Role of Pragmatism in Shaping Administrative Behavior

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The Practical Science?

"the eminently practical science of administration"
Woodrow Wilson, 1887

In the first two sentences of Wilson's "The Study of Administration," he refers to administration as a "practical science." The perception that public administrators are practical and pragmatic is widespread. Yet, few scholars have investigated what practical might mean. Further, links to the influential, American philosophy of pragmatism are scattered and indirect.

I share the view of many mainstream public administration theorists who are dismayed with the influence of the philosophy of logical positivism on the field of public administration.[1] They seek theories with a different philosophical point of departure. I offer the pragmatic philosophy as an alternative. First, I believe that pragmatism offers a better description of "what is".[2] Second, it bridges the gap between theory and practice. Third, it over comes most of the limitations of logical positivism.[3]

A popularly held view maintains that pragmatism is a crass, anti-intellectual and unethical philosophy. It is a philosophy of expediency seen as the embodiment

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[1] See for example, Denhardt, 1984; Stillman, 1990; Waldo, 1965.

[2] In other words public administrators incorporate many elements of the the metaphysics and epistemology of pragmatism into their daily lives. See Shields (1989) for an example of the application of pragmatism to public administration.

[3] Pragmatism is a more holistic philosophy. Unlike logical positivism which incorporates only epistemology and logic, pragmatism includes all five branches of philosophy (metaphysics, epistemology, logic, ethics and aesthetics).

of American aggressiveness, competitiveness and materialism (Suckiel, 1982: 7). Given this widely held perspective, it is not surprising that public administration has distanced itself from pragmatism and perhaps rejected it pre-maturely.

Actually, pragmatism is wholly unlike its popular image. Pragmatism is a pervasive and misunderstood philosophy. It also has the potential to unify the fragmented field of public administration. Hence, the purpose of this paper is four fold. First, the pragmatic philosophy is described. Secondly, pragmatism's link to US democratic processes is developed. Thirdly, its influence on public administration in the United States is explored. Finally, I will demonstrate how its explicit and expanded application can help public administrators address the theory practice debate and other issues raised by the dominance of logical positivism.

Pragmatism

Pragmatism is a philosophy developed in the United States. It urges us to turn away from fixed, faulty or rigid visions of ourselves and the world to those which are true and useful. The early pragmatists modeled their philosophy after Darwin's theory of evolution. Truth and knowledge were akin to evolving organisms. This is in contrast to Plato's view of truth as absolute or fixed. Hence, no belief is beyond revision (Luizzi, 1993: 27).

Pragmatism: A theory of truth

The pragmatic philosophy posits a unique definition of truth. The truth of a notion is traced by its "respective practical consequences. ... What difference would it practically make if this notion rather that that notion were true" (James, 1907: 45). *"True ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify. ...The truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it. Truth happens to an idea. It becomes true, is made true by events. Its verity is in fact an event, a process."* (James,

1907: 201). For example, what is 90 degrees? Is it hot or cold? The pragmatist would ask, are you boiling water or are you playing basketball? The truth, is in the experience, the problem and the context.

Truth helps us sort between working hypotheses carrying us from one experience to another (Flower and Murphy, 1977: 676). Effective truth is associated with a plan of action. It mediates between experiences. It connects the old to the new, it welds theory and fact. In addition, it is provisional, just the starting point used to address the next day's problem (Flower and Murphy, 1977: 681). Returning to the temperature example, if it is 90 degrees and you are playing basketball, the plan of action might consist of stopping and getting some water. Last weeks (old), experience with dehydration and its experience/effects helps provide the plan of action for today's decision-- to stop. The truth of 90 degrees being hot (in this context) mediated between yesterday and today. Theory would also be helpful. Dehydration is a concept with theoretical significance. Knowing some theory and the stages of dehydration would be useful.

Pragmatism is also, holistic, the whole puzzle, the entire experience, including novelty, is faced. None of the concrete facts denied. Like all major philosophies, pragmatism helps one to exercise powers of intellectual abstraction. In addition, it focuses on making a "positive connection with the actual world of finite human lives" (James, 1907: 20). It dwells in the world of tangled, muddy, painful, and perplexing, concrete *experience* (James, 1907: 21). "It turns toward concreteness and adequacy, towards facts, towards action and towards power" (James, 1907: 51).

The pragmatist asks about practical differences when settling disputes. "If no practical difference whatever can be traced then the alternatives mean practically the same thing, and all dispute is idle." (James, 1907: 45). Hence, pragmatists look for *what works* when settling disputes or solving problems.

Theories, also must work or have practical application (James, 1907: 216).

Since practical consequences generally depend on context, pragmatism also allows

for multiple realities.

> Theories thus become instruments, not answers to enigmas, in
> which we can rest. ....Pragmatism unstiffins our theories,
> limbers them up and sets each one to work. (James, 1907: 53).

Ends are never viewed as absolute, rather, they are seen as ends-in-view or an

intermediate step in a larger never complete quest. "[I]f you follow the pragmatic

method," you cannot view any word[4] as "closing your quest."

> You must bring out of each word its practical cash-value, set it
> at work within the stream of your experience. It appears less as a
> solution, then, than as a program for more work, and more
> particularly as an indication of the ways in which existing
> realities may be *changed* (James, 1907: 53).

Ends-in-view can be perceived as ideals. Democracy, justice, freedom,

community could all be the elusive yet real ends-in-view. If one asks, "What

difference would it practically make if this notion rather that that notion were true?

" The practical difference might be whether one notion of truth enhanced justice.

Hence, values are an important part of pragmatism.

The theory of truth extends to ethics. *"There is no single touchstone of truth*

in ethics .... a pragmatic ethics seems to embrace a developmental approach about

how to best deal with ethical problems" (Luizzi. 1993: 28). Ethical problems may be

addressed by forming principles and generalizations that work. These principles

should be taken seriously and developed with care. Nevertheless, if conditions

change or if new facts appear principles, may be revised. For example, for centuries

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[4] The reference to "word" is in the metaphysical sense. "Metaphysics has usually followed a
very primitive kind of quest. You know how men have always hankered after unlawful magic, and you
know what a great part in magic words have always played. If you have his name, or the formula of
incantation that binds him, you can control the spirit...That word names the universe's principle, and to
possess it is after a fashion to possess the universe itself. 'God', 'Matter,' 'Reason,' 'the Absolute,'
'Energy,' are so many solving names. You can rest when you have them. You are at the end of your
metaphysical quest" (James, 1907: 53-53). No such word exists for the pragmatist.

the rights of women did not include the right to vote or own property. Clearly, ethical principles dealing with political participation and property rights played some role in developing these rules. Today, these principles no longer work, conditions have changed and new ethical principles guide behavior.[5] Keep in mind, however, ends-in-view are more stable. Regardless of whether women do or do not have the right to vote; democracy, equity and/or fairness are potential ends-in view.

Pragmatism: A method of learning

Pragmatism is also a method of learning that focuses on process. It posits that people learn by experience. Particularly, they learn by using experience in combination with a loosely defined experimental model. It uses a naturalistic logic to develop and test ongoing hypotheses. Problems are important because they help to generate experiences, contexts and hypotheses.[6] The evidence used to verify the hypotheses can be drawn from a variety of experiences. Aside from measurable, scientific facts, pragmatism embraces the affective. It is, for example, inclusive of religious experiences[7], art as experience[8] and nature as experience. The key which ties them together is the practical consequences associated with the experiences. Without an awareness of consequences, that which is distinctive about human learning could not take place.

