

Between Policy and Management: Common Ground and Shared Opportunities

Donald P. Moynihan, University of Wisconsin-Madison

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The Kershaw Award is made every two years to a scholar under the age of 40 who has made a significant contribution to policy and management. The award honors David Kershaw, the first President of Mathematica, who died of cancer at the age of 37.

Thanks and Acknowledgments

It is a great honor to receive this award.

I have a lot of thanks to give, but will try to keep it short. I am a product of the Maxwell School at Syracuse University where I received a PhD in public administration, but my scholarship has also been shaped very much by being in Wisconsin, where I feel like I have received a second PhD. I feel fortunate to be at an institution where our Chancellor, Becky Blank, is a former winner of this award. I am glad to see so many Syracuse and Wisconsin people here.

I am deeply grateful to the committee who nominated me:

- Carolyn Heinrich, a wonderful friend and colleague
- Patricia Ingraham, a model for a great mentor, who found me at the Maxwell school very shortly after I moved to the US from Ireland
- David Weimer, former President of APAPM, an exemplar for developing conceptual tools that have enormous practical relevance, and
- Tim Smeeding, one of the most distinguished scholars of poverty and social policy.

Thanks also to the award committee:

Angela Evans, President of APPAM,

Paul Decker, President of Mathematica, and

Cecelia Rouse, Dean of the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University.

Thanks to Mathematica and APPAM for sponsoring this award, though let me note my disappointment that the prize was not awarded via a giant novelty check.

Finally, thanks to many of my co-authors, who helped to produce the body of work that wins this award, but who do not share in the money. The list is long, but includes people like Pam Herd, Stephane Lavertu, Patricia Ingraham, Sanjay Pandey, Al Roberts, Brad Wright, and Tom DeLeire.

Introduction

I have deeply valued being involved in APPAM. It brings together some very smart people from across the social sciences, and at its best, pushes these people to interact and challenge one another on important questions of how public services work. With competition for space in the conference and JPAM, this sometimes creates tensions between groups, and public and nonprofit management scholars are conscious of this. I hope this award is seen as a strong and positive signal to public management scholars about their importance to APPAM.

My instructions for this speech was to highlight the work that led to the award, so please assume that the self-indulgence that follows is entirely involuntary and deeply embarrassing.

I started as a classic public administration scholar and a good deal of my work focuses on the internal workings of administration, dealing, for example on how organizational factors might affect employee turnover, or how leadership alters employee beliefs and actions. I will not focus much on this work in what follows, but instead on aspects of my work that more explicitly connects policy and management. Over time more and more of my work falls in this shared space, surely a reflection of the vibrant intellectual environment at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The overarching theme of my talk is the possibility of fruitful rigorous research in the common ground between policy and management, and to highlight what I think are underutilized yet profound research opportunities for those who work in this space.

This theme both reflects and breaks with an underlying tension in the field of public affairs. Woodrow Wilson's early characterization of politics and administration has been interpreted, not entirely accurately, as an argument for putting policy in a domain separate from

administration. The paucity of knowledge of management issues at the start of the 20th century served to encourage scholars to direct more attention to administrative issues, but a close reading of those early scholars does not show a disdain for policy, or a desire for treating it as a separate field. Rather, for those scholars, there was a deep sense that the needs of the state are shaped by pressing external events, and serving those needs required deep investment in the institutional structures of governance (Moynihan 2009a), something I think most members of APPAM would agree with.

The perceived need for the study of policy distinct from administration, which gave rise to the creation of policy schools in the 1970s, provided a defining logic, language and institutions that formalized a separation that was more a result of scholarly construction of a division of labor than a reflection of the actual policy process. The field of public affairs still struggles to recover from the study of governance into distinct subfields. It has, inevitably, resulted in epistemological blind spots in each area.

Policy studies rest upon, sometimes implicit, assumptions of administrative quality and preferences, assumptions often not recognizable to those who directly study public administrators. In some cases, administration is considered as variable only to the degree it represents a troubling deviance, for example as when we talk about fidelity concerns in the implementation of evaluation-inspired policies. Administration is also sometimes “rediscovered” in policy circles as Dwight Waldo (1980) observed in his characterization of implementation studies in the 1970s, and the idea of implementation science as a distinct area raises similar concerns. At an extreme, policy designs are treated as self-implementing, assumed to have the same effect regardless of administrative context.

