

Professional Development Grant Final Report

# **The Twenty-First Century Administrative State and the Subversion of Democracy**

Present by

Dr. Michael T. Rogers

Associate Professor of Political Science

History and Political Science Department

at

The Public Administration Theory Network 2016 Conference

May 19-22, 2016

San Antonio, Texas

## **A. Restatement of Research Problem**

I was invited to participate in a symposium at the 2016 Public Administration Theory Network (PAT-NET) conference in San Antonio, Texas. The PDF grant funded my travel to the conference in San Antonio from May 19-22 (see Appendix A for evidence from the conference program that I attended). The symposium explored the power of administrative agencies, i.e. their rulemaking, discretion and adjudication powers over federal policy. The papers presented at the 2016 PAT-NET conference in the symposium have all been submitted for double-blind peer review with the expectation they will be published in the PAT-NET journal *Administrative Theory and Praxis*.

For my paper, I first show how public administration subverts democracy today and then construct an alternative model of the bureaucracy that would transform it into a civic cultivator. For both the critique and the model, I provide a synthesis of the German critical thought of Hannah Arendt and the American pragmatic philosopher John Dewey. Essentially, the problem this paper addresses is how to transform today's bureaucracy with its inherent authoritarian decision-making tendencies into a force for the promotion of participatory democracy in America.

## **B. Brief Review**

In my original professional development grant proposal, I listed two basic objectives for this conference. The first was to bring greater light to a disturbing administrative precedent that is becoming a popular administrative ethic in the United States today, the tendency of the executive branch to practice Nixon's dictum that "*operations is policy*" or that the bureaucracy can dictate policy through its implementation.<sup>1</sup> The second was publishing the article I produced for the

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<sup>1</sup> Richard P. Nathan, *The Administrative Presidency* (New York: Wiley, 1983), 45 (emphasis in original).

conference in the PAT-NET Association's journal, *Administrative Theory and Praxis*. As often happens in the writing process, the latter content objective changed, but the second objective remained the same.

Thus, at the conference I presented a paper that suggested the dictum "operations is policy" has spread in popularity. However, as sufficient scholarship was found that already supported this problem, my paper shifted to showing Hannah Arendt (and to a lesser extent John Dewey) had warned that the modern bureaucracy inherently has such a tendency towards authoritarianism. However, the new objective that emerged was to show how the political philosophies of Arendt and Dewey could be synthesized to produce a model of public administration that counteracted this inherent authoritarian tendency and make the bureaucracy a force for participatory democracy. Thus, the paper shifted from being primarily a critique of the bureaucracy to being split between a critique and a possible solution.

As for the second goal—publishing the article, the manuscript is currently under double-blind review by the journal, *Administrative Theory and Praxis* (see Appendix B for screenshots of an e-mail and Routledge webpage showing that the manuscript is currently under review. Also, I should mention that the title of the final manuscript changed from what was proposed in this grant to "Civics Cultivation through Public Administration: A Synthesis of Arendt & Dewey").

### **C. Summary of Findings and Experiences**

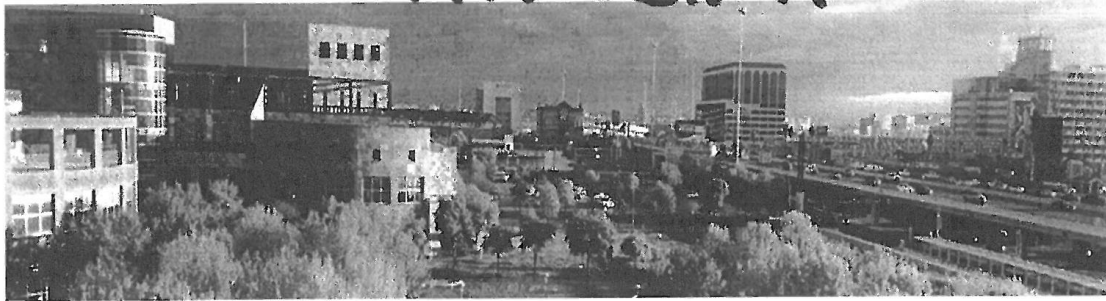
First, this was a great professional development conference, as I have not been exposed a lot to the public administration literature and subfield of political science even though I routinely cover the subject in POLS 2003-American Government. The conference and different presentations were refreshing, exposing me to new arguments and practical examples to share

with ATU students as we explore the American bureaucracy. Second, the conference and this manuscript allowed me to engage and pursue publication using two authors I have always been interested in but not written on, Hannah Arendt and John Dewey. What is more, the attendees of the panel generally were intrigued with the model of participatory democracy for public administration that I was able to produce through my synthesis of their political theories. Finally, a third benefit of this conference was the invaluable feedback I received for improving the manuscript. Foremost, the discussant provided some valuable criticism on the (in)compatibility of Arendt and Dewey. Hearing such concerns, I was able to revise the draft in ways that made it stronger before it was sent off for double-blind review. I am confident that even if it is not published in *Administrative Theory and Praxis*, that I will find a home for it in a journal given the interest it garnered at the conference.