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[5]   Vincent Luizzi (1993)links legal ethics and pragmatic conceptions of ethics. He argues that legal ethics are a source for a universal ethic.

[6]   Problems generate experience. We learn by experience when we act and try out solutions to the problem. Dewey uses cooking as an example, To deal with the problem of hunger one might fry an egg. How best to fry the egg (how hot the skillet, how much grease, how long to cook etc) can be viewed as working hypotheses. Try and teach a child to fry an egg. What seems natural to an adult is an unknown to a child. Experience is a critical component. Dewey's *How we Think* (1910) is one of the clearest presentations of these points

[7]   See James (1902) *The Varieties of Religious Experience.*

[8]   Hence,unlike logical positivism, pragmatism incorporates aesthetics. See Dewey, (1958) *Art as Experience,*

This method-of-learning philosophy draws from the scientific method but not in a reductionist manner. It allows for a richer set of experiences (or data) to test naturalistic, working hypotheses. Learning and knowing are connected. Knowing becomes a part of the natural process of adjustment. The working hypotheses are tested through action. Experiences and consequences that flow from the action become part of knowing. In this natural process environment knowledge and action cannot be divided. (Flower and Murphy, 1977; 813) Hence, learning and action are connected.

Pragmatist view and judge theories as instruments in problem solving. They are particularly concerned with consequences associated with *problem solving*. The problem helps to define the experience/reality boundary. "Reality begins with a problematic situation which stimulates" action. (Patterson, 1953: 467) [9] The action is then judged considering consequences. Since experience reveals the best procedures through consequences, pragmatism is also characterized by instrumental reasoning. Pragmatism is married to the concrete, chaotic, messy world of experience. A place where public administration practitioners work and solve problems.

During the late 19th and early 20th century American pragmatism was defined as a philosophy by William James and John Dewey.[10] To understand pragmatism as articulated by Dewey and James it is helpful to learn a little about them. Both had profound international stature and both were major contributors to

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[9] In his discussion of pragmatism Patterson (1953: 467-469) discusses "problematicism" as a defining characteristic of the philosophy.

[10] Any discussion of the early pragmatists must include the ideas of Charles Sanders Pierce. He is the first philosopher to define American Pragmatism. In addition, he had influence on both James (as colleague) and Dewey (as his teacher). Peirce developed a conception of *meaning* which James used as the springboard for his theory of truth.

Peirce argued that the he only differences between the meanings of words such as *hard* and *soft* and *heavy* and *light* are how they test out in experience. What are the experiential or practical consequences. Unless a word can be anchored in observable practical results it is meaningless. "In order to ascertain the meaning of an intellectual conception one should consider what practical consequences might conceivably result from the truth of that conception and the sum of these consequences will constitute the entire meaning of the conception" (Peirce, 1935; 6).

the fields of psychology, philosophy, and education. In addition, both were influenced by Charles Darwin and his theory of evolution.

William James (1842-1910)

William James has the distinction of being called both "the country's greatest psychologist" (Schultz, 1975: 129) and the "most influential American philosopher" (Soccio, 1992: 476). William James, brother of the novelist Henry James, originally was trained as a medical doctor.[11] He was drawn to psychology while teaching at Harvard. *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), his greatest contribution to the field of psychology, was acclaimed internationally and dominated the teaching of psychology for decades. It provided an inspiration to psychologists trained in the early part of the 20th century (Schultz, 1975). *The Principles of Psychology* had an enduring impact. Over fifty years later, Herbert Simon, in *Administrative Behavior* (1945) would draw heavily upon James' *Psychology* .

James is attributed with helping to lay the groundwork for the new American school of Functional Psychology and with developing a new conception of emotion.[12] James also focused on decisions, the purposefulness of behavior, selective attention and habit. (Shultz, 1975: 133) James talked the language of common sense and postulated a role for decision in determining beliefs and actions. In addition, he established the relationship between knowledge and action. "Not only is knowledge for the sake of action, but, because there is a feedback, knowledge is tested in action"(Flower and Murphy, 1977: 644-45).

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[11] This early professional training is compatible with the development of pragmatism. To solve the problem of healing a sick person an effective medical doctor would draw upon a multitude of sources. In addition, James was sickly as a child and a young adult. During one prolonged health crisis episode he literally willed himself well. Hence, he was keenly aware of the mind body connection and the importance of considering problems in there entirety. This experience also promoted his interest in psychology.

[12] James developed a conception of emotion which is different from the prevailing wisdom *"the bodily changes follow directly the perceptions of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur is the emotion"* (James, 1890: Sahakian , 1968: 211)

James' pragmatic philosophy was and outgrowth of his psychology. An early and basic elaboration of the philosophy is James's *Pragmatism* (1907). To James, pragmatism was a way to mediate between the tough-minded empiricist and the tender-minded rationalist. James maintains that the world of experience (empiricists) and abstraction (rationalist) need each other. Pragmatism plunges one into the "river of experience."

> ... let the water represent the world of sensible facts, and let the air above it represent the world of abstract ideas. Both worlds are real, of course, and interact; but they interact only at their boundary, and the *locus* of everything that lives, and happens to us, so far as full experience goes, is the water. We are like fishes swimming in the sea of sense, bounded above by the superior element, but unable to breathe it pure or penetrate it, We get our oxygen from it, however, we touch it incessantly, and every time we touch it, we turn back into the water with our course re-determined and re-energized. (James, 1907: 128)

Clearly, James' pragmatism connects the world of theory and practice. Pragmatism unstiffins theories and judges them by their usefulness. Pragmatism lies in the midst of theories like a hotel corridor. All the rooms open out to it and all the rooms can be entered. Pragmatism *owns* the corridor and the right to move freely from room to room (James, 1907: 54). This is one reason pragmatism is associated with pluralism.

Finally, James believed that the moral question of how to live the good life was the most basic practical issue facing human beings. His morality was not confined to abstract rules or questions of duty. Rather, it was a series, of never-ending live choices -- choices that made a practical difference. He wanted people to take the moral choices seriously. The conflict between good and evil was real. Consequently, we need a moral direction. (Soccio, 1992: 491) Hence, James' pragmatism, unlike logical positivism, incorporates ethics and ethical considerations.

John Dewey (1859-1952)

John Dewey, the philosopher-psychologist-educator-social activist, refined

pragmatism as a method of learning and inquiry. Dewey, who was born before the

Lincoln Administration and died the year Eisenhower was elected, accomplished

much. Summarizing Dewey's life, philosophy, or causes is difficult. [13] His life

would have kept 3 or 4 active people busy.

Dewey, like James, made early contributions to psychology. He is noted

among the world's important psychologist's as a founder of the Chicago School of

Functional Psychology and for challenging the duality of stimulus-response.[14] This

successful challenge was an early harbinger of Dewey's life long battle with dualisms

[15] (Flower and Murphy, 1977: 811). In addition, Dewey wrote two psychology texts.[16]

Thus, it should be noted, that American pragmatism was refined by men deeply

involved in shaping psychology. [17]

Before pursuing a Ph.D. in philosophy from Johns Hopkins, Dewey taught

high school. He was, thus, trained as a philosopher, but experienced as a teacher. His

"experienced" based, "context and consequences" oriented philosophy of inquiry

was at odds with the rigid educational practices of the day. He also lived his action

oriented philosophy. Thus, it is not surprising that he helped to lead major

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[13]   For example, the 24 year old Dewey that wrote "Knowledge and the Relativity of Feeling" was quite different than the 78 year old that published *Logic: a Theory of Inquiry*. (1938?), or, the 90 year old who published a *New York Times* article supporting Secretary of State Acheson.