Public administration scholarship too often treats the policy setting as a given, not considering how policy design affects administrative variables. At an extreme, policy is treated as an object to be implemented, subverted, or ignored by administrative actors, a theme I will refer to later. Too little attention has been given to the basic question of how administrative factors can be designed to facilitate the success of policy goals, and not enough self-questioning as to why public management scholarship so little influences policy discussion.

Pity then, those of us, such as many of the scholars here tonight, who find themselves working in the space between these two areas. APPAM at least offers one of the few venues where we talk to each other, with some acknowledgement of our respective biases and blind spots.

Three Areas of Interplay Between Policy and Management

My research cuts across a variety of areas, looking at managerial aspects of policy areas such as public health insurance, homeland security, and the running of elections. To make sense of my body of work I will use as an organizing framework the policy feedback model from political science (here I draw from Moynihan and Soss 2013). This model subverts the classic assumption that policy is a function of political choice, but instead conceives of the relationship between policy and politics as an ongoing interplay, where one shapes the other over time (Soss, Hacker, and Mettler 2007). In particular, this helps to identify three ways in which policy and administration connect that I use to categorize my research.

The first area arises from unpacking the central claim of policy feedback which has sometimes been simply stated as “policy shapes politics”, a stark alternative to the obvious claim that “politics shapes policy.” The claim “policy shapes politics” implies the subclaim

“administration shapes politics.” This assertion directs scholars to study not just how political forces impinge on administration but also how administrative organizations act on and transform different aspects of politics: ranging from basic access to public goods and services; political relations between the citizen and the state, including trust in government, and the sense of civic standing the individual has in relation to the state; and individuals sense of political efficacy and civic engagement.

The second and third relationships reflect the point that within the nexus of policy and management there is a dialogic relationship: that administration shapes policy, and that policy shapes administration. While at a superficial level, we might be equally willing to agree that “policy matters” and “management matters” such an agreement masks different beliefs about which is more profoundly important in governance, and fails to consider the implications of how policy and management matter to each other. Rather than engaging in an exhaustive characterization of the ways in which this dialogic relationship works, I will explain how my work has offered some novel insights in the interplay of causal arrangements.

Relationship 1: The Interplay of Policy and Administration Affect Politics

Let me return to the first relationship. The concept of policy feedback suggests that policies can transform the political landscape. Policies, in this view, are political forces that reconfigure the underlying terms of power, reposition actors in political relations, and reshape political actors’ identities, understandings, interests, and preferences (Moynihan and Soss 2013). Policies, and administration of those policies, have consequences for whether citizens receive resources they seek, and how they understand their broader civic role.

The effects of policies and administration in politics can occur in straightforward ways. Perhaps the most obvious ways are in how policies and administration structure democratic participation. With colleagues from the UW-Madison Department of Political Science, a paper published in the *American Journal of Political Science* (Burden et al. 2014) examined how different election rules structured generated different turnout levels. While the current debate on election policy focuses on voter ID laws, our work pointed to the relative importance of another aspect of policy design and administration. Allowing individuals to register on the same day they vote removes an administrative hurdle – registering to vote some weeks before the election – and turns voting into a one-stop shopping experience more likely to draw in voters who might become engaged in elections late in the race. We showed that greater access to this seemingly minor administrative service significantly increased turnout in elections, and other work suggests those turnout gains are higher for populations that are more likely to move frequently: poorer and minority voters (Rigby and Springer 2011).

Formal policies that structure access to administrative resources key to voting are one thing, but in another paper (Burden et al. 2013), we also identified the direct importance of discretion of election officials. We found that when local election officials in Wisconsin had ideological views different from the majority of their constituents, turnout was lower. For example, when these appointees were conservative, turnout was lower if they oversaw elections where voters tended to favor Obama. While these individuals filled officially nonpartisan positions, the results illustrate how bureaucratic discretion in expanding the pool of registered voters and making access to voting easier can affect election outcomes.

