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Paradigm Shift in Public Administration: Implications for Teaching in Professional Training Programs

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The decline in popularity of New Public Management worldwide reinvigorated the search for a new paradigm in the field of public administration. Several alternatives to New Public Management, such as the New Governance and Public Value paradigms, have gained prominence in recent years. Despite tensions among these paradigms, exceptional challenges for public administration teaching programs exist. Xun Wu and Jingwei He of the National University of Singapore compiled data on public administration and management courses from 48 top master of public administration degree programs in China and the United States. This essay analyzes how competing paradigms influenced the selection of course content and pedagogical foci in professional training curricula. The authors conclude that in order to take advantage of an unprecedented opportunity provided by the rapid, global expansion of professional education in public administration, there is an urgent need to find a synthesized theoretical framework.

New Public Management (NPM) has emerged as a key approach in shaping public sector reforms in the last two decades. The failures of government in maintaining economic stability, protecting environmental quality, and reducing poverty have led to a search for leadership and innovative solutions outside the public sector, and NPM has been enthusiastically embraced in many countries. The prospect that NPM would become the new paradigm in public administration, however, has become increasingly doubtful as more attention has turned to its less than satisfactory performance in practice. Its critics argue that reform initiatives guided by NPM have undermined other fundamental values in governing public affairs, such as fairness, justice, representation, and participation, in the name of improving efficiency (deLeon and Denhardt 2000; Frederickson 1997).

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The decline of NPM has reinvigorated the search for a new paradigm in public administration. Building on the growing popularity of the concept of governance, some scholars have proposed the "New Governance" paradigm, which seeks to reconfigure the role of the public sector through citizen participation and network governance (Bingham, Nabatchi, and O'Leary 2005; Boyte 2005). The concept of *public value,* first articulated by Moore (1995), has also attracted considerable attention among scholars and practitioners alike (Alford 2002; Smith 2004; Stoker 2006). The "Public Value paradigm" has emerged as another alternative to NPM (O'Flynn 2007). The decline of NPM has also rekindled the interest in the "old" bureaucratic paradigm. Lane (1994) argues that, while various "new" paradigms may introduce new dimensions, the bureaucratic paradigm continues to provide an indispensable foundation in the field.

The presence of different paradigms may increase the power and variability of research in public administration (Uveges and Keller 1998), but tensions among competing paradigms may also pose unique challenges for teaching in professional training programs. The debate surrounding characterization of the new paradigm is sufficiently intense that it would seem inappropriate to insulate students from competing but vital approaches by orientating toward a single prospect; however, inclusive admission of many diverse paradigms could adversely affect coherence and depth of coverage in teaching. The global proliferation of professional training programs in public administration, such as MPA programs, may add another dimension to these challenges. While the boom in professional training provides an unprecedented opportunity for lesson drawing and theory building in a comparative context, to assume uncritically that a paradigm shift of a global nature is in process may lead instructors/scholars

in different countries to conform to "new" paradigms that bear little practical relevance to their own contexts.

In this essay, the syllabi of introductory public administration and management courses from 48 top MPA programs in China and the United States are used to analyze the extent to which competing paradigms have influenced the selection of course content and pedagogical foci in professional training curricula. Our analysis points toward a synthesized framework in order to take advantage of an unprecedented opportunity provided by the rapid and global expansion of professional training programs in public administration.

Methodology

Course syllabi have recently been used effectively for analyzing trends in curriculum development in public administration and public policy programs (Rethemeyer and Helbig 2005; Romero 2001). Straussman (2008) argues that reviewing syllabi in public affairs programs is an important means of exploring the level of agreement in the profession about what makes up core content in professional training curricula.

The main sources of data for our analysis were syllabi of introductory public administration and management courses in the top programs selected for our study. We chose introductory courses not only because they represent students' initial exposure to the field,

but also because these courses are most likely to be taught by faculty members who are active in research and practice in the field of public administration. The programs were selected from a list of the first universities in China (47 in total) accredited by the National MPA Steering Committee to offer MPA degrees and from a list of the top 50 U.S. MPA programs in the latest rankings (2008) for public affairs by *U.S. News & World Report*.