John Dewey, "Knowledge and Relativity of Feeling" *Journal of Speculative Psychology* 17 (1883):56-70. John Dewey, "Mr. Acheson's Critics: Their Attacks Feared Damaging to Our World Prestige," *New York Times*, 19 November 1950, p.14.

[14]   Dewey's seminal article in psychology is John Dewey, "The reflex arc concept in psychology," *Psychological Review*, 1896,3,357-370. In this article he successfully challenged the stimulus-response conceptualization.

[15]   For example, theory-practice, thought-action, science-value, man-nature, means-ends, process-product and mind-body are all dualism Dewey rejected.

[16]   One, a social psychology, text was later referenced by Herbert Simon in *Administrative Behavior*.

[17]   Dewey was elected president of the American Psychological Association for the year 1899-1900 (Dykhuizen, 1973:99).

educational reform. Through the "progressive movement" in education, children were taken out of rigid seating arrangements, memorized less and "experienced" more. Science laboratories, vocational education programs, field trips and gymnasiums are all credited to the progressive movement. Edwin Patterson (1953:486) maintains that Dewey's influence on American public school education and its teachers has probably done more than any other to make pragmatism the "typically American way of thinking." If Patterson is correct, for most of this century, pragmatism has had an invisible yet pervasive influence on American public administrators through primary and secondary education.[18]

Dewey was deeply concerned with the "reality of moral problems and the value of reflective thought in dealing with them" (Dewey and Tufts, 1927: iii). In 1908, John Dewey and James Tufts wrote, the widely used, *Ethics* , an undergraduate philosophy text (reprinted in 1927). In it they developed a theory of ethics congruent with pragmatism. [19] They also developed an ethics equipped to address unsettled societal questions. They believed that ethical theory without practice was "intolerably academic." Moreover, practice sharpens theory-- theories must be judged by their practical use (Dewey and Tufts, 1927: v). Thus, *Ethics* discussed practical concerns which might be of interest to public administrators such as distrust of government, administrative efficiency, and conflict between the public and private interest. It also addressed policy reform such as child labor laws. Ethics was a fundamental element of Dewey's pragmatism.

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[18] For examples of influential books on education and education reform see Dewey, 1900; Dewey, 1910; Dewey and Dewey, 1915.

[19] In the theoretical portion the book "affirms that there is a place in the moral life for reason and a place for happiness, --a place for duty and a place for valuation. Theories are treated not as incompatible rival systems which must be accepted or rejected *en bloc*, but as more or less adequate methods of surveying the problems of conduct. This mode of approach facilitates the scientific estimation and determination of the part played by various factors in the complexity of moral life. The student is put in a position to judge the problems of conduct for himself. This emancipation and enlightenment of individual judgement is the chief aim of the the theoretical portion" (Dewey and Tufts, 1927, iv-v).

During the late 1930s, leading logical positivists tried to forge a connection with pragmatism through Dewey (Lamont, 1959:11; Westbrook, 1991: 403-408). Although there were similarities (both use of the scientific method and empiricism), Dewey distanced himself from the logical positivists. His major objection lie in the realm of ethics. The *Theory of Valuation* (1939) was his response to the logical positivists. Dewey's naturalistic method of scientific inquiry incorporated values and emotions. Many of Dewey's concerns about logical positivism are echoed by today's PA theorists. Then, as now, Dewey and pragmatism offer an alternative.

For the public, Dewey is perhaps most well known for his social activism. Over several decades, the American people were exposed to Dewey through his extensive writing in the popular print media. Here he aired his views on many of the key policy debates of the time such as suffrage, child labor laws, unionization of labor, educational reform, individual rights, the New Deal, the League of Nations etc. He also actively supported causes helping to organize the American Civil Liberties Union, the American Association of University Professors, the New School of Social Research, and teachers unions (Dykhuizen, 1973: 169-173).[20] In addition, while at the University of Chicago, Dewey worked closely with Jane Addams and was an active member of the first board of trustees of Hull House. Thus, Dewey, the activist-pragmatism, worked to solve current social problems and contributed to the debate of many more.

Dewey's liberal activism was steeped in a faith in democracy. His personal philosophy incorporated "democracy" as an ends-in-view. Throughout his life Dewey developed a theory of democracy. Although in a minority,[21] Dewey was the

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[20]   He also founded a more short lived organization at Columbia, the Men's League for Woman Suffrage (Kimmel, 1993:64).
[21]   Democratic realists were the dominate and opposing school of thought. Walter Lippman is among their most important spokesmen. In addition he engaged in prolonged public debate with Dewey

most important liberal intellectual of the twentieth century to advocate participatory democracy. [22] He called for a pervasive democracy which would shape the democratic character and create of a common democratic culture suffusing factories, schools, political parties, and other organizations (Westbrook, 1991: xv-xvi). He demonstrated a commitment to the principle or ideal of democracy. An ideal which he believed organizations and governments should strive. For example, he advocated co-education at the University of Chicago because he believed that co-ed classroom was profoundly democratic (Dewey, 1911).

Pragmatism the American Philosophy

Pragmatism is one of the major philosophies of the 20th century. In addition, it is the United States most noted contribution to the *world* of philosophy. Why would pragmatism originate in the USA?[23] First, it is linked historically with the birth of democracy as well as the interplay between the market and democracy.[24] In

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over this issue. Democratic realists view democracy in more narrow and procedural terms. "For them the power of average citizens should lie not in their direct participation in public life but in the indirect effect their votes would have on those who made policy. To remain in power, elites in a democracy had to remain responsible to the opinion of the citizenry. and hence, citizenry as voters retained a measure or influence without any direct participation in policy making and usually without even any direct communication with policy makers"(Westbrook, 1991: 544).

[22] "[T]he belief that democracy as an ethical ideal calls upon men and women to build communities in which the necessary opportunities and resources are available for every individual to realize fully his or her particular capacities and powers through participation in political, social, and cultural life" (Westbrook, 1991: xv).

[23] James's subtitle for *Pragmatism* is *A New Name for an Old Way of Thinking.*. Hence, James was articulating and refining a philosophy that had been around for a long time. According to George Novack (1975: 19) "The pragmatic viewpoint emerged organically from the special conditions of American historical development. It came to flourish as a normal mode of approaching the world and reacting to its problems because the same social environment that shaped the American people likewise created an atmosphere favoring the growth of pragmatism. It permeated the habits, sentiments, and psychology of the American people and their component classes long before receiving systematic formulation by professional philosophers. In fact these philosophers were as much influenced by those surrounding conditions of life which gave rise to pragmatism as the fellow citizens they thought and spoke for."

[24] The origins of Pragmatism can be traced to the Sophists of ancient Greece. The sophists educated the sons of wealthy nobel men. They emphasized the rhetorical education that was needed in political life, particularly in the newly emerging *democracy*. They taught young men how to succeed in a democratic political context. They were criticized by Plato for taking money for teaching. Protagoras

governments where absolute monarches rule, there is little room to examine practical differences in means. The monarch's means-ends vision dominates. Hence, secondly, democracy, unlike a monarchy, allows for multiple realities and conflict. It sets the stage for dispute resolution which asks "What difference would it practically make to any one if this notion rather than that notion were true?" (James, 1907:45) Democracy unstiffins policy debate as pragmatism unstiffins theory. Thirdly, pragmatism is modeled after Darwin's theory of evolution. A theory which, compared to Europe, was much more quickly accepted by the US public and scholars.