The ways in which policies and administration shape citizens civic capacities can occur in less obvious way. In her model of policy feedback, Suzanne Mettler (2002) hypothesized that

policies matter to civic capacities by the types of resources they provide to citizens, and by the experiences citizens face in receiving those services.

Bureaucratic encounters can affect both of these variables. My recent work has examined how administrative burdens citizens encounter alter access to valued goods or services. These encounters may also teach citizens lessons about the state, mark them in politically consequential ways, alter their political capacities, and reposition them in relation to other citizens and dominant institutions (Moynihan and Soss 2013).

Aspects of administrative burden appear in different streams of prior research, but without a common conceptualization that allows for a consistent understanding of the topic, unifies existing knowledge, or frames a coherent future research agenda. My initial research on this topic offers a broad conceptualization of burden as composed of three types of costs (Moynihan, Herd and Harvey 2014). *Learning costs* arise from engaging in search processes to collect information about public services, and how they are relevant to the individual. Large proportions of those eligible for a program are unaware of a program, believe correctly they are ineligible, or underestimate benefits. *Psychological costs* include the stigma of applying for or participating in a program with negative perceptions, a sense of loss of personal power or autonomy in interactions with the state, or the stresses of dealing with administrative processes. Individuals seeking to avoid disempowering processes, or be seen as dependent, may avoid psychologically distressing encounters. Those that persevere through such encounters may nonetheless experience a loss of civic capacities. *Compliance costs* are the burdens, including time and money, of following administrative requirements, e.g., the costs of completing forms, providing documentation of status when applying for a service.

My work, along with co-authors Pam Herd, Tom DeLeire, Elizabeth Rigby and Hope Harvey, argues that these burdens are important for a variety of reasons.

First, *administrative burdens affect program take-up*. Compared to the near 100 percent take-up for universal programs like Social Security and Medicare, estimates of take-up rates by eligible beneficiaries of means-tested programs in the United States are much lower. The central difference between means-tested and universal programs is that the former must do more to distinguish between the eligible and ineligible, and in creating administrative processes to do so impose higher levels of burdens that even eligible applicants fail to negotiate.

Work from behavioral economics points to cognitive biases that help to explain why burdens that seem relatively small relative to the benefits at stake are consequential in terms of whether a citizen accesses a service they may need. For example, in our study of Medicaid in the state of Wisconsin a seemingly modest requirement asked recipients to document that they lacked lack of affordable employer-based insurance. Officials expected this change to affect between 2-3 percent of applicants. It resulted instead in an enrollment drop of 20 percent for children and 17.6 percent for adults. Subsequent investigations found that the vast majority of those affected by the policy change were eligible. It was the failure to negotiate the administrative processes, and not eligibility, that drove the dramatic loss of access to program benefits. More generally, we offer evidence that efforts by the state to reduce burden increased enrollment in public health insurance (Herd et al. 2013).

A second question arising from this work asks *are burdens policymaking by other means?* Is the creation and reduction of burden, as well as the distribution of burden between the state and the individual, a venue where politics plays out? Empirical studies of program take-up have not addressed this question, and in the field of public administration the existence of red

tape has generally been attributed historical accident or incompetence. Our analysis of the unfurling of burdens in Medicaid in Wisconsin suggests that the preferences of political actors about a policy may shape what they perceive as the appropriate level of burden in that policy area – how successive governors viewed public insurance in turn reflected administrative decisions to reduce or increase burdens (Moynihan, Herd and Harvey 2014). Beyond Wisconsin, a simple analysis of the complexity of Medicaid forms across state governments suggest that partisan control of government predicts the compliance burdens that applicants face (Moynihan, Herd and Rigby 2014). Policymakers in such instances appear to use burdens as an alternative or complement to more overt forms of policymaking. The attractiveness of administrative burdens for such purposes is tied to their opacity. The details of administration that give rise to burden – such as the level of documentation required by an application form – may be largely invisible to the public and even most policymakers, their impact poorly understood.