We used a combination of methods, such as Internet search, e-mails, and telephone requests, to collect syllabi from these programs. Two additional selection requirements were imposed to ensure the consistency in our analysis: that *only core courses were to be selected*, and that *the courses selected must be the only core courses in the areas of public administration and management*. We chose one syllabus for each program, and used the syllabus for courses offered most recently if syllabi for multiple years were available. Our data set for the study, summarized in table 1, includes 24 syllabi each from China and the United States.

Findings

Public management is one of the nine core courses required for all MPA programs across China,[1] as mandated by the National MPA Steering Committee, while about 10 percent in our selection pool of U.S. programs (Harvard, Princeton, Minnesota, Texas at Austin, and Kentucky) do not offer any introductory course in public

Table 1 List of Courses Included in the Sample

China		United States	
University	Course Title	University	Course Title
Beihang University	Public Management	Arizona State University	Public Affairs
Chinese Academy of Social Sciences	Public Management	Cleveland State University	Introduction to Public Administration
Dongbei University of Finance and Economics	Public Management	Columbia University	Public Management
Fudan University	Public Administration	Florida State University	The Profession of Public Administration
Hu'nan University	Public Management	George Mason University	Introduction to Public and Nonprofit Administration
Huazhong University of Science and Technology	Public Management	George Washington University	Introduction to Public Administration and Public Service
Jilin Univeristy	Public Management	Georgia State University	Public Administration and Organizations
Lanzhou University	Public Management	Indiana University–Bloomington	Public Management
Nanjing University	Public Management	Indiana University–Purdue	Public Management
Nankai University	The Study of Public Administration	New York University	Managing Public Service Organizations
Northeast University	Public Administration	Northern Illinois University	Scope and Dynamics of Public Administration
Peking University	Public Management	Portland State University	Public Administration
Renmin University of China	Public Administration	Rutgers University–Newark	Introduction to Public Administration
Shanghai Jiaotong University	Public Management	University at Albany	Foundations of Public Administration
Shanxi University	Public Management	Syracuse University	Public Administration and Democracy
Sichuan University	Public Management	University of Arizona	Politics and Public Management
Sun Yat-sen University	Public Management	University of Missouri	Foundations of New Governance
Tianjin University	Public Management	University of Colorado Denver	Introduction to Public Administration and Public Service
Tongji University	Public Management	University of Georgia	Public Administration and Democracy
Tsinghua University	Public Management	University of Michigan–Ann Arbor	Public and Nonprofit Management
Beijing University of Science and Technology	Public Management	University of Nebraska–Omaha	Intro to Public Administration
Wuhan University	Public Management	University of Southern California	Public Administration and Society
Xi'an Jiaotong University	Public Management	University of Pittsburgh	Administration of Public Affairs
Xiamen University	Public Management	University of Wisconsin–Madison	Public Management
Zhejiang University	Public Administration	Virginia Tech	Concepts and Approaches in Public Administration

administration and management as a part of their core curricula. Although some related topics may be covered in elective courses, it is possible for students in these programs to graduate without any exposure to fundamental issues in public administration and management.

To facilitate our analysis, we coded various elements of course content listed in the syllabi according to six categories: traditional topics in public administration, the New Public Management paradigm, the Public Governance paradigm, the Public Value paradigm, professional skills for public managers, and other topics. While the topics could have been categorized in many different ways, the scheme we chose allowed us to gauge pedagogical foci and paradigmatic orientations imbedded in the courses. Table 2 displays more details regarding the topics included in each category, in a fashion that permits comparison between courses in China and those in the United States.