The United States' version of democracy has weak, antagonistic, historical ties to monarchy.[25] In addition, US democracy contained an elaborate system of checks and balances, and a federal structure which created contexts suited to the development of pragmatism.[26] Indeed, the Administrations of *pragmatic* presidents such as Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Baines Johnson had profound influence on policy direction. These leaders were all associated with change that influenced the direction of Public Administration and the jobs public administrators perform.

James Q. Wilson compares policy making in the United States Europe.

> "Policy making in Europe is like a prizefight: Two contenders, having earned the right to enter the ring, square off against each other for a prescribed number of rounds; when one fighter knocks the other one out, he is declared the winner and the fight is over. Policy making in the United States is more like a bar room brawl: Anybody can join in, the combatants fight all comers and sometimes change sides, no referee is in charge, and the fight lasts

of Abdera was one of the earliest and most influential Sophists (Ehrenberg, 1973: 338-351) In this way both capitalism and democracy are linked to pragmatism's origins.

25   Dwight Waldo(1990: 78) contrasts the "Imperial"(Roman) and the "Civic Culture" (Greek) traditions of government. The US is part of the Civic Culture. In the Civic Culture "there is a weak sense of state....The organization of the administrative apparatus tends to be untidy in appearance, more organic or *pragmatic*, less logical or formally rational." (emphasis added)

26   Robertson and Judd (1989) analyze the impact of the US federal structure on policy. They maintain that this porous and layered system creates fragmented and incoherent policy. It is also a structure which creates contexts for multiple realities.

not for a fixed number of rounds but indefinitely of until
everybody drops from exhaustion" (Wilson, 1989: 299-300).

The people charged with carrying out public policy directives in this environment
would find pragmatic logic useful.

Arron Wildavsky posits a complementary vision of public policy in the US.
He describes public policy as a continuum. When approaching a policy problem it is
important to realize there is no permanent solution, no end-of-quest. Each policy
solution creates consequences which foster new problems. Hence, policies are
ongoing and successive rather than definitive. Aaron Wildavsky is eloquent in his
description:

> The reforms of the past lay like benign booby traps, which could
> make one stumble even if they did not explode... More and more
> public policy is about coping with consequences of past policies...The
> more we do, therefore, the more there is for us to do, as each
> program bumps into others and sets off consequences all down the
> line. In this way past solutions, if they are large enough, turn into
> future problems....Instead of thinking of permanent solutions we
> should think of permanent problems in the sense that one problem
> always succeeds and replaces another (Wildavsky, 1979:4-5).

Pragmatism is problem and consequences oriented, it is not, however,
solution as end-of-quest oriented. A solution has practical value within the
"stream of experience. It appears less as a solution, then, than as a program for
more work" (James, 1907: 53). This is obviously a philosophy which is in accord
with Wildavsky's point about the nature of problem succession in policy.
Modern public administrators must adapt and change as problems succeed one
another.

Pragmatism and Public Administration

The popular image of the pragmatism is one of amoral expediency.
Hopefully, this overview of "American Pragmatism" and its founders dispels that
image. Pragmatism is a rich philosophy. Unfortunately, except for *The Public and its*

Problems (Dewey, 1927), neither James or Dewey wrote about topics or used a language readily accessible to modern public administration. Their association with PA is indirect. Nevertheless, there are a few connecting examples.

Herbert Simon

One noted source to find the influence of William James and John Dewey is Herbert Simon's pivotal *Administrative Behavior*. In the introduction of the second edition, Simon indicates that Chapters 4 (Rationality in Administrative Behavior) and 5 (The Psychology of Administrative Decisions) were the core of the book (1957: xi). The psychologists, Dewey and James are cited extensively in chapter 5. [27]

In *Administrative Behavior* Simon's contributed to the understanding of administration by focusing on individual purposeful behavior and the decision/action.[28] The decision is a pivotal action used to anchor experience and consequences. Simon uses the decision premise as the focus for context. These ideas ties to James's psychology which showed how the *decision* determined our *actions* (Flower and Murphy, 1977, 644-645). In addition, James maintained that people "pursued ends preferentially and behave purposively" (Flower and Murphy, 1977, 640). Simon also uses the language of pragmatism. In the "Rationality" chapter he uses pragmatic concepts when replacing the means-ends notion with alternative-consequences. In addition, the psychology chapter uses concepts such as "practical

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[27]   Simon indicates in a footnote that "most of the references here(ch 5) are to William James, *The Principles of Psychology* ...and John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* "(Simon, 1945:80). One surpassing aspect of Simon's book is that it is poorly indexed. Even though he cites 3 of Dewey's books in 9 footnotes, Dewey is not in the index.

[28]   It should be noted that Simon's first psychology reference is to Toulman's *Purposive Behavior in Animals and Men* (1932). Toulmin is associated with the "Behavioral" school of psychology. Toulmin both drew from James and departed from him. Like James, he focused on choice, decision, and purposive behavior. Unlike James, he gave goal-objects and means-objects more concreteness and emphasized the cognitive (Toulmin, 1932: 470). To Toulmin there is an end-of-quest. Toulmin's psychology is consistent with logical positivism. James's is not.

decision-making", "consequences", "experience" and "practical problems" to make arguments. (Simon, 1945: 82-83).

> Finally, Simon cites Dewey and James extensively when he discusses habit. An equally important mechanism that assists in the preservation of useful behavior patterns is habit.[29] Habit permits conservation of mental effort by withdrawing from the area of conscious thought those aspects of the situation that are repetitive (Simon, 1945: 88)

Simon extends the notion of habit several pages later when he introduces "standard practices" in organizations.

> The organization establishes standard practices. By deciding once for all (or at least for a period of time) that a particular task shall be done in a particular way, it relieves the individual who actually performs the task of the necessity of determining each time how it shall be done (Simon, 1945: 102).

Through *Administrative Behavior* and later work Simon changed the direction of Public Administration. He is credited with bringing the controversial, philosophic doctrine of logical positivism to Public Administration (Stillman, 1990: 118; Denhardt, 1984: 75). Logical positivism is an approach which maintains that philosophy should deal with what is and not what ought to be. Logical positivism emphasizes, empiricism, analysis, and logic. It is a philosophic approach that mirrors the methods of the hard sciences. It uses hypotheses and focuses on 'facts' that can be empirically measured. As a belief system, it asserts that the domain of ethics is beyond the empirical. Through logical positivism Simon redefined efficiency and brought rationality in decision making to Public Administration. He also brought a fact-value and (by implication) a cognitive-affective dichotomy (Fry, 1989: 210-212).

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[29]   This was footnote 8 in the "Psychology" chapter of *Administrative Behavior*. Dewey (*Human Nature and Conduct*, pp.14-131, 172-181) early emphasized the important role of habit in social behavior. James, in his *Psychology*, contributed a classic chapter to the psychological literature on habit (chap.iv).

Simon's use of Dewey and James is ironic. Of all key people in public administration, he built theory using their ideas most explicitly. By embracing logical positivism, however, he moved Public Administration away from the influence of pragmatism.

Pragmatism and Pluralism

Richard Stillman has identified three theoretical images in the field of Public Administration. They are unitary, dualism and pluralism (Stillman, 1990; 9-13). Pluralism and pragmatism are formally tied. No one theory, say the advocates of pluralism explains contemporary public administration thought. There is rather a diversity of opinions and points of view. The pluralist perspective views diversity as a strength.

