

A Tree with Roots: Public Administration Ethics from Case Studies to Assemblages

by

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation provides a critical analysis of public administration's understanding of the relationship between rational thought and action in its discourse on ethics. It argues that rationalist ethics assume a particular relationship between thought and action: that good knowledge leads to good, proper action. While there have been many critiques of rationalist administrative ethics, scholars have not examined the way in which rationalism persists in the way in which the teaching of ethics is conducted. The use of the case study figures prominently in this. Thus, the dissertation explores the historical and theoretical intersection of rationalism, ethics, and teaching through the lens of the case study. It begins with a history of the pedagogical use of the case study and the institutional transformations of the university. While conventional accounts of the field locate its founding in the United States in the municipal reform movement, here the founding of the field of public administration is recast through connections to reforms in the university including changes in epistemic assumptions, pedagogical methods, and curricular changes in ethics in which the case study is central and remains so as the field develops. The dissertation then considers scholarship in public administration that raises questions about rationalist ethics. Three critical approaches are explored: recognition of the uncertainty and complexity of administrative practice, critique as unmasking of power relationships, and the shift of ethics from an epistemological to an ontological inquiry. The dissertation builds on the work in this third approach and shows how it attempts to articulate a non-rationalist, or immanent, ethics. This ethics is concerned with exploring the conditions

that make possible mutually beneficial relationships and meaningful lives from which categorical norms of the good life could emerge. Drawing on the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, it is argued that the distinction Deleuze and Guattari make between “arborescent” and “rhizomatic” knowledge gets to the root of the tension between thought and action and offers an innovative and useful way to advance an immanent, non-rational ethics. The challenge digital technologies and the information society present to the field is considered to illustrate the need to rethink administrative ethics and also the particular usefulness of Deleuze and Guattari in doing so. The dissertation concludes with a discussion of pedagogical practices and classroom examples that encourage a rhizomatic understanding of the theory and practice of public administration.

Four beans

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A seed was planted years ago in Dr. Marvin Shaw's Buddhism & Christianity undergraduate class at Montana State University which was nurtured into a promising sapling by Patrick Saunders in my time between undergraduate and graduate studies. Dr. Eric Austin took on the care of a then scraggly, but maturing, tree and began the long process of delicately trimming, training, and encouraging branches and limbs in such a manner to establish some deep and strong roots. Dr. Thomas Catlaw should be credit for taking a now burgeoning and somewhat out-of-control tree and in the spirit of Kazantzakis' John the Baptist chopped this tree down... continually... until such a tree worthy to belong in the cadre of human knowledge grew true. The idea that was the seed planted fifteen years ago by Dr. Shaw is simply: Control is not power, but dependency. Responsiveness is power through caring.

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## **Preface: To Teach**

It is easy to assert that schools of public administration should teach aspiring public servants to be ethical and should encourage the integration of ethics into the curriculum, and into all aspects of program operation.<sup>1</sup> Operationalizing that instruction, however, has proven to be more complicated. (Kennedy & Malatesta, 2009, p. 161)

But there can be no one way to teach ethics. We must admit that we do not know in what precise form the toughest choices will come to or slide by our students within a career in public service. So we seek to rouse a moral sensitivity concerning the role of public administrator as well as to illuminate the characteristic problems, the likeliest moral challenges... We teach ethics to people embarked on careers in the public service...so that we may never be reproached with the words “No one ever spoke to me of striving for the morally good in my work.” (Mainzer, 1991, p. 20-21)

If you have read much of the ethics literature in public administration these thoughts are probably familiar. We should teach public administration ethics, but it’s hard.

And since we have an obligation to the public and our students we feel we must teach well, and even teach *good*.

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<sup>1</sup> Accreditation in Master of Public Administration (MPA) and Master in Public Policy (MPP) programs in the United States is through the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA).

But how to achieve teaching well, determining what is good, and the effectiveness of such an endeavor, is a perennial concern within the field. NASPAA's *Member Code of Good Practice* (2009) suggests that a member program: "Integrates ethics into the curriculum and all aspects of program operation, and expects students and faculty to exhibit the highest ethical standards in their teaching, research, and service" it further explicates integration by explaining that a member program "Focuses on the preparation of students for professional careers in public service, emphasizing both the values and ethics of public service, and the development of professional skills and knowledge." Hence, ethics education is two-fold: To teach (including through example) and to prepare students in professional careers. For if faculty of public administration ethics courses are being ethical, as the NASPAA code suggests, then teaching of ethics itself is an ethical practice. And clearly the ethical practice in this formula is not the *content* of ethics, but the *teaching* of ethics. Throughout the history of the field of public administration, in one form or another, a thread of disciplinary coherence resides in the varying attempts at justifying *teaching well* what is *believed to be good*. The field of public administration as it emerges within the university—intimately connected with teaching—is too an ethical practice. The quest for legitimate grounding for the teaching of public administration ethics, I suggest, does not emerge from practices of governing. Rather, the seeking for legitimacy is inherited from the conceptual fabrication of the field and therefore is a concern of the field and hence not a concern of ethics per se. "Indeed, the very concept of public administration arguably is defined by its ongoing search for an identity and disciplinary coherence"

(Catlaw, 2007, p. 16). Catlaw continues by describing the two means that public administration has sought to explain its legitimacy:

The first explanation locates the crisis of government in the absence of the correct value set, be it defined in terms of constitutionally or democratically based values. From this diagnosis, it seeks to alter the consciously held values of the individual public administrator and the field generally from neutrality to an explicit normative position. The latter position conceives of the crisis primarily in terms of government's failure to perform and deliver effective services to the public and so grounds its remedy in the advancement of professional and/or technical knowledge. (Catlaw, 2007, p. 16)

These two explanations, the normative and the performative, are found throughout the varying levels of analysis within public administration: The administrator, an organization, the agency, local and state government, the United States, the field of public administration, the university. A vertical isomorphy penetrates public administration through all of these level of analysis in this bifurcation between normative and performative concerns. The pervasiveness of this conceptual congruency seemingly suggests that thought and action—in some way—are incommensurable. And though thought and action are evaluated by different standards—concepts are evaluated by the correctness in their depiction of the world and actions are evaluated by their intent—we desire their congruency. Hence, the normative assumption that we should *teach well what is good* is isomorphic of

the performative (teaching well) and normative (what is good) bifurcation of the field which itself is nested within the more general split between the normative role of education and the performance of administrative practice.