A practical policy question raised by the concept of administrative burden is *How can burdens be reduced?* And when is it appropriate to do so? In some cases burdens may serve valid public values and should not be reduced. But in some cases the value of burdens are negligible, or vastly outweighed by their costs, motivating the search for methods to reduce burdens or ameliorate their negative effects. For example, our research on Wisconsin points to a variety of techniques: efforts to engage in outreach to systematically reach target populations reduced learning costs. Marketing campaigns to present Medicaid as health insurance for the working poor, rather than a form of welfare, was intended to reduce the stigma of such programs. Online applications, simplification of forms, less frequent recertification helped to reduce compliance costs (Herd et al. 2013). A particularly promising avenue of research is to document practices and program designs that reduce burden without undercutting other values. Information

technology and governmental data systems make it more feasible for states to shift burdens from the citizen to the state, using state data to identify and document the eligibility of individuals (Herd et al 2013).

A practical implication of this work is the degree to which the state should monitor burdens in the context of a hollow state. The move to a reliance on third-party government has sometimes left the state struggling to articulate its role. The reduced oversight of third parties may give rise to their using burdens as a means to engage in cream-skimming if incentives align (Soss, Fording and Schram 2011). Governmental actors largely contract for services on the basis of some measure of output, perhaps some indicator of quality, and financial indicators. But they could also articulate administrative burdens as a normative criterion around which they monitor how citizens interact with the provider of governmental services.

This work is recent, and so only a small part of my research to this point. But I believe it points to an area where policy and management scholars should have a shared interest: burdens are co-created by policy designs and administrative implementation, and have profound impact on policy outcomes.

Relationship 2: Administration Affects Policy

A second aspect of the policy-administrative relationship is the degree to which administrators reshape policies in their implementation, taking advantage of information asymmetries. This claim is not, of course, new, and a mainstay of street level bureaucracy and implementation studies of how policies are implemented. As I noted above this claim can be taken too far, to the point of systematically ignoring policy.

But there are ways in which administrative processes have profound effects on policy outcomes, because policy designs rest on incorrect or simplistic assumptions about those processes. My contribution to this work has looked at the operation of administrative instruments intended to reduce information asymmetry and assert goal alignment between principals and agents, reflected in formal requirements to put in place systems that create and disseminate performance data. Government-wide reforms, such as the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, the Bush-era Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART), and the current GPRA Modernization Act are prime examples of the creation of performance regimes. But the turn to performance measures are also embedded in policy-specific changes, such as the No Child Left Behind Act and Race to the Top in the field of education, and in welfare reform.

In my book *The Dynamics of Performance Management*, I wrote “It is only a slight exaggeration to say that we are betting the future of governance on the use of performance information. The current era is also characterized by a willingness to adopt new structural forms of government and controls, such as networks or outsourcing, or to simply provide greater freedom to managers. New structural forms and modes of control raise difficult questions. How do we coordinate? How do we manage? How do we control? How do we exert accountability? How do we improve? How do we engage citizens? Performance information is frequently cited as the answer. We are told that performance information will allow elected officials and policymakers to set goals. It will provide the basis for accountability. It will be tied to incentives. It will allow innovations to be identified and diffused. It will enable the allocation of scarce public resources. It will allow citizens to give feedback on services. The one constant in future visions of government is the availability and smart use of performance information. If performance information does not prove to be the linchpin for the future of

governance, we will have to return to the basic questions listed above, and find some alternative answers” (Moynihan 2008, 4-5).

If there is a single lesson from my body of work in this area, it is that the implementation of such systems are themselves complex, and subject to such implementation difficulties that they do not, cannot, neatly fill the heavy weight they bear in contemporary models of governance.

My research on the adoption of performance systems in state governments documented how the actual policies departed from the New Public Management template from which they drew in one important way. NPM doctrine called for managers to be held to higher expectations of performance, but also to be given more autonomy to achieve goals. By examining changes in performance reporting requirements, but also on basic personnel and financial controls it became apparent that state governments adopted the first of these prescriptions, but not the second. This placed managers in a context where they face expectations for greater performance, while having gained little in terms of tools to achieve these ends (Moynihan 2005).

The espoused theory of such reforms is that more performance information will lead to better decisions, because performance information is objective, standardized, indicative of actual performance, consistently understood, and prompts a consensus about how a program is performing and how it should be funded. Some observers have noted that such goals are unrealistic, and my book sought to offer an alternative theoretical framework to understand the role of performance measures in policymaking, based on research at the state and federal level.