The pragmatic philosophy has a pluralistic outlook or metaphysics (Flower and Murphy, 1977: 682-688; Suckiel, 1982: 6). James's image of the hotel with its rooms and corridors is exemplary. The pluralist notion of truth is also consistent with pragmatism. For the pluralist the world is a messy and 'truth,' is held by many approaches. It is discovered by sorting through bits and pieces of truths from a wide variety of perspectives. From the give-and-take of many ideas, truth emerges (Stillman, 1990: 12).

In addition, Lindblom's incremental model is tied to the pluralist approach (Denhardt, 1984:83). It is a decision making model and problem solving approach that mirrors pragmatism as a *method of learning*. The incremental model holds that administrators address problems through a series of incremental adjustments (decisions) (Lindblom, 1959).

Under incrementalism, decisions are made in small steps, the consequences of the change are assessed and then more small changes are made. Policy evolves in a naturalistic progression. Empirical evidence used to assess each stage is not limited

to what is measured and consistent with a formal theory. Hypotheses are defined loosely and there is a broader definition of what is acceptable empirical evidence. Incrementalism relies on and expands administrative experience-- it is pragmatic.

In addition, unlike the rational-comprehensive decision model with its assumption that goals are defined, incrementalism uses something akin to the pragmatist ends-in-view. These ends are approximate and successive. They are also more closely tied to the means available.

Judicial Pragmatism

Public administrators translate legislative mandates into working orders through a vast network of rules and regulations. The bureaucracy makes more rules than the legislature, and it tries more cases than the court system. Hence, the bureaucracy is both quasi-legislative and quasi-judicial [30]. One way public administrators leave their imprint on policy is through administrative discretion. That is, when they make or apply rules. Emmette Redford (1975: 46) describes the link between administrative discretion and the rule of law as "pragmatic in the fullest sense: there is no necessary aim of permanence; it is merely today's practical decision in the light of social ends which are accepted."

Legal philosophers and Supreme Court Justices such as Oliver Wendel Holmes, Jr., Roscoe Pound, Benjamin Cardozo and Louis Brandeis are responsible for a legal school of thought known as Judicial Pragmatism (Patterson, 1953:465-537). These men actively applied pragmatic principles to the law. Because of the quasi-judicial nature of many public administration activities/problems, the insights of judicial pragmatists are useful.

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[30] Rules specify rewards and sanctions as well as how a program is to be implemented. They provide guidelines and ensure consistency of implementation across geographic areas and over time.

Legal scholars/practitioners such as Oliver Wendell Holmes[31] applied the pragmatic philosophy to the disparity between the law and reality. The law specifies what is right and wrong what is acceptable and what is not. Holmes emphasized the distinction between the law that "is" and the law that "ought to be" (Patterson, 1953: 505). He also believed that when moral principles are implemented they are changed into something different. Courts are continually asked to interpret and change the boundaries of the law. Obviously, when change occurs there are logical consequences for the reality/experience that flow from the new interpretations. In this way, the laws (what ought to be) and their implementation (what is) form an interactive boundary. The courts are responsible for the boundary and monitor "what is" to ensure it mirrors "what ought to be."

Judges also operate in a world where values are relative. For example, in cases such as abortion, education funding, AIDS, they must come to terms with the struggle between individual rights and the general welfare. Thus, the courts continually balance "competing social advantage" i.e., values (Patterson,1953: 506).

Since legal pragmatists view value-reality as continually changing, there is an implicit relativism or a disregard for absolutism within legal pragmatic schools. The pragmatic legal school examined ways reality changes the law; the application of rules yields an indeterminate outcome-- "the fact that is established in the courtroom is, indeed not the truth for all time" (Patterson, 1953: 481). Thus the law has a temporal nature.[32]

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[31] Holms was particularly influenced by William James. While a young Boston lawyer, Holms and James along with Pierce and others developed many of the germinal ideas of pragmatism in the 1870s. They formed a "Metaphysical Club" which contained men trained in law, the natural sciences, mathematics and medicine (Patterson, 1953: 474). As a Justice he carefully read Dewey. He is famous for a quote about Dewey's *Experience and Nature*. After several readings, Holms said"Me thought God would have spoken had He been inarticulate but keenly desirous to tell you how it was" (Dykhuizen, 1973;214).

[32] The doctrine of stare decisis, instead of being absolute, actually limited the indeterminacy or helped define a boundary of feasible solutions (Patterson:469).

Within the legal world, judges must deal with a multiplicity of people with diverse points of view. [33] From a pragmatic perspective the many points of view are separate realities (James, 1907:48). This assumption about reality is conducive to using a mode of analysis that is piecemeal. It considers diverse problems which resist solution by a single formula.[34]

The public administrator within the bureaucracy works under similar circumstances. The relative weight of values or what is considered important continually changes. For example, a new superior or administration might emphasize different aspects of the routine. Congress might rewrite a mandate. In addition, keeping in mind the nature of problem succession, the very success of a program may yield a new set of problems. Hence, when one problem is addressed the process of resolution will uncover a new set of problems which in turn may change the relative position of values. For example, in the military the value of efficiency must compete with readiness, duty, or fairness. During the Vietnam War, the military emphasized efficiency. Many new efficiency measures were employed, for example enemy body counts were used to assess officer performance. This new performance measurement often produced exaggerated numbers. Eventually, problems with exaggerated numbers translated into concern about values such as intelligence, readiness and ethical officer conduct.

Another parallel with the world of law is the inherent tension between specificity and generality among the pervasive bureaucratic rules, procedures and regulations. Rules, procedures and regulations need to specify details. Yet if the details are too specific the process becomes unmanageable. Public administrators

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[33] Patterson (1953) describes this as the pluralism nature of the legal pragmatists position.
[34] This ad hoc method is associated with common law, which was never reduced to a system" (Patterson:469).

often compromise in a world where mandates are either too abstract or too detailed. They look for "what works."

A pragmatic administrator would observe that rules (what is expected) not only evolve but can change dramatically (e.g., affirmative action, regulation-deregulation etc.) Because rules, procedures and regulations within the bureaucracy have a contingent or temporal nature, there is an element of expediency in the nature of choice. The instrumental logic of pragmatism "works" in this context.

The Public and its Problems

Dewey's (1927) *The Public and its Problems* is the work with the most direct applications to Public Administration.[35] Dewey was in his late 60s when he wrote this book. It was the roaring 20s; a time when *laissez faire* ruled. Individualism and utilitarianism were dominant social theories. Stimulated by prohibition, public corruption on the local level was rampant. When local revenues were declining, the automobile confronted local governments with big new infrastructure expenditures. [36] Dewey was also personally frustrated with the inability of the national government to deal with something as morally right as child labor laws. From his perspective it was gridlock 1920s style.

In *The Public and its Problems* , Dewey examines basic concepts relevant to public administration such as "public," "state," "community," "democracy," "organizations," "technological change," and the "rule of law."[37] He also addresses "the importance of finding experts and of entrusting administration to them"

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[35]   References to *The Public and its Problems* can be found in Gaus, 1947; Redford, 1975; Simon, 1945; Lindblomb, 1990; Stever, 1993.

[36]   At the time the alcohol excise tax was the major source of revenue for local government. Prohibition resulted in falling revenues.