In the field of public administration, ethics has been central to the discourse around legitimacy in thought and action. Researchers in the field explicitly evaluate the congruency between thought and action through developing a body of knowledge around public administration ethics. In the performance of administrative practice, the more administrators believe they are being ethical, the greater congruency between their accurate conceptual depictions of the world and the intended actions informed by these depictions.

But the field of public administration ethics is a *teaching* field as suggested by the NASPAA member code which itself is a bifurcation of the split of the field's legitimacy into normative and performative directions. On one hand, integrate ethics education (concepts) into the program and expect all associated individuals to be ethical (actions). On the other hand, the preparation for practice (action) is conceptual by focussing on values, ethics, professional knowledge (concepts). To put it more bluntly: The teaching of ethics involves proper behavior and proper behavior involves learning ethics. Again, central to public administration ethics is *the act of teaching* which is the lynchpin between good knowledge and good behavior. Explicit in NASPAA's expectations of public administration ethics is the disciplining of students to professional standards and norms. Implicit in these expectations is that teaching *good* knowledge and action is teaching *correct* knowledge and action.

A bifurcated field. On one side, correct thought. The other, correct action. When this formulation is not problematic, public administration ethics works. There are no problems when knowledge and intention are congruent. I suggest that the teaching of public administration ethics is assumed to be instrumental in achieving this congruency in preparing practitioners to be ethical in their work by representing the world of practice. Public administration ethics is *practice for practice*. This translates to an intrinsic concern for effectiveness in teaching to ensure practitioners have the conceptual knowledge to be ethical in the workplace.

But, ethical behavior inevitably breaks down in the surfacing of the incommensurability that has been glossed over by the conceptual congruency that the field of public administration fabricates between thought and action. In other words, when we need ethics the most is when there may be no knowledge of what to do, or the options for action are equally bad, or one's behavior does not correspond with what their intention is supposed to be. Hence, an intrinsic difficulty exists in teaching public administration ethics in the safe and usually stable classroom environment. It is easy to make fair-weather ethical students, but empowering practitioners to be ethical in stormy weather is a different manner.

The following work suggests that case studies representing the stormy days (ethical dilemmas) emerge in the field of public administration as a practical way of preparing students for these moments. In case studies, students are often presented with a choice between two options, both equally difficult and unsatisfying. Yet, they have to choose. It

is their job and to pass the buck is to be negligent. This is the life of the public servant. They should get used to it and in doing so they become prepared for public service.

But why? Why are case studies believed to prepare students for public service?

The assumption that case studies prepare students seemingly has been naturalized. Herein light is shed upon this assumption. In the following chapters the case study will be presented as a pedagogical tool that historically emerged within this tension between normative values and expectations of performance. The writing of the case study for several generations of scholars has been a way to capture the drama and tensions of the dilemma and present it in a manner to students to put them in the hot seat. Yet it wasn't always this way—the methods with which we teach, and the knowledge we hope to convey, are contingent upon the historical development of the field of public administration. Even after well over a century of evolution in the field of public administration, the case study still captures the tension between intrinsic in the legitimacy debate<sup>2</sup> and re-presents the tension as a pedagogical tool for connecting practice to education: a way of weaving the normative values with the performative.

Yet, the tension, as we will see, is not resolved. The performative expectations explored in the classroom through case studies are not actual performances, but representations which are based on what authors and teachers think are valuable for students to

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<sup>2</sup> McSwite (1997) and Farmer (1995) suggest that the rational framing of how we justify a “legitimate” administrative state in a democracy creates unresolvable tensions. As developed in chapter 2, I specifically follow Catlaw’s (2007) critical split between the normative and performative concerns in public administration as central to the field’s justification for a legitimate administrative state.



learn. Even though the words around case studies represent the practice of public service, they are normative representations and not actual practice.

Yes, it is true that administrators will face no-win situations and case studies are representations of tough situations in the practice of administration. To prepare for practice, one practices. Yet this practice is a *making of the field* of public administration as much as it is preparation to be a practitioner. In other words, the field of public administration is *autopoietic* with—is created in conjunction with—the modern practice of administration. Though one can argue whether the field of public administration informs the practice of public administration or practice informs the field, it is rather difficult to imagine one without the existence of the other. In multiple ways throughout the histories of the practice and teaching of public administration, the case study is the representational connection between the two. The present work is a study of this relationship. I suggest that the case study, and all of our methods of teaching and research, are not only instruments to understand the worlds in which we live, but are *also instruments to interrogate how we understand the world as well*. We do this to some degree in the social sciences today with the distinction between qualitative and quantitative methodologies. They ask different kinds of questions and give us different kinds of answers. We also use distinctly different methods and frames of analysis within each methodology to articulate the shortcomings of each approach. In other words, in recognizing that we do not have perfect information in the world, we developed more specific and nuanced approaches to accommodate for our limited ways of knowing the world. The refinement of these approaches to

specific and distinct ways of interrogating the world can be seen as formalized introspections on how we understand the world.