What I referred to as the interactive dialogue model argued that performance data was not comprehensive – for any complex program, there are multiple ways of capturing performance, some of which will and will not be formalized. So two people could look at the same policy area,

and reasonably disagree on what were appropriate measures. Performance data also has the quality of ambiguity - the same data can generate different interpretations. Performance information tells us nothing about context, and implementation, factors that shape how we interpret whether a program is effective. Two people could look at the same data on schools, for example, and come to different conclusions both on the meaning of the data, and what to do next. This element of ambiguity would be apt to be encourage subjectivity about performance, where actors associated with specific institutions, parties, or worldviews would use performance data to present the version of the world they favored.

In short, performance data could not be reasonably expected to replace politics, or erase information asymmetries in the policy process. Instead, the most reasonable expectation was that it becomes part of the language in an interactive dialogue on the meaning of performance, shaped by different worldviews, interests, and power.

My work has also made that case that to understand the functioning of performance systems, we needed tractable ways of tracking the effects of these systems in terms of their behavioral effects on intended audiences. I made the case for studying performance information use as such a variable (Moynihan 2005; Moynihan and Pandey 2010). In particular, I identified that while performance information use was a broad concept, there were a variety of types of uses, such as perverse use of data that increased measured performance at the expense of underlying goals, or political use of data to advocate for or against programs (Moynihan 2009b). The key practical challenge for performance systems was how to encourage purposeful use that would foster greater innovation and effectiveness and limit perverse use.

A number of scholars have joined in this work, amassing a limited but growing body of knowledge on a variety of environmental, organizational, job and individual factors associated

with performance information use (see Kroll 2014 for a recent review). My own contribution is probably most prominent on two dimensions. One is to make the case that, consistent with the interactive dialogue model, politics did not undercut the use of performance data as some had suggested it, but could encourage use. For example, one study of school superintendents in Texas showed that those with more fractious, diverse and engaged stakeholders were also more likely to be more likely to use data, partly to respond to the variety of claims that stakeholders made, and to turn to what is perceived as a non-partisan source of information to justify their performance (Moynihan and Hawes 2012). In highly partisan contexts, however, politics could limit the effects of performance reforms. In a series of papers, I identified that the Bush administration's Program Assessment Rating Tool initiative appeared to benefit conservative agencies in terms of encouraging performance information use (Lavertu and Moynihan 2013). Individuals exposed to the Program Assessment Rating Tool saw an increase in performance information use relative to peers in their agency not exposed to PART, and to employees in liberal agencies. The Program Assessment Rating Tool was experienced as more burdensome by liberal agencies, based on both subjective survey measures (even after accounting for individual ideological beliefs) and on objective measures of the number of performance assessments and improvement plans placed on liberal agencies (Lavertu, Lewis and Moynihan 2013). One summary of this work concluded: "reforms are more likely to succeed if the political executive is preaching to the ideological choir and more likely to falter among ideological heretics. But the more negative possibility...is that reforms are used as a mechanism to investigate and burden the heretics" (Moynihan 2013).

A second dimension of my contribution to the growing research on performance information use arose from an observation from *The Dynamics of Performance Management*,

which is that performance systems, while often promising lofty changes, were limited to rules about measuring and disseminating data. They did little to institutionalize routines of using data. In aggregate my research suggested that routines created by the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 and the Program Assessment Rating Tool did not facilitate greater use of performance data (Moynihan and Lavertu 2012). Perhaps because of this troubling experience, the more recent GPRA Modernization Act explicitly sought to inculcate routines of use, in the form, for example of requirements for quarterly meetings around key goals. In a paper presented at this meeting, I offer evidence that exposure to these organizational routines is associated with greater use of performance data for decisions at the individual level. This suggests the possibility for performance systems to be adapted over time by investing in organizational factors and professional values rather than putting faith in mechanisms of external control (Moynihan and Kroll 2014).