[37]   He defines Public. "All those who are affected by the indirect consequences of transactions." (p. 15) The state is defined as "The organization of the public effected through officials for the protection of the interests shared by its members" (p. 33). The state establishes agencies to "care for and regulate the consequences" (p.39). Dewey believed that the rule of law controlled behavior by issuing consequences for transgressions associated with behavior. (p. 55) He also addressed community and association, the role of technology in "altering the modes of associated behavior" (p.30).

(Dewey 1927: 124). He was clearly frustrated by the influence of "individualism" and utilitarian economic theory in shaping debate and policy in the United States. He showed how democracy in the United States was tied to the philosophy of individualism. He proposed a view of democracy which incorporated the notion of community. [38]

His holistic philosophy was at odds with the individualistic, reductionistic theories popular at the time. He had problems with the dominance of a theoretical framework which produced the *law* of "supply and demand." Further, he was concerned with policies that held in check the dreaded "interference of government" (p.92).

Dewey proposed a theory of the democratic state that included both the individual "I" and the community "we" (p. 151). He did not view the individual and community as a duality. Rather he stresses their interconnectedness. [39] As I read *The Public and its Problems* , I was struck by a sense of deja-vu. Dewey's arguments and perspectives are remarkably similar to many modern scholars writing in the 1980's. These modern scholars question the dominance of logical positivism and neo-classical economics[40] in shaping both theory and policy.[41]

In a 1993, *Administration and Society* article, James Stever draws heavily from *The Public and its Problems* to articulate "The Organization Theory of John Dewey."[42] In this article he forges a connection between Dewey's pragmatism and

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[38]   Dewey was very positive about democracy in the long run. He believed that "the cure for the ailments of democracy is more democracy" (p.146)

[39]   They are like a tree rooted in soil; "it lives or dies in the mode of its connections with sunlight, air and water. Then too the tree is a collection of interacting parts; is the tree more a single whole than its cells?(p. 186)

[40]   Neoclassical economics is a blend of rationalism and logical positivism. See for example Friedman, 1953; Hitch and McKean, 1960; Downs, 1958)

[41]   See for example Etzioni, 1989; Denhardt, 1984; Bernstein, 1976; Stone 1988; Sagoff, 1988.

[42]   This is an excellent article which deals carefully with the complexity of Dewey's ideas. Stever drew from 10 of Dewey's books to write this article. *The Public and its Problems* was one of the most prominent.

organization theory. Stever maintains that Dewey's organization theory has much to offer Public Administration. Ultimately Dewey had faith in organizations. They played a "pivotal role in correcting and solving some of modernism's most pressing problems. Vital organizations allow modernism's quest for freedom to continue" (Stever, 1993: 439). Stever's article is the most recent attempt to apply pragmatism to Public Administration theory and practice. Pragmatism is indeed a complex and rich philosophy. With its focus on naturalistic inquiry and change it is a fruitful place to examine many of PA's unresolved issues.

Addressing Unresolved Public Administration Issues

This section deals with the final purpose of the paper. It demonstrates how an explicit and expanded application of pragmatism to PA addresses persistent problems. Stillman and Denhardt credit Simon with introducing Public Administration to logical positivism and its companion theory the rational model. It should be noted that many social sciences (e.g., economics, political science, operations research, etc.) and contemporary philosophy have embraced logical positivism and the rational model. Further, over the last 30 years, policy and management prescriptions based on the logic of positivism and the rational model have been widely adopted. Not surprisingly, both theory and policy have been criticized. Academics such as Amitai Etzioni (1988), focus on the absence of ethics and the inaccurate assumptions about human motivation in their criticism. Keep in mind that critics of logical positivism within public administration are part of a larger trend.

There are, however, critical factors which set PA concerns apart from those of social science. PA theories must connect to the world of practicing public administrators. Denhardt's most devastating criticism of logical positivism is that it divorces theory and practice. This gulf is the basis of the crisis of legitimacy

in PA (Denhardt, 1984:157). Pragmatism is an alluring alternative because the theory practice connection is the basis of much of its epistemology. Unlike logical positivism, pragmatism continuously focuses attention on the theory practice nexus.

Theory and Practice

The marriage of theory and practice is endlessly fertile.
James, 1907

With its dual emphasis on truth and learning, pragmatism addresses the theory-practice debate from two angles. As a theory of truth, pragmatism provides a criterion to judge theories. Theories are true if they "work" or have practical value.[43] Pragmatist assert that PA problems produce PA experiences/consequences and these in turn are understood and addressed by PA theory. PA experiences are the instruments which link problem and theory.[44] PA theory suggests action which also produce consequences and experiences. Thus, PA theory itself is forged and evolves through practice using the pragmatic criterion of truth.

For example, consider the theory around the use of fees in human services. In the 1960s, the human service administrators used a Freudian theory to administer fees for psychotherapy. Freud maintained that fees helped people get better faster. As a result, neither the revenue nor the allocative efficiency potential of fees were considered in their implementation. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, however, the fiscal crunch hit. The "therapeutic value theory" lost its usefulness to

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[43]   As Dewey points out one must not take a too narrow view of usefulness. "It does not pay to tether one's thoughts to the post of use with too short a rope. Power in action requires some largeness and imaginativeness of vision. Men must have a enough interest in thinking for the sake of thinking to escape the limits of routine and custom. Interest in knowledge for the sake of knowledge, in thinking for the sake of the free play of thought, is necessary then to the *emancipation* of practical life--to make it rich and progressive" (Dewey, 1910: 139).

[44]   It should be noted that these experiences are inclusive of bureaucratic politics, relationships between and among co-workers, citizen expectations, limited resources, interpreting rules, meeting deadlines etc.

administrators as fee practices and policies were reviewed. It was more "practical" and useful to also view fees as a revenue source (Shields, 1981 and Shields, 1989). Hence, the PA experience (declining revenue) or context changed and the relevant theory that worked changed.

The theory practice debate can be examined using James's hotel corridor metaphor. Unity is achieved because the pragmatic administrator *owns* the corridor. She walks from room to room using the theories that address ongoing problems. Ownership of the corridor joins theory and practice. Public Administration can find unity in the *ownership*. In this context, the pragmatic administrator appreciates logical positivist theories for their usefulness (truth). Logical positivism is a room (maybe a wing) in the hotel. It is, however, reductionistic and unidimensional. To the extent it threatens the concept of "ownership," it should be dismissed--it has lost its usefulness (it is no longer true).

Again, the fees example is illustrative. Theories dealing with therapeutic value (Freud), revenue potential (finance) and allocative efficiency (economics) could all be viewed as different rooms. Consider this problem-- What should the fee be for court ordered psychotherapy for middle income child abusers? Economic theory suggests that demand is inelastic and fees would generate enough revenue to cover costs. Freudian theory might suggest that if the fee was too high the client would resent therapy and continue the abusive behavior. In addition, theories about administering fee systems might be used. The public administrator is free to walk between theories (Shields, 1989). He is not married to allocative efficiency as the economist or to the therapeutic value as the social worker (Rubenstine et al., 1985).

Another vivid metaphor is the fish, the water and the air. Like the fish, the practicing public administrator lives in the *water of experience.* Practical everyday problems confront him daily. Theory and the abstract are the air above. He is unable to breath them pure. Theories, however, provide approaches to problem solving. Every time he touches them, he turns back into the water with his course re-determined and re-energized.