And here's the rub: Case studies can be informed by qualitative *and* quantitative studies *and* we can use case studies with multiple frames. For example, Graham Alison's (1971) *Essence of Decision* looks through the Cuban missile crisis through three different lenses. We gain a wealth of information from such uses of case studies. It seems that case studies can give us good information about the world we live in. And this method generates factual representations of the world to bring new experiences and ideas into the classroom. Case studies are therefore a logical tool for teaching students how to be ethical in their careers outside of the classroom. In fact, the case study could be one of the few research methods whose output has direct application in classrooms. Therefore the value of case studies are not what methods or theoretical frames inform the investigation but rather, they glean knowledge of real world into accessible representations that have immediacy in their practicality.

What about fiction? Picoult's (2004) novel *My Sister's Keeper* is a fictional story often used in ethics classes to challenge students to think differently about individuality, family, and emerging technology such as genetic engineering. One could argue that literary genres such as fiction, science fiction, or fantasy are not appropriate for case studies because they do not represent the actual world we live in. Yet if we need to teach students about events or things that are on the horizon or hard to empirically represent—for example technologies that have not been fully developed or normative obligations in an in-

creasingly securitized state–fictional case studies are a useful thought experiment that can be highly effective in the classroom. And herein lies the value of case studies: They are effective in teaching.

But, I am not interested in case studies in and of themselves. I want to use them as a tool to interrogate our thinking. To use case studies as a case study upon themselves. Why are case studies—from which we learn general knowledge from focussing on a particular instance—such a generalizable method themselves? So let's be rational about being rational. How do we account for the differences between all the different uses and forms of case studies? What are the normative assumptions behind the practice of teaching which make case studies so attractive and widespread?

Developed in the following chapters is the argument that case studies embody the model of what counts as good knowledge in rational discourse. Good knowledge is knowledge that accurately represents something and is knowledge that can directly inform action relevant to that something or another. Case studies are widespread and useful as they are isomorphic of the split between knowledge and action in public administration. Wherever rational discourse may be found in the field, a case study can be incorporated. But this presumed omnipresence is really not absolute. Rather, public administration, ethics, case studies, and teaching are historically and contemporarily connected.

Chapter 1 begins with the founding of the field of public administration in the United States. Within the cadre of public administration scholarship this founding is often surmised in Wilson's (1887) famous essay on the study of public administration (Adams,

1992). I suggest that the discourse around this founding essay is far too often associated with the founding of public administration instead of historically where one academician is suggesting a curricular change to the academy. In following the academic side of this founding document the founding is expanded. Public administration is founded in the same era as the modern university and the conditions of this reform era drastically shifted pedagogical values and methods. The current form of ethics as an elective course in the university, and also the case study, emerge from these pedagogical shifts. Herein the founding is recast as an expansive set of relationships that connects public administration to reforms in the university to changes in epistemic assumptions and pedagogical methods to curricular changes around ethics. This wide angle allows for a different consideration of public administration ethics in chapter 2 than the method that emerges in chapter 1. Chapter 2 considers how public administration ethics embodies the rational split between theoretical and practical concerns and how this is isomorphic of the bifurcation between normative and performative concerns that is replicated throughout the field. Chapter 3 connects this representational logic, which Deleuze and Guattari (1986, 1987) call arborescent rationality, to public administration specifically, and the Enlightenment tradition in general. Though this logic dominates Western thought, Deleuze and Guattari (re)discovered a radically different form of thought in the rhizome that gets to the root of the tension between thought and action. And so ends the first part of the dissertation in which the theoretical groundwork is laid.

The second part of the work applies the implications of the first half to ensure a proper fit within the field of public administration by splitting theory and practice. However, instead of theory informing action, the suggestion herein is that our concepts and our practices are *autopoietic*; we move from presumptions that public administration's legitimacy are normative *or* performative concerns to practices that are always normative *and* performative. Chapter 4 weaves the theoretical chapters in the first half into a rhizomatic consideration of the field of public administration today. This relationships between public administration, the university, and teaching public service ethics, render them inseparable. Our curriculum, university funding and structure, pedagogy, students, and ourselves are all connections within our normative and performative concerns. Yet, all of these elements on the table of contemporary public administration ethics are dynamic and in flux. There is perhaps no better place to witness this dynamism than in the challenge digital technologies and the information society present to our concepts of knowledge and action. Chapter 5 presents the argument that the social evolutions occurring through digital technologies—global communication, social networking, “smart” devices, the ability to remix nearly everything from music to genes—is within the purview of public administration ethics. Perhaps it is even more than within the field's concern. It is possible that emerging technologies could intensify the very terrain of public administrative ethics in a fantastical fulfillment of the field's deep technicism. Chapter 6 concludes the work through pedagogical considerations and classroom examples that encour-

age a rhizomatic ethical understanding of the theory and practice of public administration.

A rhizomatic mode of thinking about public administration adds to a growing discourse of how we conceive ethics in relation to public service. This approach emerges from the problematization of the founding of public administration explored in chapter 1 by making connection between reforms in the progressive university including structure, curriculum (including ethics), and pedagogy and connect that space to contemporary challenges the university and field face in the Digital Era. The rhizome contributes a new understanding of the founding of public administration. No longer is the foundation the beginning of the field, but the creation of a conceptual space in which we are still a part.

Through trees (arborescence) and roots (rhizomes) the dissertation also connects 20th century French Philosopher Gilles Deleuze to the public administration community of scholars. Deleuze is the thinker of connections and in an increasingly securitized state, with global communication networks, networks of governance, social networks, transdisciplinary studies, online education, so on and so forth, Deleuze provides useful updates to the field's conceptualization of connections and relationships.

