than anything else is meant to do what Sparkes has suggested, explore and understand topics in new ways."

As June gathers up her papers and her books she says, "Sometimes I think you are crazy Bree – I mean, where do you come up with the stuff?"

Laughing I close class with some encouraging comments, "Each of you will write a personal story and I'm looking forward to next week and what we will learn from each other." As I drive home I re-teach class in my head. I try to remember what each student said and how I could have responded more fully. Had my students left with the understanding the need to complete the assignment? Why am I so often left with that same question? As I pull into my driveway I think about how difficult it can be to mine human experience.

References

Angrosino, M. (1998). *Opportunity house: Ethnographic stories of mental retardation*. Walnut Creek, Ca: AltaMira Press.

Barthes, R. (1966). Introduction to the structural analysis of narrative. Occasional Paper, Centre for Contemporary cultural Studies, Birmingham, England: University of Birmingham.

Behar, R. (1996). *The vulnerable observer: anthropology that breaks your heart*. Boston: Beacon.

Bochner, A. & Ellis, C. (1996). Talking over ethnography. *In composing ethnography: Alternative forms of qualitative writing*. C. Ellis and A. Bochner (Eds.). (pp. 13-45). Walnut Creek, Ca: AltaMira Press.

Capote, T. (1965). *In cold blood*. New York: Vintage.

Clough, P. (2002). *Narratives and fictions in educational research*. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.

Ketelle, D. (2006). Bree Michaels: A glimpse into the life of a public school principal. *Public Voices*, 8(2), 131-135.

Ketelle, D. (2004). Writing truth as fiction: Administrators think about their work through a different lens. *The Qualitative Report*, 9(3) 449-462.

Richardson, L. (1998). The politics of location: Where am I now? *Qualitative Inquiry*, 4(1), 41-48.

Sparkes, A. (2002). Autoethnography: Self-indulgence or something more? In

A. Bochner & C. Ellis (Eds.), *Ethnographically speaking: Autoethnography, literature and aesthetics* (pp. 209-232). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira press.

Dr. **Diane Ketelle** is an Assistant Professor in the School of Education at Mills College. Diane began her career as a first grade teacher and went on become an elementary school principal and a district superintendent. While working in the field she won numerous awards including two California Distinguished School awards while she was a principal, as well as a California Distinguished Principal award before she was named Superintendent / Principal of the Year for the State of California. She currently directs the administrative credential program at Mills College.

Postmodern Public Administration

Reviewed by *Karen Kunz*

In this new edition, Hugh Miller updates his earlier work with Charles Fox on the application of postmodern theory to issues of public governance. Drawing on the works of well known philosophers such as Habermas, Derrida, Foucault, Rorty, and particularly Lyotard, the authors evaluate the neoliberal virtual reality that comprises contemporary society and its governance and offer instead a set of conditions for framing a discourse of inclusion based on democratic ethics.

This 157-page book is divided into six chapters. The initial section offers an introduction to and critique of the Representative Democratic Accountability Feedback Loop – what the authors perceive to be the contemporary ideological method of governance. Chapters 2 and 3 evaluate alternatives to the current orthodoxy, while the two subsequent chapters counter with perspectives that encourage the development of a more socially inclusive model. The book concludes with a discussion of the implications of majoritarian democracy versus the benefits of a discursive form of governance.

In the introduction Miller is quick to note that, in spite of its former extremist reputation, postmodernism will not make one want to immediately run out and join a contemporary version of the Sex Pistols. Postmodernism is simply and completely a critique of the status quo. In the public sphere, postmodernism challenges the notion that the populace can, through contemporary methods of public discourse, develop shared perceptions of reality – let alone those of preferred civic policies – through existing representative and democratic traditions (p. ix).

The authors pursue this idea by deconstructing the loop model of democracy, which assumes that sovereignty is vested in citizens who demonstrate their preferences and hold public officials accountable through the use of the ballot box. This connection between representation and accountability implies that the policy wishes of those who vote are those of the populace at large. In actuality, it obscures a lack of consensus among multiple

perspectives and conflicting interests. The common good is superseded by the tyranny of special interests; substance is replaced by images of reality promoted by the media and those elites who control it.