Traditional topics in public administration continue to form the largest component of the majority of courses included in our sample, but considerable differences can be found when comparing courses between the two countries. There is a strong agreement among courses in China to include the topics of evolution of the field of public administration (91.7 percent), organization theory

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Aside from the influence of the paradigmatic orientations of instructors, the reduced emphasis on traditional topics in U.S. courses might reflect the changing composition of student population in MPA programs. Straussman (2008) reports that more than one-half of MPA graduates of the Maxwell School at Syracuse University take their first jobs in the private or nonprofit sectors upon graduation. In China, by marked contrast, it is stipulated by the National MPA Steering Committee that 80 percent of students admitted into MPA programs must be from the civil service (Ministry of Personnel 2002). The only two topics receiving less attention among the courses in China (relative to the United States) are ethics (37.5 percent) and intergovernmental relations (16.7 percent). Given the widespread corruption and sustained attention to decentralization in China, students in MPA programs there could certainly benefit from more extensive coverage of these topics.

New Public Management receives considerably more attention in courses from MPA programs in China than it does in the United States. Topics such as the role of government, reinventing

Table 2 Coverage Based on Course Content

Category	Content	United States	China	Total
Traditional topics in public administration	Evolution of public administration	16 (66.7%)	22 (91.7%)	38 (79.2%)
	Political context of public administration	13 (54.2%)	3 (12.5%)	16 (33.3%)
	Organization theory	18 (75%)	22 (91.7%)	40 (83.3%)
	Ethics	14 (58.3%)	9 (37.5%)	23 (47.9%)
	Financial management	14 (58.3%)	15 (62.5%)	29 (60.4%)
	Human resource management	14 (58.3%)	22 (91.7%)	36 (75%)
	Administrative processes	10 (41.7%)	12 (50%)	22 (45.8%)
	Policy process	16 (66.7%)	20 (83.3%)	36 (75%)
	Intergovernmental relations	8 (33.3%)	4 (16.7%)	12 (25%)
New Public Management	Role of government/market failure	1 (4.2%)	13 (54.2%)	14 (29.2%)
	Reinventing government	10 (41.7%)	20 (83.3%)	30 (62.5%)
	NPM measures	9 (37.5%)	12 (50%)	21 (43.8%)
	Strategic management	5 (20.8%)	14 (58.3%)	19 (39.6%)
	Total quality management	0	6 (25%)	6 (12.5%)
	Performance management	7 (29.2%)	17 (70.8%)	24 (50%)
New Governance paradigm	Civil society/nongovernmental organizations	7 (29.2%)	10 (41.7%)	17 (35.4%)
	Citizen participation	4 (16.7%)	1 (4.2%)	5 (10.4%)
	Network governance	2 (8.3%)	5 (20.8%)	7 (14.6%)
Public Value paradigm	Public value creation	6 (25%)	1 (4.2%)	7 (14.6%)
	Political management	10 (41.7%)	6 (25%)	16 (33.3%)
	Capacity building	3 (12.5%)	3 (12.5%)	6 (12.5%)
Professional skills for public managers	Leadership	14 (58.3%)	13 (54.2%)	27 (56.3%)
	Interpersonal skills	5 (20.8%)	4 (16.7%)	9 (18.8%)
	Negotiation and mediation	3 (12.5%)	1 (4.2%)	4 (8.3%)
Other topics	Crisis management	1 (4.2%)	4 (16.7%)	5 (10.4%)
	Information technology management	2 (8.3%)	11 (45.8%)	13 (27.1%)
	E-government	0	7 (29.2%)	7 (14.6%)
TOTAL		212	277	493

government, strategic management, and performance management can be found in the majority of courses in China. It is revealing that reinventing government, an initiative launched by the Bill Clinton administration in the 1990s, is included in 20 out of 24 courses in China, whereas fewer than half of the U.S. courses in our sample cover the topic. The differences are not only in the extent of coverage, but also in the manner in which these topics are covered. Close examination of recommended readings listed in the syllabi indicates that U.S. instructors are much more critical of NPM than their Chinese counterparts.