This richly complex terrain of networks, connectivity, and relations is the terrain of Deleuze. Michel Foucault once suggested that the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a Foucauldian century, one in which stable institutions like prisons, schools, and factories enclosed and shaped individuals into prisoners, students, and line workers, respectively. And the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Foucault taunted, would be Deleuzian (Deleuze, 1995). Stable institutions of en-

closure would be replaced with always shifting corporations and complex relationships and formed identities would be superseded by identity codes and passwords (Deleuze, 1992).

Consequently, the dissertation extends the critique of rationality within public administration scholarship, upon ourselves as teachers of public administration. The rationality which receives so much criticism in the field, I suggest, is replicated in our history and current pedagogical assumptions. To *teach well* what is *believed to be good* is not a question of effectiveness or of having accurate knowledge of what is good. *Teaching well* and the *beliefs in what is good* both describe the overarching normative position of rationality in the field. To be ethical in our teaching is an entirely different matter whose primary concern should be helping bring forth—with our students—a world in which they desire to live.

## **Chapter 1: Public Administration, the University, and the Case Study**

### **Introduction**

“Most often in the contemporary literature, a ritual mention of Wilson is followed by a jump to the present time with no historical analysis at all” (Adams, 1992 p. 395). Adams’ claim regarding the scholarship of public administration is poignant and due to the atemporal nature of the field’s scholarship, Adams’ claim is itself timeless. Adams’ claim points to the scholarship’s underlying enthrallment with modernity and the adaptation of the culture of modernity including “...secularization, the universalistic claims of instrumental rationality, the differentiation of the various spheres of the life-world, the bureaucratization of economic, political and military practices, and the growing monetarization of values” (Turner, 1990 cited in Adams, 1992).

Adams (1992) closes the essay with the call for free and open inquiry into the epistemic and political dimensions of this culture of modernity. As such, the culture of modernity can be seen as the logic which generates the knowledge of the field of public administration and the relationship of modernity and public administration becomes the object of inquiry. Yet, how is Adams’ call—or any critical assessment—different than the object they critique?

In an abstract manner, academic scholarship in public administration can be drawn as a regression line, whose starting point is where the field has been and then drawn through a second point approximating where the field is considered now (or perhaps this reversed), and then either a description of how the line’s trajectory is or has been off



course, a claim of where the trajectory of the line should go, or a bit of both. In either case, scholarship often normalizes the distribution of past contributions to the field around the line and trajectory the author has drawn. Scholarly contributions that cannot be normalized to the author's line are often juxtaposed as different by the terms of the author, or they are simply excluded.

This method of building knowledge will be demonstrated to have such intimacy with the structure of rationality that perhaps the only claim we can honestly make about scholarship is that it is a demonstration of the effectiveness of rationality in developing and maintaining a discourse. Rationality is the knowledge of public administration. Even critique, as we will see, is rational and further entrenches rational discourse. Perhaps the wicked problems and increasing complexity and uncertainty of the contemporary world is a problem of rationality, and not of the world, which is exponentially intensified by rational discourse—rationality amplifies difference. Catlaw (2006a) provides a useful understanding of this in describing how heterosexual men have more representational power due to being the norm, that “already the standard bearers, are always counted twice—once in the model and a second time as a living subject, a ‘copy,’ so to speak, of their own model” (p. 193). I suggest that this applies to any individual (i.e. a datum or a human) compared to a standard or normalized population. Yet, outliers to the standard are counted thrice, once standing alone as *a unique instance*, twice being different *within a population of the same kind being counted*, and thrice in the *difference against the nor-*

*malized population*. Rational discourse, which Chapter 3 considers in depth, confirms its standard and in amplifying difference reifies the same standard.

And herein is the problem: To add to the cadre of public administration scholarly knowledge, one could very well be adding to an intrinsic problem of the field as well—the structure of knowledge. The very idea of presenting something new is presented as different from the old, requiring a reconciliation of the old and new which in turn increases the importance of the old. Even the non-rational is differentiated against the rational and seeks reconciliation via establishing a stable relationship based on mutual difference with the non-rational's disadvantage as inversely exponential comparative to the rational's advantage.

“What to do then?” becomes the question. Catlaw (2007) provides a closing commentary on how one could present an alternative political ontology to the representational (rational) ontology that undergirds the field. Though brilliant with a deeply intuitive appeal, Catlaw's proposals seem to possess a self-consciousness of the problem that these alternatives may be strengthening the representational legitimacy of which he is critical. Proposed within his treatment on the underlying representational ontology of public administration, Catlaw (2007) suggests a logic of *subtraction* which “entails the act of positing one's own presuppositions or conditions of existence, that is, suspending the terms of one's own model of identification as well as one's emotional attachments to that model” (p. 199). Catlaw's position is one of resistance. Public administration could be the site of

an alternative conception of governing but to do so it must shed the representational ontology in which its legitimacy presumes a grounding.

Deleuze and Guattari's (1986) discussion of critique in *Kafka* is possibly useful in understanding how resistance generates alternatives to a dominant discourse:

the dismantling of the assemblages makes the social representation take flight in a much more effective way than a critique would have done and brings about a deterritorialization of the world that is itself political and that has nothing to do with an activity of intimacy. Writing has a double function: to translate everything into assemblages and to dismantle the assemblages. The two are the same thing. (p. 47)

To write of “how to teach ethics in public administration” ethics, teaching, and public administration are translated into an assemblage—a space rendered by the near intersection of distinct scholarly lineages of education, ethics, and public administration. The concern is that the critiquing of major schools of ethics in public administration—from instrumental to critical approaches—contributes to the problematization of ethics. That is, the rational discourse in the field of public administration may generate the conceptual space in which public administration ethics is a concern. Perhaps scholarship in ethics adds problems to public administration. Unable to determine the validity of such a claim, one is left to wonder if ethics is a problem of public administration. That is, how can one verify that a model for inquiring a normative claim produces any results besides the claims qualified by the very normative claim presumed? The field of public administra-

tion is adamantly concerned with the rational belief that good knowledge leads to good behavior, and since academia is specifically about good knowledge it makes good sense for public administration ethics to assume it is doing good through university teaching. In this arrangement neither public administration, the university, nor ethics stands apart from each other. To write of such an assemblage, I find refuge in the legitimacy of public administration in the founding of the field. In other words, to ground the legitimacy of my scholarship in the field's founding, I am deterritorializing the founding.