On the issue of performance information use my work and others have started to move from a reliance cross-sectional survey-based designs to experimental work. While survey-based work remains critical in trying to assess governmentwide reforms, experiments offer better causal assessments, and can utilize more objective indicators of whether performance was used or not. In recent work I utilized survey experiments that offered evidence about how the framing of performance data altered how it influenced budget decisions that subjects were asked to make (Moynihan forthcoming). While both treatment and control groups were shown the same data, treatment groups that were given additional information responded to performance data differently. For example, one experiment provided data that suggested good program performance to all subjects, but the treatment group were also provided target information which showed that while performance had been increasing, it had not kept up with a very demanding

target schedule. Respondents given the somewhat arbitrary target information were likely to be less generous in making budget allocations to the program, even though the underlying performance had not changed. Similarly, another experiment added comments from a policy advocate to the treatment group, which served to alter how respondents understood the performance data and how they allocated resources. The results are consistent with the interactive dialogue model characterization of performance information use as a form of behavior that is circumstantial, with individuals using performance data to alter allocations depending on the nature of the data and how it is presented.

There is even greater potential to understand how performance data is used via the use of field experiments. Working with colleagues in Denmark, we found that randomized allocations of greater autonomy on personnel decisions to school principals was associated with greater tendency to for those principals to download performance data – as part of the experiment, data was made available to principals, but they were not told that researchers were observing whether they downloaded it or not (Calmar Andersen and Moynihan 2014). A basic problem with performance data is that it often lacks a sense of context about whether a level of performance is good or bad. We also found that if the data made available included comparisons with other schools, which provided such a context, principals were more apt to download more data. Consistent with the interactive dialogue model, we also found that individual preferences about the appropriate goals of education (collected via a survey) affected the tendency to utilize performance data.

There remains a need for more research in this area. One generally implicit assumption about the promise of performance systems is that it made concerns about the “black box” of management in the policy process less relevant, since we could use external indicators to direct

the black box without having to worry too much about its internal workings. This approach is largely wrong – elected officials pay little systematic attention to performance data, and so its value depends upon how it is used by those inside the black box, and that process is as mysterious as most other management questions.

To use a medical metaphor, changes sought to rewire the brain and surgically restructure the body of governance relying on primitive notions of how the brain worked. The success of policy initiatives and new structural approaches to governments depend on a better understanding of how the performance information is processed into shared beliefs and actions in policymaking, and the neurological wiring – at the individual level, but also in a metaphorical sense, the organizational level and the policy field - that makes that the use of performance data more or less likely.

If the central goal is actually improved performance, much of the insight of my work suggests that the use of techniques and frameworks different from the dominant agency-theory inspired approach that emphasizes external accountability, and extrinsic reward. Instead, the use of performance data seems to be greater for purposeful ends and less susceptible to perverse use with public employees are given autonomy to do their job, when such systems appeal to altruistic motivations, and when they become embedded in organizational routines that center on learning. Such a claim hits a discordant note in the prevailing chorus for how performance systems should be organized.

Relationship III: Policy affects Administration

The third relationship I consider is how policies shape administration. In much of administrative scholarship, including my own work, to the degree policy is considered, it is often

treated as an unvarying background, or as an object of administrative action. The potential for administration to shape policy is real, as reflected in the discussion of the second proposition above. But we should also be willing to complement this insight with its reverse. As organizations implement a policy, they transform it and are themselves transformed.

Administrators shape policy outcomes to be sure, but policies also have the power to disrupt and reconfigure administration. They can restructure authorities, change tasks, alter routines, redistribute resources, and reframe culture, identity, and motivation. The implication of this point is “that the study of administration today is distorted by a one-sided focus. The fruitful investigation of how administrators shape policy has blinkered researchers to the ways that bureaucracies are remade by the policies they administer” (Moynihan and Soss 2013, 325).

It is easiest to observe the effects of policy on administration in areas where there has been significant policy change. One such area is election administration, which has seen significant policy change since the 2000 election, with the passage of the Help American Vote Act (HAVA), and subsequent and ongoing state and local policy changes. The passage of HAVA helps to explain a puzzle that I had identified (Moynihan 2004; Moynihan and Silva 2008): what explained the popularity of electronic voting systems despite well-documented flaws? The answer is partly tied to incentives provided by HAVA, which encouraged such adoption. Once adopted, these technologies then enjoyed the benefits of path dependency. My work (Moynihan and Lavertu 2012) showed that adopters tended to display a series of cognitive biases to defend and maintain the selection of electronic voting machines. Using the first national survey of election officials, collected in partnership with the Congressional Research Service, I found that even after controlling for perceived benefits and costs of different technology, the perceived value of e-voting systems was shaped by a series of individual biases, including faith in

technology, own-judgment bias (confidence in ones judgment not based on empirical inferences), confirmation bias (screening out of critical information about electronic voting machines) and a basic preference for the status-quo.