Pragmatism is also a method of inquiry. It joins theory and practice through action--pragmatic administrators learn by experience. All kinds of experiences are relevant. When a manager mediates a conflict between employees, both cognitive arguments and affective considerations produce dimensions of an experience. A tension filled meeting is a consequence of the conflict and a concrete fact (experience). Theories about personality types or conflict resolution may help resolve the immediate problem (form the working hypothesis). Actions test the theory (how was the conflict resolved). Hence, different of problems use different facts and theories. [45] The pragmatist uses a multiplicity of theories to sort out and make sense of experience.

The theory practice debate can also be viewed through the tough-minded/tender-minded perspectives. James describes pragmatism as a method to mediate between the tough-minded empiricist and the tender-minded rationalist. The empiricist is a "lover of facts in all their crude variety." The rationalist is a "devotee to the abstract and eternal principle" (James 1908: 9). James' description of tough-minded and tender-minded is fascinating. It is a reversal of PAs current

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[45]   For example a superintendent of schools may deal with the problem of overcrowding. Documents that reveal school enrollments have dropped in one district and have dramatically risen in another. These are another form of concrete facts. Economic theory might help develop a plan of action to redirect budget dollars between districts. Of course the pragmatic administrator would also be aware of the political context-experience and probable consequences of any redirection.

image. In today's conventional wisdom economists would be counted as among the most tough-minded of all social scientists. By James' definition, however, most applications of economic theory are tender-minded because they are abstract.

The "operators" of the bureaucracy are at the other end of the spectrum (Wilson, 1989). These are people steeped in the experience and context of the bureaucracy. They are the prison guard, the case worker, the foot soldier, the meat inspector. They live in the tough-minded world of the empiricist. The pragmatic administrator mediates between the two— she blends theory and fact. She unstiffins theory and makes it "work" for the operators. Her imprint on policy is found in the mediation, in the "making it work" (or making it useful).[46]

Again, the fees example is illustrative. The dominant theory throughout the 50s and 60s was drawn from social work and was the "therapeutic value" theory. The operator-case worker were concerned with their clients getting better. When grants were plentiful, administrators could ignore fees and concentrate on grant administration. The therapeutic value theory prevailed. When grant dollars tightened, however, up the therapeutic value theory had to be unstiffened. Human service administrators were forced to consider the revenue potential and the waste[47] that was found in existing fees systems. They had to make changes and mediate between the social work perspective and the new problem of fiscal stress (Shields, 1981).

A theory practice gulf can also be observed as legislative mandates are implemented. Legislative mandates are often abstract (theoretical) because they are an ideal. Using the terminology of the judicial pragmatists they represent "what

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[46]   Note that this mediating role would not be limited to theory/practice. It could extend to mediation between steak holders,clients and taxpayers, clients and operators, politicians and citizens etc.

[47]   Sliding scale fee systems were often used. Clients would be billed for office visits monthly. Often they failed to pay. Agencies were thus stuck with the billing costs. These practices were often adjusted and fees were collected at the time of service (Shields, 1981).

ought to be." Again the pragmatic administrator takes on a mediating role. He mediates between the mandated abstract vision (what ought to be) and the empiricist/operator. He connects theory and practice. He asks "What works?" because he is charged with making it work.

Clearly, the theory/practice debate is central to the epistemology of pragmatism. Perhaps James's work as a medical doctor led him to concentrate on the theory-practice, theory-action connection. Dewey, the educator, developed the link between reflection and action--another concern of Denhardt's.

Connecting Reflection and Action

In *How We Think* (1910), Dewey examines reflective thought.[48] He also shows how reflective thought and action reinforce each other. Reflection requires effort and correct habits (Dewey, 1910:6). "[G]ood mental habits consist in acquiring the attitude of suspended conclusion, and in mastering the various methods of searching for new materials to corroborate or to refute the first and to carry on systematic and protracted inquiry" (Dewey, 1910:13). Dewey also identifies the problem situation as critical. Suspended judgment requires inquiry into the nature of the problem before an attempt at its solution (Dewey, 1910: 74). Reflection produces inferences which are tested through experience and action. Further, the actions that create experience are the "natural stimuli of reflective inquiry" (Dewey, 1910: 64-65).[49]

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[48] "Reflection involves not simply a sequence of ideas, but a *consequence*-- a consecutive ordering in such a way that each determines the next as its proper outcome, while each in turn leans back on its predecessors. The successive portions of the reflective thought grow out of one another and support one another; they do not come and go in a medley. Each phase is a step from something to something-- technically speaking, it is a term of thought, Each term leaves a deposit which is utilized in the next term. The stream or flow becomes a train, chain, or thread" (Dewey, 1910: 2-3).

[49] Over the course of 35 years Dewey defined his method of inquiry as a type of naturalistic logic. In addition to *How We Think* three other works (*Studies in Logical Theories* (1903), *Essays in Experimental Logic*(1916) and *Logic a Theory of Inquiry*(1938)) all refined his position on reflective thought.

Dewey's insights offer a prescription for public administration. Hence, working hypotheses that would guide a *pragmatic* public administrator should be grounded in reflection and tested in action.[50] The action/experience that resulted would then be "natural stimuli of reflective inquiry" (Dewey, 1910: 64-65). Further, persons with reflective habits of thought are better able to learn from experience (and mistakes) (Dewey, 1910:74). It is not clear to me that public administrators actually use this technique. Rather, that the concern raised by Denhardt could be addressed using pragmatic logic.

Pragmatism: an Expanded Approach to Learning.

The positivist approach to inquiry relies upon the methods of the hard sciences. Inquiry is guided by verification and measurement. Logical positivism is a streamlined philosophy. It concentrates on epistemology and logic alone, incorporating neither metaphysics, ethics or aesthetics as legitimate branches within its domain. Dewey and James, on the other hand, were careful to develop a comprehensive philosophy. Pragmatism embraces all five branches of philosophy.

The noted modern pragmatist, Richard Rorty maintains that positivists have actually preserved god through their notion of science. "Pragmatism, by contrast, does not erect Science as an idol to fill the place once held by God. It views science as one genre of literature-- or, put the other way around, literature and the arts as inquiries are on the same footing as scientific inquiries" (Rorty, 1982:xviii).

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[50] The connection between reflection and action do not result in cast-iron rules. "Each case has to be dealt with as it arises, on the basis of its importance and of the context in which it occurs. To take too much pains in one case is as foolish-- as illogical--as to take too little in another. At one extreme, almost any combination that insures prompt and unified action may be better than any long delayed conclusion; while at the other, decision may have to be postponed for a long period--perhaps a lifetime. The trained mind is the one that best grasps the degree of observation, forming of ideas, reasoning and experimental testing required in any special case, and that profits the most, in future thinking, by mistakes made in the past. What is important is that the mind should be sensitive to problems and skilled in methods of attack and solution" (Dewey, 1910: 78).

By failing to include aesthetics, logical positivism is ill equipped to incorporate the quality of experience (Denhardt, 1984:156). Valuable paintings, for example, are in public museums because neither their market value nor their cost (paint, canvas, etc.) represent their aesthetic value to society. On the other hand, aesthetic experiences/values are incorporated into pragmatism. In the "pragmatic hotel" the corridor connects to rooms where PA theories consider aesthetic experience and judgment. The pragmatic method is used to determine which theories "work" in which context. Pragmatism's naturalistic approach to inquiry represents an expanded, alternative approach to learning.

If public administration is to embrace the pragmatic approach to inquiry, it will need to give qualitative research methods a higher standing.[51] The ability to form working hypotheses, reflect on the parameters of the "problem," determine what experiences represent experiential evidence and identify context are necessary skills for the pragmatic administrator. Finally, the pragmatic administrator should have the confidence to set the whole process in motion by acting.