I suggest that “the birth” of public administration as an academic field is a distraction from the change that was occurring at the time in higher education, ethics education, pedagogical method, and science. These changes form the problematic with which contemporary public administration ethics is concerned. The problem of public administration ethics is in the *concept* of public administration ethics and has very little to do with the actual world which the field presumes is the ground for being relevant.

Ethics education in the United States, as we will shortly explore, is a field that once held the highest position in higher education in the United States and in the educational reform that removed ethics from this position, public administration emerged. And in this period of educational reform, the delegation of ethics to a minor role also sees a significant shift in students from being endowed with the collective wisdom of human history to an individualistic problem solver. The individualistic nature of public administration is engrained into the same reforms from which the field emerges. Farmer (1998) describes public administration ethics as suffering from macro- and micro- myopia, the desire for a

grounding often in an anchoring of ethics onto philosophy, and a concern for the individual, respectively. Administrative ethics has a need for legitimacy, a desire to be relevant, and a focus on the individual decision maker. The seeds of all of these can be found in the intersection in the initial conditions of the late 1800's higher education reform and are hence encapsulated into the field of public administration.

### **The Changing University**

Why has no one ever written on the art of academic lecturing and its many notable triumphs?...Are not our college class-rooms, in being robbed of the old-time lecture, and getting instead a science-brief of data and bibliography, being deprived also of that literary atmosphere which once pervaded them? (Woodrow Wilson, 1893 p. 3)

Woodrow Wilson, founder [*sic*] of the field of public administration, appears to have been a pedagogical luddite. Education in the United States at the turn of end of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century was going through unprecedented reform which Wilson appeared to vehemently oppose. The great universities—a handful or two of commonly recognizable names—were quickly outnumbered by the expansion of higher learning institutions through the creation of land grant colleges with the Morrill Act (1862 and amended in 1890 ). “The unprecedented growth of American universities in recent years and their efforts to conform or to resist conformity with the demands of the times have effected such a transformation it is difficult to get a clear idea of their present condition and relative standing” (Slossan, 1910, p. *vii*). The growth in universities left two important issues to be con-

fronted: 1) pedagogical shifts toward individualized instruction via the influence of science and 2) the development of practical and specialized fields to accommodate higher education for the changing society. The growth and specialization of higher education was not unique to the American experience. For example, science graduates in English universities increased by 60 fold from 1870-1910 (Daston & Galison, 2007). During this time, revolutions occurred within the classrooms regarding methods of instruction to adapt to the scientific and technological revolutions outside of the university.

Instead of listening passively to lectures, students were actively indoctrinated into the craft and standards of their specialities—in the laboratory, the botanical garden, the observatory, and the field, as well as in the seminar room. Aspiring scientists first honed their skills by repeating exercises that were already part of the repertoire of the discipline. (Daston, Galison, 2007, p. 333)

A consequence of the pedagogical evolution in the United States is a change in the relationship between student and faculty (Sloan, 1979; Haines, 1977). Wilson looked remorsefully upon how “faculty were losing close moral and sympathetic personal touch with students” (Brubacher & Rudy, 2004, p. 212). Princeton’s and Yale’s presidents were a voice of tradition with other elite university presidents against the reforms (Haines, 1977). In a speech at Princeton, Wilson (1896) amplified this conservative view of education reform. “The object of education is not merely to draw out the powers of the individual mind: it is rather its right object to draw all minds to a proper adjustment to the physi-

cal and social world in which they are to have their life and their development: to enlighten, strengthen and make fit. The business of the world is not individual success, but its own betterment, strengthening, and growth in spiritual insight” (Wilson, 1896). Wilson's admonishment is specifically addressed to the reforms taking place in higher education which he sees rooted in the escape of science from the walls of the laboratory and in turn infecting society.

But there is more to Wilson's view. Reforms, such as the development of elective courses, were significantly fought by Wilson's predecessor, Francis L. Patton. Wilson's rhetoric created a stronger public vision of liberal education grounded in traditional values, while his smart reconceptualization of undergraduate studies to include a mix of specialization and generalization adapted Princeton to keep up with the changing times. The *Princeton Alumni Weekly* (Oct 12, 1904) describes this approach as “prescribed studies in the first two years of college ...disciplinary and introductory” (p. 63) and included departmental specialization the Senior year while mandating an elective in an entirely different area. *The Princeton Review* specifically notes that the senior seminars, structurally similar to the ethics seminar praised by anti-reformers, was often a failure and eliminated in Wilson's reforms. Regarding these reforms the *Weekly* explained:

Perhaps the most novel feature of the whole scheme is to be found in this gradual approach the chosen field of upper year work. The “group system” [described above as seminars] often fails at just this point. Established to prevent dissipation of energy along incongruous lines, it mews the stu-

dents up within rigid walls of the very outset of his career. Thus compelled to abide by the immature choice, the situation of the victims often pitiable. It is much as the one were required at 16 to make choice of a wife without the subsequent remedy either of death or divorce. On the other hand, where the student is perfectly satisfied with the isolation to as the “group system” subjects him, he often emerges as a one-sided educational product, entirely unconscious of his own unilateral development. (*The Princeton Alumni Review*, Oct 12, 1903, p. 63)