HAVA changed the workplace of election administrators in other ways. Based on the same survey of election officials, work with Carol Silva (Moynihan and Silva 2008) demonstrated a serious concern on the part of election officials about the dramatic increase in work created by HAVA. A more in-depth analysis of the lot of election officials in Wisconsin used a mixture of qualitative interviews and focus groups, administrative data and surveys to demonstrate the degree to which HAVA had made the work of these officials more burdensome, and less attractive (Burden et al. 2011).

Increase in workloads associated with policy changes might result in organizational changes, such as higher turnover, and a redistribution of organizational resources. But it might also alter bureaucratic beliefs and preferences in important ways. We found that as state election policies designed to ease voting convenience in Wisconsin were experienced as burdensome by election officials, these officials tended to be more critical of these policies on unrelated dimensions. They tended to perceive such policies as reducing electoral integrity, were more likely to incorrectly believe that such policies failed in their goal of increasing turnout, and more apt to oppose additional policy changes that would have further eased access to the polls (Burden et al. 2012). The effects of electoral policies in one time period altered how administrators evaluated these policies, in some cases leading to demonstrable errors in evaluations, and cemented opposition towards new policy proposals in future policy cycles. As public officials play a crucial role both as policy implementer and as policy stakeholder, the effects of policies on bureaucratic beliefs and assessments matter.

Another aspect of my work on the influence of policies on comes from a National Science Foundation-funded study on disaster response. This work identified the adoption, first voluntary but later mandated, of a managerial technology, the Incident Command System, by the federal government. Any federal agency with response capability, as well as state and local responders receiving federal dollars, and the private and nonprofit responders who interacted with them were required to adopt a new way of engaging with one another (Moynihan 2008; 2009c). My research, relying primarily on in-depth coding of after action reports, public testimony and interviews examined the tensions inherent in a mechanism of social coordination that featured both the characteristics of hierarchical control, but occurred in the context of a network of interorganizational responders. The Incident Command System changed how responders communicated with one another, the language they used, and how authority was deployed.

Despite the hierarchical characteristics prominent in formal presentations of the Incident Command System, the way in which response to large crises works in practice – we depend upon large number of responders from different types of organizations who are often unfamiliar with one another but must coordinate in a limited time-period – meant that the network properties fundamentally mattered to its operations. Based on case studies of different types of disasters, from forest fire responses, the outbreak of avian flu, natural disasters and terrorist attacks some common patterns emerged. Larger network of responders increased coordination costs and the potential for conflict even as they provide a wider array of resources. Who directs the response is frequently a contested issue between network members, and trust based on prior workings relationships matters a good deal to the success of crisis responses.

Let us turn to a deeper consideration of the tensions between the formal framework of a new policy and the actual incentive structure that it places upon existing political relationships. New policies may serve to tangibly change the type of tasks that officials perform, the people that they work with, how they are monitored and the goals they are held accountable to, the rewards and punishments they face. In crisis response, the successive national response frameworks have directed the Department of Defense to play a role in disaster response. This has eroded a traditional and deeply-held DOD cultural reticence to accept tasks that are not directly related to war and engage it in disaster response. A case study of their role in Hurricane Katrina demonstrated how DOD leaders were able to alter use pre-existing cultural beliefs to facilitate the embrace of disaster response. The slow initial DOD response arose because of self-imposed red-tape designed to limit engagement in crisis response, reflecting a cultural assumption of the need to maintain autonomy. DOD leaders altered the nature of the response by committing to another widely-shared cultural assumption: a “can-do” approach to achieving difficult goals regardless of obstacles (Moynihan 2012a). As a result, the DOD responded on an unprecedented scale to a domestic disaster, but continued to act on its own terms, reflecting its preference for autonomy even in a networked environment.