In public administration, positivist efforts to reform public management through performance management techniques result in an image of accountability. The ever-increasing use of incentives to game the system in order to show mandated results takes precedence over actual improvements in transparency and accountability. The image of accountability and performance is preserved through the use of skewed indicators and manipulated outcomes to provide ultimately meaningless results, as the authors illustrate in their examination of crime statistics reporting (p. 14). As a result, the loop model of democracy bases the continuous legitimization of its very symbolization system on voters as the empirically verifiable unit of analysis, ignoring real-time tallies of citizens' preferences. Positivist, empirical attempts by public administration to bolster democracy and hold it accountable to *the people* obviously miss the mark.

Problematizing the loop model of democracy enables the authors to critique three alternatives that also have their foundations in public legitimacy and accountability: (1) Neoliberalism, based on classical liberalism, is results oriented. Examples include privatization, the contemporary understanding of eminent domain, and the development of the federal Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART), used to evaluate the performance of federal agencies, departments, and programs. Downfalls include the potential for corruption, including inducements to game the system as noted above, performance measurement and results assessments that are based on unrealizable ambition (p. 35), and the penchant for extreme control of government. (2) Constitutionalism has its basis in constitutional legitimacy, social contract theory, and the logic of truth and justice. The Blacksburg Manifesto is an illustration of this alternative, whose extreme conservatism and promotion of institutionalism and authority make it unfeasible to even its staunchest promoters. (3) Citizen activation, or communitarianism, advocates direct involvement over representative democracy, with the good of the whole and the belief that each person should reach their maximum potential as guiding principles. Problems here include totalitarian tendencies, the supremacy of community integrity, morality or unity over privacy and individual rights, "mind-numbing conformity" (p. 48), and idealistic, unrealistic goals, compounded by issues of citizen apathy.

The authors complete their critique of the loop model of democracy with a discussion of hyperreality, the term they use to describe "the transient, unstable, rapidly mutating media-infused reality; and... incommensurable realities distributed among diverse subcultures" (p. 57). Hyperreality is characterized by the use of self-referential and epiphenomenal symbols – "a form of semiotic hegemony" (p. 60) – to facilitate public discourse; the thinning of national culture and the potential for neotribalism, wherein diverse subcultures talk past each other; simulation and media spectacle – virtual reality – as a replacement for political conversation; and symbolic politics that are largely devoid of value. Hyperreality trumps substantive discourse, making continual monitoring of its impact on the current orthodoxy and the alternatives discussed above essential.

Moving beyond criticism, Miller and Fox argue that reality and, by extension, bureaucratic practices are socially developed frames of mind and, in the case of public administration, embodied by work. Explanations of constructivism (socially constructed reality) and structuration theory (linear, recursive constructivism) provide the basis for their discussion of Giddens' concept of reality as conscious and unconscious generational repetition of mutually agreed-upon social constructs that can be altered or reconstructed. By extension, institutions are simply habitual patterns as well. The term *bureaucracy*, as understood to mean public institutions, is actually a seemingly real fusion of independent, diverse, and often opposing patterns (p. 87) and is only one way in which to understand the techniques of power within the practices of governmentality. Governmentality, as described by Foucault, is linear, serialized, systematic rationality in action. It is, "above all a form of social coordination in which [objectified and subjectified] individuals monitor their own behavior and voluntarily facilitate circuits of power" (p. 98). Accordingly, problematizing governmentality leads to a more expansive dialogue about power practices, bureaucracy, and the roles of government.

Finally, Miller and Fox move to the crux of postmodern theory – the conditions in which discourse is framed – particularly within public governance. Most public administration theory is based on mainstream positivist ideas of rational choice, command-and-control bureaucracy, and cause-and-effect determinism, all recursive applications of the meta-narratives that shape assumptions, understandings, and the possibilities and potentialities of actions yet to be imagined. Legitimate discourse and true democracy reject these assumptions, as well as reified socially constructed categories and a priori conditions.