#### **D. Conclusion and Recommendations**

Overall, the funds from the ATU professional development grant have allowed me to attend a conference, PAT-NET, that I have never attended before. This exposed me to a subfield of political science that I regularly teach through POLS 2003-American Government but have lacked adequate training in and exposure to in my career. That is no longer the case given that the funds allowed me to hear from and interact with leading professionals in the subfield. While this by itself makes the funds well spent. However, the funds also facilitated my pursuit of publication of the manuscript produced for the conference in *Administrative Theory and Praxis*. These opportunities would not have happened without the generous support of the ATU professional development grant program.

# APPENDIX A



## Important Immeasurables and Public Administration Theory



### Public Administration Theory Network Annual Conference

at  
The Menger Hotel  
204 Alamo Plaza  
San Antonio, Texas

May 19-22, 2016

**UTSA** College of Public Policy  
Department of Public Administration

**Friday, May 20, 2016**

**1:30pm to 3:00pm      Concurrent Panels—Session 3**

**Panel 3A Administrative Law Panel 1**

[Renaissance]

Hans Hacker, Arkansas State University, Convener  
Donald M. Gooch, Stephen F. Austin State University, Discussant  
Donald M. Gooch, SFASU; Peyton Wofford Gooch, SFASU.  
"Administrative Quasi-Legislative Actions and the Implications  
for Democratic Theory."  
Hans Hacker, Arkansas State University. "The Myth of Neutrality in  
Administrative Rule-Making and Adjudication: Pursuit of  
'Public Convenience, Interest or Necessity' as Kafkaesque."  
Michael T. Rogers, Arkansas Tech University, "The Twenty-first  
Century Administrative State and the Subversion of  
Democracy."

**Panel 3B Epistemology/Ontology Panel 3: Conventions  
Critiqued**

[Patio]

Hugh Miller, Florida Atlantic University, Convener  
Leisha DeHart Davis, University of North Carolina, Discussant  
Roy Heidelberg, Louisiana State University, "Theory in Public  
Administration (a polemic)."  
JS (Kobus) Wessels, University of South Africa. "Public Administration  
Research: Knowing What You Do Not Know You Don't Know."  
Derek Slagle, Florida Atlantic University. "Correspondence Theory of Truth or  
Veridicality."

**Panel 3C Underrepresented and/or Immeasurable**

[Cavalier]

Michael Spicer, Cleveland State University, Convener  
Akhaque Haque, University of Alabama at Birmingham. "Measuring  
the Immeasurable: How Information Is Transformed into  
Action."  
Megan E. Hatch, Cleveland State University. "Quiet Voices:  
Underrepresented Perspectives in Public Administration  
Theory Courses."  
Richard J. Herzog, Stephen F. Austin State University. "In Public  
Administration We Trust."

**3:00pm to 3:30pm      Coffee Break**

# Appendix B



Dear Dr. Michael Rogers,

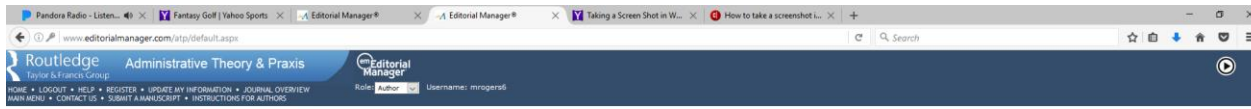
Your submission entitled "Civic Cultivation through Public Administration: A Synthesis of Arendt & Dewey" has been assigned the following manuscript number: ATP-D-16-00044.

You will be able to check on the progress of your paper by logging on to Editorial Manager as an author.  
The URL is <http://atp.edmgr.com/>.

Thank you for submitting your work to this journal.

Kind regards,

Staci Zavattaro  
Managing Editor  
Administrative Theory & Praxis



Submissions Being Processed for Author Michael Todd Rogers, Ph.D.

Page: 1 of 1 (1 total submissions) Display: 10 results per page.

Action	Manuscript Number	Title	Initial Date Submitted	Status Date	Current Status
<a href="#">Action Links</a>	ATP-D-16-00044	Civic Cultivation through Public Administration: A Synthesis of Arendt & Dewey	11/21/2016	01/13/2017	Under Review

Page: 1 of 1 (1 total submissions) Display: 10 results per page.

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