Wilson enjoyed success with the curricular change and it was not achieved through fighting the reform sweeping through the universities. Instead Wilson’s approach can be seen as “letting the final product appear to emerge as a matter of consensus, while giving some deft guidance, which he let be felt as little as possible” (Cooper, 1983, p. 91). A new baccalaureate degree was issued in Letters to accommodate students who wanted to receive a liberal education but did not have prerequisites in such classical studies as Greek. Though he extolled the value of traditional education and appeared to be resistance to many of the reforms, Wilson’s action did not necessarily correlate with his rhetoric. Cooper further describes Wilson as not having an overarching pedagogy, but rather was focussed on a “set of specific plans.” Perhaps Wilson was a luddite in this sense of not having a coherent and comprehensive reform based agenda. But he was effective in many of his projects. He created a public image of the value of a liberal education and recognized the changing tides of education and society. In doing so Wilson also ensured a



trajectory that brought Princeton and himself into the highest echelons of power in a drastically different world than from which they began.

The move away from the group system, critiqued above, signified a shift in the general role of the university. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, university presidents taught a moral philosophy class to seniors that was intended to unify the four years of an undergraduate education into a reflexive and internally consistent logic which, in its connection to the past and classics, provided an education which was believed necessary for virtuous leadership (Sloan, 1979). Moral philosophy during this time privileged unity in ethical discourse and hence avoided controversial topics. This avoidance created an environment ill suited for social reform movements that were inevitably controversial topics. Haines (1977) describes how reformers' excitement and intention to bring public attention to social problems was discouraged by the conservative environment of the universities and were effectively squelched. Because of the resistance against overtly discussing social reform, social progress was seen by reformers as more readily achievable through science and not ethical discourse in the university. Hence, the inability of university elite to publicly discuss the hard moral quandaries of the time led a new generation of faculty toward a belief in an intrinsic social progress in science (Sloan, 1979, Haines, 1977; for critique of, see Wilson, 1896). Science was a way to advance social progress while avoiding political battles within university departments.

The traditional conservative and elite view of education is endemic to Wilson's (1893, 1896, & 1915) writing. "We are unquestionably gaining in thoroughness; but are we gain-

ing in thoughtfulness? We are giving to many youths an insight, it may be profound, into specialties; but are we giving any of them a broad outlook?" (Wilson, 1893, p. 3). In this new relationship of individuals within education is also an inversion of the relationship of individual's ability to affect change. The efficiency to which Wilson famously refers to can be seen as guided by democratic principles, not empirical scientific principles. To avoid thoughtful, and hard, discussions of social values by supplanting social progress into the "neutral" realm of science missed the point of societal progress. "The principles on which to base a science of administration for America must be principles which have democratic policy very much at heart" (Wilson, 1887, p. 220).

The fundamental change in knowledge, from principles to an objective empiricism shifted the perception of progress from educated leaders with virtuous wisdom to individuals with knowledge able to affect the world (Sloan, 1979). The traditional liberal education of the 19<sup>th</sup> century shaped the character of the individual and endowed them with refined facilities to not only know business, political, or scientific endeavors, but the unification of those facilities in the context of social progress. Wilson's faith in man [*sic*] may be seen as more reflective of American Transcendental literature than a foreshadowing of the scientific expert to emerge from Progressivism. "We are now men, and must accept in the highest spirit the same transcendent destiny; and not pinched in a corner, not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but redeemers and benefactors, pious aspirants to be noble clay plastic under the Almighty effort, let us advance and advance on chaos and the dark!" (from Emerson's *Nature* quoted in Wilson, 1896). The emerging expert-individuals

affected the world with rational instrumental knowledge and pushed the privileged traditional concern for the virtue of humanity aside.

Wilson's sharp criticism of the acceptance of science's methods and general relevance to topics outside of the traditional place of science provides insights into his earlier suggestions of the establishment of a field of public administration. With the expansion of new universities and even the model of education, for example the growing extension education (*American Society for the Extension of University Teaching*, 1901), and the development of professional associations and modern research institutes, we see a fundamental shift from the education of Wilson's own experience at Bryn Mawr and Princeton. Wilson admonished not only the specialization of the university system and the reform in the classroom, but also the social and professional, and practical elements introduced to the modern college (Wilson, 1915). Wilson's (1887) desire for the study of public administration presumes any knowledge gained or taught in the university is knowledge unified with social and ethical concerns. Though Wilson's (1887) essay is discussed in context of public administration's founding (Adams, 1992), at the time the essay was one of many curricular suggestions from an academic to the academy in the thrall of a newly crafted era of reform in higher education. The founding of public administration perhaps has more to do with academia and pedagogy than research in administrative practice.

Pedagogically, Wilson was a strong critic of incorporating scientific method into teaching—"science has its place." Textbooks and lectures were being replaced by seminars, essay writing, cases, and other empirical and inductive methods from the sciences

leading Wilson to ask, as noted above, “Are not our college class-rooms, in being robbed of the old-time lecture, and getting instead a science-brief of data and bibliography, being deprived also of that literary atmosphere which once pervaded them?” (1893, p. 3). These pedagogical shifts were necessary as the very mission of higher education changed. “The [traditional] curriculum might, and did, vary from year to year and from school to school, but it was always based on the concept that in four years a student might acquire all the fundamentals of human knowledge, discipline, and Christian morality. Its purpose was to produce students skilled in logic and familiar with the highest forms of culture” (Haines, 1977, p. 894). Four years of undergraduate education in the traditional university culminated in a moral philosophy class taught by the university president. Moral philosophy “attempted to preserve the unity of the college curriculum and, thereby, to ensure the existence of a unified and intelligible universe of discourse” (Sloan, 1979, p. 22).