Ideological discourse is effected through the use of political symbols, metaphors, and myths. Ideographs are symbols used in linguistic systems to denote not only the object pictured, but also the idea that the picture is expected to connote, and are produced internally through imagination and externally through media manipulation. Ideally there should be no internal-external dissonance to allow for escaping reality but, as noted above, substance is replaced by image. As in the case of government performance accountability or the example given of Americans as autonomous, free-thinking individuals who can control their own destiny and enact social change (pp. 106-8), appearance is taken for reality.

In discussing the difference between theory (ideals, explanations) and practice (habitual performance) the authors note that theory is "potentially, *practice-to-be*" (p. 114). When a practitioner becomes aware that a particular practice is no longer effective, an *impasse*, or collision between ideographs, is experienced. The search for a new theory prompts a stroll through the archives – those socially and habitually constructed understandings of reality. Thinking outside the box (to use a very overworked phrase) is akin to leaving the archives to explore alternative ideographs. Social change, and hence, institutional change, happens when ideographs are transformed.

Not surprisingly then, the authors reject majoritarian and consociational models and settle on ideographic discourse as the model of choice. They conclude with a discussion of ways in which the loop model and its alternatives, the effects of hyperreality, and the reification of

rationality and public institutions, prevent such discourse. They call for decoherence – for seeing public administration not as immutable institutions but as alterable social formations that can be reformed through conscious effort.

The authors rely heavily on Lyotard's discussions of the framing of discourse and acquisition of knowledge; however, considerations of image as reality could be further informed by the work of Guy Debord, a contemporary of Lyotard. Additionally, the common critique that postmodernism lacks genuine applicability is equally relevant here. The theoretical ideographic discourse model offered here is clearly missing its pragmatic component. And while the authors assert that image overrides substance in society, and particularly in public management, they offer no practical means of movement from the current morass to the discourse-based, citizen-oriented, ethical and moral venue that they claim can be socially re-constructed. In essence, they tell us, we can change the world if we think postmodernly. As with most postmodern texts, the authors walk us only as far as theoretical exercise takes us, leaving us to find our own way out of the archives.

Karen Kunz is a Research Associate and doctoral candidate in the Department of Public Administration at the University of Illinois-Springfield.

Public Voices
Symposium:

Public Service in the Mind's Eye: Positive Images of Public Servants in Movies, TV Shows, Commercials and on the Internet

Call for Manuscripts

Public Voices announces a call for manuscripts for a new symposium entitled "Public Service in the Mind's Eye: Positive Images of Public Servants in Movies, TV Shows, Commercials and on the Internet."

A long time ago Mark Twain held an opinion that institutions did not serve us well, and several generations later we still seem to agree with him. There are many among us who, at one time or another, felt unjustly wronged or heartlessly let down by an uncaring, or cynical, or downright corrupt bureaucrat. No wonder that throughout time and over all continents bureaucrat bashing has been a favorite public pastime.

And yet, there are those, like Charles Goodsell, who firmly believe that American public service "has been greatly misrepresented in this country's popular contemporary and academic discourse" ("The Case for Bureaucracy," 1994, p. xi).

We invite you to continue the academic discussion began by Humbert Wolfe in his 1924 essay examining the portrayal of public servants in English novels and carried on through almost a century by such public administration scholars as Dwight Waldo, Nancy Murray, Charles Goodsell, Marc Holzer, Howard McCurdy, O.C. McSwite, Susan Paddock, Mordecai Lee and, most recently in *Public Voices* (IX-2), by Beth Wielde and David Schultz. The discussions centers on the role of popular culture in creating messages about governmental institutions and people who work there. We are looking for the material provided by cinematography, television and the World Wide Web that highlights positive administrative experiences and depicts public servants as effectively serving the public interest.