Public administration is not alone in questioning the preeminence of logical positivism and its quantitative methods. Throughout social science in general, scholarship on and use of qualitative research methods is growing.[52] Notions such as analytic generalization and theoretical replication discussed by Robert Yin (1988) help connect theory, method and hypotheses in naturalistic settings. They also add needed rigor. A pragmatic orientation to public administration would support training that connects qualitative methods and PA theory.[53]

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[51] Note, quantitative methods are not discarded.
[52] See for example, Guba (1981), Morgan (1988) and Yin (1988). Although not advocating pragmatism, Mary Bailey (1992) advocates increased use of qualitative methods in public administration research.
[53] Denhardt (1984) emphasizes the importance of connecting theory and practice. He uses case studies and suggests that students/administrators keep journals as methods to connect theory and practice. With the exception of the development of working hypotheses, most of the elements of the pragmatic approach to inquiry are incorporated in his approach.

The Connection with Democracy

The cure for the ailments of democracy is more democracy
Dewey, 1927

Critics of PA theory are often unhappy with the dominance of business values (e.g., efficiency, effectiveness) underlying the theory (Denhardt,1984; Stillman, 1990). In essence, they argue that PA theory has concentrated on something a kin to generic "administration" and has ignored the "public" part of PA. By concentrating on business values, other values particularly those associated with democracy such as justice, equality and freedom are ignored. They stress that commitment to democratic values are important because they provide public administration with an ethical road map. Values such as efficiency and effectiveness by contrast are sterile.

One could view their argument along a continuum. Theories that stress efficiency and effectiveness on one extreme while theories dealing with equity, justice and freedom are on the other end. Theorists such as Denhardt emphasize equity, justice, and freedom. They believe that public organizations should seek democratic outcomes and use democratic procedures. Although I don't completely agree with the radical position of this group, I can't help but be struck by Dewey's relevance to them. Dewey's theory of democracy is quite consistent with this position. As advocates of participatory democracy, Dewey and Denhardt have much in common.

Pragmatic public administrators can ill afford to ignore efficiency and effectiveness as they try to make programs work. They operate in a world where taxpayer/citizens want fewer taxes and more services. In addition, politicians promote themselves and the possibility of getting more for less by advocating more governmental efficiency. Like it or not this is a large part of the PA context. The

pragmatic administrator must pay attention to efficiency and effectiveness or risk becoming irrelevant--which is the opposite of pragmatism.[54]

Pragmatism as a mediating philosophy would seek theories that connect democracy and efficiency. In addition, compared to logical positivism, pragmatism both historically, and through Dewey is more connected to democratic values than logical positivism.

Managing Change

Denhardt maintains that Public Administration is "concerned with managing change in pursuit of publicly defined societal values" (Denhardt, 1990: 43). This view depicts PA as a process which is connected to formal systems of government. He maintains that logical positivism, the rational model and Weberian bureaucratic structure theory led to a static interpretation of public administration and PA theory. In the rational model there is a stable, objective outcome, output or goal that is specified. In addition, proponents of logical positivism advocated value neutral PA theory (except for of efficiency as unstated value). This is most easily seen in the dominance of the politics administration and value/fact dichotomies.

By focusing on outcomes the rational model ignores process except as a means to achieve an end. The pragmatic philosophy has a much different orientation.[55] The naturalistic style of inquiry that is the trademark of pragmatism

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[54]   I need look no further than a recent newspaper. David Elliot, "Some State Services to go up for Bid." *Austin American Statesman* June 14, 1993: B4. The first two sentences "Are you tired of state government wasting your tax dollars. Do you think your private business can do the job more efficiently?"

[55]Dewey presents a useful distinction between process and product. He also shows how they can fit together. Process is associated with the activities of play. They exist for the joy of it without seeming purpose. Product on the other hand is associated with work. "In work, the end holds attention and controls the notice given to means" (Dewey, 1910, 217). When the two are separated play becomes fooling around and work drudgery. "Exclusive interest in the results alters work to drudgery. For by

is modeled after Darwins theory of evolution. Evolution is a process which focuses on change. Likewise, pragmatism is a philosophy which places change and process at its heart.

Conclusion

Several years ago I asked the question; What is the public administration paradigm? At the time, policy implementation seemed the obvious candidate. The imprint of PA on policy occurred when public administrators took mandates and turned them into working programs. After months of reading and writing, I unfortunately, concluded that policy implementation was interesting but missed the mark. It didn't really speak to the people themselves or capture their unique conceptual lenses (paradigm).

Emmette Redford was instrumental in my move to study pragmatism. From his over 60 years as a leader in the field, he saw policy implementation as a fad that would last only a decade or two.

After weeks of deliberation, pragmatic seemed to be the term I most often returned to when considering public administrators. Public administrators were pragmatic because they had to make the programs work. With the encouragement and help of of members of SWT's Philosophy Department, I began to investigate pragmatism. With its focus on experience, consequences and problems, pragmatism

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drudgery is meant those activities in which the interest in the outcome does not suffuse the means of gettint the result. Whenever a peice of work becomes drudgery, the process of doing loses all value for the doer" (Dewey, 1910:218). Dewey advocates a focus on the connection between between process and product. "Willingness to work for ends by means of acts not naturally attractive is best attained by securing such an appreciation of the value of the end that a sense of its value is transferred to its means of accomplishment" (Dewey, 1910: 218).

Hence, the public administrator should have commitment to the result (ends-in-view or product) and be able to give meaning to the process by connecting it to the product. The process, however, is where the experiences, context, and problems are most tangible. It is where the public administrator must focus attention.

seemed to capture the essence of what was missing from current conceptions of public administrations.

As my investigation progressed I began to see that pragmatism offered a deep alternative. It was well poised to unseat logical positivism. It also met the Redford test, it was not faddish.

My sense is that modern public administrators have unknowingly adopted fragments of pragmatism. Elements of pragmatism are pervasive. For example, there is acknowledgement of the importance of experiences, consequences and problems. In addition, those charged with "making a program work" ask the pragmatic question "What works?" What works today, however, may not work tomorrow as administrations change (or problems succeed themselves).[56] Hence, public administrators must turn away from fixed, faulty or rigid visions of the world to those which are true and useful.

Unfortunately, experience and consequences can teach that nothing new works. One of the key insights of James Q. Wilson's *Bureaucracy* (1989) was that public administrators are faced with more constraints that private administrators. Any change can upset powerful interest groups, employees, clients, politicians etc. As a result, administrators in American bureaucracy are more likely to get in trouble, if they instigate change, than to be rewarded. Instead of learning to act, experience and consequences may teach administrators to duck. This view represents applied pragmatism. It is, however, a fragmented pragmatism. It does not provide the administrator with the tools of pragmatism nor its commitment to ethics. PA should investigate pragmatism in its wholeness. It is a philosophy equipped to deal with action, change and ethics.

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[56] Changes in administration can refer to changes in city councils, school boards, agency heads, university presidents (and deans), govenors etc.

In addition, what really attracts me to pragmatism is the vast unexplored territory. I see implications for teaching, theory building, PA ethics, and research methods. I see new ways of asking questions? How do we connect to the daily experiences of public administrators? How do we use experience/theory to develop working hypotheses? How do we understand the PA context and problem? How do leaders define our ends-in-view? How do we maintain the ends-in-view as organizational scale and context change? Let us heed Woodrow Wilson's call and study the "eminently *practical* science of administration."

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