The unified knowledge created virtuous leaders who, in turn, led socially responsible progress. The history of moral philosophy before the late 19<sup>th</sup> century social reform movement held internal logical consistency to such high regard that the controversial or emerging topics were avoided and placed in an intellectual blind spot (Sloan, 1979). As such universities lacked the discursive capacity to engage controversial topics. Hence, this absence of normative discourse beyond the narrow confines of moral philosophy encouraged reformers to strive to be objective to avoid ethical issues and controversy intrinsic to social reform (Sloan, 1979). Moral ethics quickly fell from the pedestal of capstone courses led by university presidents to unify knowledge and instead became electives

taught in philosophy departments. Sloan argues that it is this inability to address change that was intrinsic in the moral philosophy underlying the higher education that led university progressives to abandon progress. “By the mid-1890s nearly all the originally more activist academics had begun to dissociate themselves from reform causes, and to emphasize instead their devotion to scientific research and their professional ties” (Sloan, 1979, p, 25). The reformer academicians, according to Sloan, were embroiled in conflict with conservative university presidents and faculty became the popular face of controversial social problems. As such the reformer academicians were charged with distracting from and delegitimizing social problems they were trying to fix. “The stress on harmony, the avoidance of conflict, the desire to promote progress-all gave to moral philosophy built-in conservative tendencies that lent themselves to the support of the status quo and the dominant societal interests” (Sloan, 1979, p. 23). The practices of the scientific self (Daston & Galison, 2007) or the scientific emotion (Rice, 1934), which sacrificed the individual subject, central to traditional education, were believed to generate objective knowledge without any sign of the human observer. With this objective knowledge and the specialization of academia to include disciplines of social science, a belief that scientific knowledge itself was embedded with social progress undermined the unifying virtue of moral philosophy. Knowledge had switched from virtuous to instrumental within the halls of academia. These two views from which the modern university emerged were both positioned toward avoiding conceptual conflict. The conservative po-

sition avoided the conflict of specifics which the reformers emphasized while avoiding the conflict of the conservative's moral harmony.

### **The Changing Curriculum**

The university fundamentally changed during Wilson's life as "The paramount need of American society, university spokesmen began to argue, was for guided social change under the direction of trained experts. Not so much as a man of culture and an exemplar of a unified single culture of learning, the man of learning was redefined as the specialized expert" (Sloan, 1979, p. 24). Sloan describes how "the university also took upon itself the task of providing training for burgeoning career opportunities in an expanding industrial-managerial society. It coupled these functions with a commitment to support and lead scientific research, both in the faith that scientific expansion by itself promoted social progress and that scientific methods of analysis were the tools most needed by a new generation of leaders" (p. 24). This reform to elective principles and specialized fields expanded scholarly knowledge, professionalization, graduate education, vocationalism, and increased the focus on research around the burgeoning number of new disciplines and departments (Sloan, 1979). This reformed university, is familiar to academicians today but was not the university of which Wilson had in mind.

The evolution in the classroom, of which Wilson was skeptical, which was embedded in a reform of the university itself, included a shift in the way ethics was to be taught. In the shift from ethics being the capstone to an elective course, the method for developing ethical knowledge and teaching it also changed and the case study figured prominently in

this change. A scholarly dialogue in *The Journal of Philosophy* that spanned issues discussed the possibility of teaching ethics with the case method (Cox, 1913 & 1914; Powell, 1913; Overstreet, 1913).

This evolution of the conceptual space within which the university evolved, and how Wilson bridged the two, provides a useful context to understanding knowledge in Wilson's writing in the time where he suggests a field of public administration. His is a knowledge that has immediacy, is self-apparent, can be recognized in specifics, from which understanding brings closeness. And he speaks in the language as if one was speaking moral truth as it is virtuous and constitutes "fearless criticism" and "courage of convictions" in the knower.

It is therefore, the difficult task of one who would now write at once practically and critically of our national government to escape from theories and attach himself to facts, not allowing himself to be confused by a knowledge of what government was intended to be, or led away into conjectures as to what it may one day become, but striving to catch its present phases and to photograph the delicate organism in all its characteristic parts exactly as it is today; an undertaking all the more arduous and doubtful of an issue because it has to be entered upon without guidance from writers of acknowledged authority. (Wilson 1885, p. 10)

Wilson's (1885) text is at the cusp of an epistemic shift, one where the ideal types, "the scheme" (p. 11), the "charm of the constitutional ideal" (p. 332) has had its use.

Government of virtuous gentlemen then by democratic principles (Luton, 2003), had not only passed, but were replaced by Wilson's hope: "A picture of the government which can be said to have been perfectly faithful yesterday, and can be confidently expected to be exactly accurate to-morrow" (p. 292). Government could be understood and run effectively by the right kind of knowledge which was not equivalent to Constitutional ideals. Wilson, as discussed above, is writing at a crucial threshold in the history of knowledge when "truth" becomes eclipsed by "facts." Wilson (1912) himself was aware of this shift away from unchanging and eternal truths which he saw as universalistic mechanical theories imposed upon governments such as checks and balances. Alternatively Wilson suggested that society was "an organism and every government must develop according to its organic forces and instincts...that what we have been witnessing for the past hundred years is the transformation of a Newtonian Constitution into a Darwinian Constitution" (p. 190-191).