The popularity of NPM in Chinese courses may be explained by several factors. First, NPM provides both theoretical foundations and practical solutions for China's ongoing transition from a planning economy to a market economy (Worthley and Tsao 1999). Second, the heavy reliance on translated learning materials (Zeng 2004) implies that content selection in Chinese courses may be driven by the availability of Chinese translations of textbooks written by Western scholars. For example, Owen Hughes's *Public Management and Administration*, one of the most frequently used textbooks in Chinese courses, has extensive coverage of NPM. Third, it is widely accepted among public administration scholars in China that NPM has replaced the traditional bureaucratic paradigm as the new paradigm in public administration (Zhang 2001), and some scholars make no distinction between public management and NPM (Chen 2001; Ma and Guo 2002).

Two other competing paradigms—New Governance and Public Value—have also made inroads into MPA programs. Defining concepts for the two paradigms, such as civil society, citizen participation, network governance, and public value, are introduced in a number of courses in both countries. In comparison to the dominance of NPM in courses in China, coverage of the three competing paradigms (NPM, New Governance, and Public Value) is more balanced among the courses in the United States. Although the third sector (nongovernmental organizations and civil society) has been covered in a substantial proportion of courses in China (40 percent), the defining concepts of the New Governance paradigm, such as citizen participation and network governance, appear less frequently, an indication that the recognition given to the third sector may not reflect an orientation toward the New Governance paradigm among courses in China.

It is not surprising that less emphasis has been placed on the New Governance and Public Value paradigms in courses in China, given that NPM has been widely accepted as the new paradigm for public administration among Chinese scholars. The potential drawback of overlooking these alternative paradigms is that students may not fully appreciate the complexities of the authorizing environment for public sector organizations and of the interactions between state actors and nonstate actors in managing public affairs.

Table 2 also shows the extent to which courses covered the professional skills for managers in the public sector. Although professional skills are not directly associated with any particular paradigm, the importance of skills such as communications, negotiation, and mediation is strongly emphasized in all three competing paradigms. They assert that the legitimacy and authority of public organizations and public managers can no longer be taken for granted.

Nevertheless, overall coverage of these managerial skills in introductory courses in both countries remains low, with the exception of leadership (present in 58.3 percent of U.S. courses and 54 percent of Chinese courses).

A comparison of course offerings in the two countries with regard to our final category—"other topics"—suggests that Chinese instructors are keener than their U.S. counterparts on introducing "trendy" topics, such as crisis management, information technology management, and e-government. On average, courses in China cover more topics (12 topics per course) than those in the United States (about 9 topics per course). While broader topic coverage in Chinese courses may point to a comprehensive orientation, the breath of coverage may be achieved at the expense of depth given the fixed amount of teaching time.

Discerning the paradigmatic orientations of individual courses (table 3) proved to be a difficult exercise. For each individual course in our sample, we began by using the list of topics covered in its syllabus as a preliminary indicator of its paradigmatic orientation; supplementary information, such as course descriptions and recommended textbooks and readings, were used to refine our interpretation. It should be noted here that the appearance of traditional topics in public administration in a syllabus was not deemed sufficient evidence of a paradigmatic orientation toward traditional approaches to public administration, as many of these topics, such as resource management and policy process, are an integral part of other paradigms as well. Our key criterion for categorizing a course as being inclined toward traditional approaches to public administration was the *absence* from its syllabus of defining topics that commonly characterize the other three paradigms.

A strong paradigmatic orientation toward NPM is clearly demonstrated among Chinese courses: nearly 40 percent can be identified with the NPM paradigm. Although topics associated with the New Governance and Public Value paradigms, such as civil society, nongovernmental organizations, and authorizing environment, can be found in a significant percentage of courses in China, no single course displays a strong orientation toward these two paradigms. Somewhat surprisingly, although the main advocates of the new paradigms tend to come from the United States, about 46 percent of the U.S. courses display a strong paradigmatic orientation toward traditional approaches to public administration. Courses categorized as having weak paradigmatic orientation were those in which two or more paradigms were equally emphasized. Overall, there is more divergence in paradigmatic orientations among courses in the United States than in China.