One basic difference between networks for public goals and those found in private settings is that relationships in public networks are often a function of mandates put in place by policies, rather than a natural function of the goals and needs of the organizations. For example, national response frameworks require DOD to take directives from FEMA in any major disaster. In practice, this arrangement is beset by tensions. A basic network theory perspective is that coordination within a crisis response network depends a good deal on the capacity of network providers to develop norms of reciprocity and positive reputation with other network members.

But network members also are concerned with the assessment of their reputation by non-network actors, such as their oversight committees or the general public (Moynihan 2012b). As actors in response networks perceive a tension between protecting their reputation within and outside the network, they may choose between one or the other. This potential tension is higher in public sector networks, where membership may be mandated (preventing voluntary exit as a solution to solving this tension) and where resources to network members come primarily from non-network audiences (e.g., your appropriation committee). My case analysis pointed to this tension in Hurricane Katrina, illustrating how the DOD approach was dictated by protecting its broader reputation even if this undermined reputation within the network, and thereby weakened trust and made cooperation between network members less likely in future disasters.

The importance of policies to organizational variables reflects an assumption derived from some of my early work on public service motivation. Public employees score higher on a desire to serve others, which was largely assumed to reflect selection patterns into the public service. My work also argued that the motivation to engage in public service was affected by the organizational context, and in some cases those factors could be negative: exposure to red tape, and length of time in position (controlling for age) was associated with lower public service motivation (Moynihan and Pandey 2007). The overarching point is that as policies change tangible aspects of the organizational environment, so too will they change less tangible but no less fundamental aspects of organizational life, such as organizational culture and individual motivation.

Returning to the effects of performance-based reforms, the motivation to serve others may be weakened by reforms in ways that are actually detrimental to performance. Some of my research has used different measure of altruistic motivations in different datasets to offer

evidence that the desire to service others among public employees is associated with greater use of performance data to make decisions (Moynihan and Pandey 2010; Moynihan, Pandey and Wright 2012). In settings where there are not strong extrinsic motivations, it is possible to frame the use of performance data as a tool by which to help others.

By contrast, research derived from crowding-out theory suggests that introducing performance-based incentives can displace intrinsic incentives, such as public service motivation. I have argued that this process may occur both by changing the norms of existing public employees, but also via selection effects, by encouraging more publicly spirited employees to exit, and to discourage them from joining in the first place (Moynihan 2010). This has meaningful and negative effects for organizational performance, as a variety of meta-analyses suggest that intrinsic motivations are more important than extrinsic for the performance of complex tasks (that is to say, most public tasks), and that the crowding-out effect may result in a net lowering of performance (e.g. Weibel, Rost and Osterloh 2010). A second potential negative effect is that the moral judgment needed to resist the temptation for perverse use of performance data is also weakened as more intrinsic motivations are crowded-out (Moynihan 2010). As performance regimes become perceived as unrealistic, unfair, and at odds with the underlying values of the service, even intrinsically motivated actors may find it easier to rationalize performance perversity.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude by returning to my central theme, which is that it is possible to have a fruitful career working at the intersection of policy and administration. Indeed, I might be willing to go further, to suggest that that the space between policy and administration is among

the most interesting aspect of our field to study, and deal with the fundamental question of governance: the ability of the state to respond to the challenges it faces, to respond to the pressing problems of its peoples. Examining the interplay of relationships between the two allows us to develop more persuasive causal models, and more relevant policy advice that speaks to broad governance issues, and across the divide between policy design and implementation.

Metaphors for the type of research I am talking about – the space between policy and administration, the borders or intersections between the two – evoke images of geographical uncertainty and perhaps some discomfort. It might sound like a place where you could become easily lost. Finding your way in such space calls for a mixture of qualities: a willingness to explore, comfort with ambiguity, patience with unfamiliarity, an appetite for new ways of thinking and melding it with the old, and perhaps a capacity to link with those you might appear to have little in common. The same qualities also are plausible attributes for a successful immigrant, and perhaps it was the experience of being an immigrant from Ireland that explains the type of work I do today. APPAM was one of the very first professional associations I presented at as a PhD student. It is one of the few, and to my mind the best, forum where the space between policy and administration is truly explored. I am privileged to be part of that process and salute my fellow travelers.

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