The Need to Move toward a Synthesized Framework

The analysis described here indicates that the presence of competing paradigms has clearly had an impact on teaching in professional

Table 3 Paradigmatic Orientations

Paradigmatic Orientation	United States	China
Traditional approaches to public administration	11 (46%)	6 (25%)
New Public Management	2 (8%)	9 (38%)
New Governance paradigm	2 (8%)	0 (0%)
Public Value paradigm	3 (13%)	0 (0%)
Weak paradigmatic orientation	6 (25%)	9 (38%)

training programs in both China and the United States. Although variation in course content can be explained by differences in student characteristics from country to country and from program to program, and in instructors' own preferences and experiences, the divergence in paradigmatic orientations may also be an indicator of several potentially negative trends. First, given the debate that is raging within the field over the characterization of the new paradigm, a strong, single paradigmatic orientation to teaching may pose the risk of insulating students from competing approaches that might be vital for their future careers.

Second, cross-sectoral interests in professional training in public administration, especially the entrance of a sizable percentage of MPA students whose inspiration and career paths fall outside the public sector, may lead to the popularity of paradigms that deemphasize the distinctive characteristics of the public sector—a bias may alienate the traditional clients of professional training programs—government officials.

Third, uncritically assuming the global nature of the paradigm shift in public administration may lead to a rush to conform to "newer," supposedly "superior" paradigms that may have little practical relevance to a particular country or situation. For example, although the bureaucratic paradigm has been pronounced obsolete by advocates of various new paradigms, the features of the bureaucratic paradigm, such as hierarchical control, technocratic professionalism, and rule-based government, are extremely relevant for China, given the country's political system, the developmental stage of its administrative system, and its quality of governance (level of corruption).

How best, then, to balance coverage of topics associated with competing paradigms as the field of public administration is undergoing a significant transformation? How best to cope with cross-sectoral interests in professional training programs without alienating the traditional clients of such programs? How best to deal with variations in practices across countries and across sectors within a country? Professional training programs must confront these questions in an era of rapid expansion and globalization. To complete this section, we propose a synthesized framework for teaching introductory public administration and management courses in professional training programs.

Figure 1 presents our framework. At its core are public sector values, to which three key components—structure, resources, and processes—are interlinked. Three elements in an outer ring represent pedagogical foci of professional training: theories, practices, and professional skills.

Public sector values are those providing a society's normative consensus about goals that should be pursued by the public sector. They are placed at the center of our framework not only because public sector values provide the normative coherency to link various activities in the public sector, but also because the pursuit of public sector values is a shared tradition among various competing paradigms.

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Public sector values often serve as criteria to measure outputs or outcomes produced by the public sector, such as quality of service and social equality, but public sector values relating to structure, processes, and resources are equally important and should be covered in any introductory course. For example, public sector values with regard to structure, such as the checks and balances in a political system, the rule of law, democracy, accountability, and values related to resources and processes, such as efficiency, due process, impartiality, and transparency, should be equal in importance.

Solid guidance and a deliberate balancing act on the part of instructors are needed to convey to students the interrelationships among these values and how their interactions may be shaped by the environment in which they apply. First, sufficient attention should be given to some intrinsic tensions between different public sector values and their implications for practice. For example, the pursuit of efficiency may compromise the realization of other public sector values such as social equity and service quality. Second, the relevance of a particular public sector value should not be uncritically assumed without careful examination of the context in which it applies. For example, due process, a critical value in the U.S. context, may not be applicable to countries with dissimilar legal traditions. Third, the pursuit of public sector values should not be uncritically assumed in practice because of potential conflicts between public values and individual or organizational interests.

Structure serves as both a constraint on the actions and behaviors of public sector organizations and a source of innovations in the public sector. It is also an area in which defining characteristics of various paradigms can be located. For example, organizational hierarchy forms the foundation for traditional approaches to public administration, but it has often been criticized by advocates of other paradigms as a central impediment to change.

The course should introduce the various organizational structures, including organizational hierarchy, that are found in public sector organizations. Alternative forms of organizational structure, such as functional structure and matrix structure, should also be included
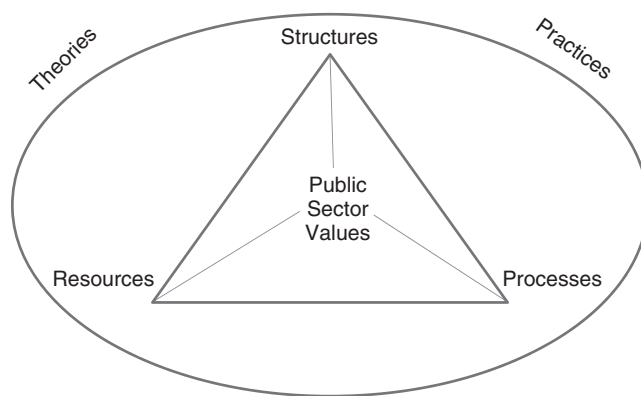

Figure 1 A Synthesized Framework

in this portion of the course. In addition, students should be made aware of structural characteristics of the external environment in which public sector organizations operate. In particular, attention should be paid to network governance, a new mode of governance structure that emphasizes collaboration between state and nonstate actors in public sector management.

Resources are the inputs that public sector organizations use, such as financial and human resources for delivering goods and services. There is a high level of agreement among courses in both China and the United States in terms of the inclusion of financial management and human resource management: the majority of courses we examined addressed these topics. Other resources of critical importance to public sector organizations, such as knowledge and information technology, should also be included in this portion of the course. For example, e-governance has emerged as a new form of governance in revolutionizing the way governments conduct their businesses (Dunleavy et al. 2006). Political resources should also be explicitly considered. A key political resource that government organizations possess is the legal authority or public power that derives from the legitimacy of the state, which can be used to compel people to act in compliance with socially agreed-upon purposes.

Although the courses we examined show a high level of agreement on the inclusion of resource management, they also show important differences in their paradigmatic orientations. For example, the traditional approach to public administration has focused on resource allocation within organizations, assuming resource availability, whereas the Public Value paradigm pays significant attention to the uncertainty of obtaining various resources from the environment. Changes in the terms for these topics, from "budgeting" to "financial management," and from "public personnel management" to "human resource management," are indicative of this shift in perception.

Processes are the prevailing patterns of interaction among individuals, groups, and organizations, which may contribute directly or indirectly to transforming inputs into outputs (Harrison 2005). The processes relevant for public sector managers can be categorized according to the nature of the tasks and task environments involved: (1) processes handling the internal environment, such as planning, organizing, coordinating, controlling, and decision making; (2) processes in relation to the external environment, such as policy process, collaboration, marketing, lobbying, and advocating; and (3) processes related to determination and measurement of public sector values, such as public consultation and benchmarking, and evaluation.

Our analysis shows that variations in the inclusion and exclusion of these processes in introductory public administration and management courses may be driven by different paradigmatic orientations. For example, traditional approaches to public administration tend to focus exclusively on the processes of handling the internal environment, whereas new paradigms such as the New Governance and Public Value paradigms emphasize processes dealing with the external environment and with public values. A comprehensive approach to processes would allow students to assess strengths and weaknesses of different paradigms as well as their complementarities.

Few scholars would dispute the significance of *theories* in guiding the practices of public administration, but the value of theory instruction in professional training in public administration has not been appreciated universally. Orientating theory learning toward public sector values as the core is a critical first step, but it is insufficient to alter the negative perception of theory learning in professional training programs. The pedagogical focus could be strengthened immensely through several intermediate measures. First of all, efforts of discernment are required to differentiate genuine theories from normative statements or prescriptions without empirical evidence. Second, although attention has been focused on reconstructed theories (consciously constructed beliefs and understanding), instructors should also devote attention to theories in use, which are ontologies, epistemologies, or paradigms that are inherent in the way people approach their work in practice (Cunningham and Weschler 2002). Instructors should also encourage students to reflect on, confront, and expand their personal theories in use. Third, theory learning should be aimed toward theory competency, sending MPA students on their way to becoming "reflective practitioners" (Stivers 2001).

Supposedly, theory provides a framework that can be used to guide *practice,* but for instructors, the greater challenge is not how to introduce theory as related to practice, but how to explain what is going on in the real world in relation to theory in a field in which theorization typically follows new developments in practice, rather than the other way around. Emphasizing practice as a pedagogical focus separate from theory is especially critical in an era of global proliferation of professional training programs. Welch and Wong (1998) have observed that the gap between theory and practice in non-Western nations may become larger than in Western nations when literature originating in the West is applied to non-Western nations and situations. Frustrations over the large gap between "Western theory" and local practices have inspired efforts among many Chinese scholars to develop a homegrown "Chinese public administration theory" (Ma 2006; Zhou and Huang 2002). We argue that the key to the perceived gap is the lack of discerning efforts in carefully differentiating practice from theory, resulting in the treatment of theory and practices generated in the Western context indiscriminately as "Western" theory, while greater caution is needed in applying practices across national boundaries.

The importance of developing professional *skills* as a focus of professional training programs has been widely acknowledged (Denhardt 1999; Straussman 2008). Public sector administrators not only need to acquire knowledge about the field, but also need to develop professional skills that will enable them to carry out their tasks more effectively (Denhardt 2001). However, our analysis of professional skills in introductory public administration and management courses shows that insufficient attention has been paid to this area. A significant number of courses in our sample focus on surveying the subject (public administration and management) as a field of study or research, instead of orientating toward skills for addressing need in the public sector. The emphasis on professional skills should be especially relevant in the context of the paradigm shift in public administration. Salamon (2002) calls for a move toward network governance as a new mode of governance, underscoring the importance of negotiation and persuasion to public sector organizations as a means of exercising their leadership. Skills in political management, such as

advocating and lobbying, are considered essential in the Public Value paradigm (Moore 1995).

Concluding Remarks

In *Creating Public Value*, Moore (1995) described a unique process in which theorizing and teaching are intricately linked. In preparing for teaching public sector managers, Moore and his colleagues at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard decided at the outset that they would start with practice and work upward instead of starting with theory and working downward. They compiled a large number of cases documenting public management practices, and these were subsequently used in the classroom for teaching public sector executives. By generalizing and abstracting from particular cases, the interactions between instructors/scholars and practitioners in the classroom provided critical inputs toward developing a coherent framework for theory. The outcome of this highly innovative process was the emergence of a new paradigm in public administration—the Public Value paradigm.

This pedagogical innovation could provide much inspiration for hundreds of Chinese instructors/scholars who walk into MPA classrooms every day. Instead of being inadvertently drawn into a "paradigm war" staged primarily by Western scholars, they could take advantage of opportunities presented in the rapid expansion of their own professional training programs, and not only adapt "Western" theory to Chinese contexts but also make valuable original contributions to theory building with global relevance. Launched in 2001, Chinese MPA programs are now offered in 100 universities and academic institutions across 20 provinces, and enrollment has increased nearly threefold, from 3,506 in 2001 to 10,253 in 2007. The deployment of intellectual capital in these professional training programs on such an enormous scale should generate significant momentum for advances in both theory and practice. To unleash such potential, however, significant changes are necessary in course content and in pedagogical emphases.

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Our comparative analysis also offers useful insights for American instructors/scholars in the field of public administration. Although the proliferation of professional training programs can potentially increase the global reach of theories generalized in the U.S. context, the apparent lack of concern for international developments in U.S. teaching and research in public administration (Straussman 2008; Ventriss 1991) may undermine its international standing as the intellectual leader in a field that has become increasingly globalized. Increased attention to international practice in professional training not only provides a critical impetus for building theories with global relevance, but also aids students in their search for innovative solutions, as many innovations in public administration practice have evolved outside the United States.

Notes

1. The other eight core courses are public policy analysis, foreign language, information technology management, theories and practices of socialism, political theory, statistical analysis, administrative law, and public economics.

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