Just five years before Wilson writes these words, a solution to a long standing debate in botany had its first iteration which provides insight into the rapidly changing concept of knowledge. Naturalists at the end of the 19th century were concerned with variability in actual specimens against idealized types. The solution that naturalists arrived at was to distinguish "specimen"—an individual plant—and the "typical specimen"—an individual that embodied the "true ideal type of a species" (Daston & Galison, 2007, p. 111). This distinction was seen as a "battle as one between the personal discretion of a few elite botanists, mostly located at powerful institutions in European capitals, and mechanical



rules applicable to all cases by all botanists, everywhere and always” (p.111). We can see the similar logic in Wilson. “In its *nature* government is one; in its *life* it is many: there are governments and *governments*” (Wilson, 1889, p. 637, emphasis original). Wilson distinguishes between the ideal and actual of government which is isomorphic of the problem of identifying the ideal type amongst variation of specimens in plants. “How does an individual stand for a class without idealization or even selection? How could a universally valid working object be extracted from a particular depicted with all it’s flaws and accidents?” (Daston & Galison, 2007, p. 251).

Naturalists established mechanistic rules over a fifty-year process (Daston & Galison, p.111) that enabled any person with common sense to be able to arrive at correctly identifying the species of a specimen. The ideal type is turned upon itself, instead of an ideal being the embodiment of Truth where variation was accidental or an abomination, the ideal type would come to be understood as typical, arrived at through objective observation and ascertaining of how things really are. Wilson argues in his early writing that he envisions a similar process of government by changing the “type” of government in which “administration is neglected for these higher concerns of removing despots and instating popular government” (Wilson, 1887, p. 204), to trying to understand amongst the variation, not only from yesterday to tomorrow, but within the functions and structures of government, what was typical. A science of administration was needed in the difficulty of organizing popular rule (Wilson, 1887). Variation under Wilson becomes inter-

nal to the project of government. Variation within the populations, within the levels and structures of government, between eras, and even nations.

Yet Wilson is still very much grounded in the traditional view of education and learning, that higher education should bring together this variation under a single sharp vision informed by the entire cadre of human knowledge. Though early-Wilson (1893, 1896, & 1915) is calling for a new field of study—the call for new academic fields was not unique for the time (Haines, 1977)—his later writing suggests though the knowledge needed to progress should change, the institution of higher learning in the United States should not.

Correlated to this, Wilson remarks that the administrator is not a neutral instrument. The scientific objectivity of “neutral instruments” contains problems of accounting for variation which comes to be accommodated for through professional training and pedagogical evolutions in the reformed university. An instrument captures certain kinds of knowledge and disregards the rest and hence, rigorous self-discipline is required to insure that the instrument does not capture traces of the observer or lose important structures or characteristics. For example, a photograph epitomized objectivity at the time of Wilson but, depending on the media and development process, two photographs of the same object could be entirely different. Whether or not Wilson is metaphorically deploying the camera doesn’t negate the implication that by “Seeing our own institutions through such media” (1887, p. 219). Wilson was emphasizing comparative political study, not to simply copy but to better understand our own systems and yet he warns that the fractured

knowledge that emerges from the piecemeal scientific approach will be devastating for social concerns.

Wilson, as president of Princeton, in addition to curricular changes brought in precepts for more personal education, petitioned for massive increases in budgets, sought to develop a system where mentors would live with undergraduate students. (Cooper, 1983) The objective and neutral knowledge obtained via science and photography seems in conflict with the highly personal model of education Wilson idealized in college life (1915) and the his critiques of science (1896). Wilson's administrator may not have been a neutral instrument or objective scientist but the virtuous leader who with a development of character and informed by knowledge would be effective in running a constitution.

Knowledge moved from a transcendent location of universals—moral philosophy, Newtonian Laws, Constitutional government, ideal types—toward an immanent space intertwined with curriculums, Darwinian evolution, popular government and actual specimens. Though there is a clear change in epistemology, the teaching of ethics, and the university of this time, Wilson's apparent inconsistency demonstrates an extremely important point. The conceptual space that is formed around change is as important as material changes themselves and though both important, they do not have to mirror each other and the former does not cause the latter.

The desired form of knowledge was no longer the universal that imposed order upon the world through morals, laws, and idealized classifications. Idealized categories possessed an intrinsic goodness that was now severed from the world. Good knowledge

came to be that which accurately described the world and could be used in specificity compared to generality.

At the beginning of the last century, four distinct traditions of the case study emerged as a method for attaining good knowledge within the specialized fields of the newly reformed university (Stein, 1952). Stylistic considerations and the clearly demarcated academic fields which emerged from university reform, created different disciplinary forms of the case study. First, in the medicine schools, case studies disciplined cohorts of medical students to identify agreed upon symptoms. Second, case studies are significant in law by creating a collective knowledge through precedent. Third, social sciences utilize case studies to demonstrate an average representation (Yin, 2002) or to connect reality to theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). If we review the early 20th century literature on case studies in social sciences, the basic lesson involved is the expression of knowledge specifically regarding human learning (see Sheffield, 1922; Judge Baker Foundation, 1922, Foreman, 1948). In this sense either a repetition of many individual cases or an encounter with an emblematic case, a generalized understanding can be gleaned. Fourth, in business schools the case study was used to discipline the student into a certain type of individual, with what we would now call the entrepreneurial spirit, to discipline a mind for business (McNair, 1954). Again public administration is intertwined within the disciplines of the university as the field struggles to adopt a methodology to attain the good knowledge needed for legitimate governing.

## **Public Administration and the Case Study**

During the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the development of the field of public administration increasingly assumed a self perception of being a science (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2011) and by mid-thirties we see a shift towards operationalizing the field as a science. Mosher (1939), in explaining the work of the Subcommittee of Research in Administration, asserted that a collective body of social science could be developed in the study of public administration and to make this point—to demonstrate that public administration is a science—the committee was tasked with collecting case studies of instances through which scientific administrative knowledge could be developed. Mosher signifies two stages to the project of collecting case studies for public administration. The first is to create a standardized approach to writing: “the development of techniques of making case studies, the working out of a pattern or patterns of work methods” a necessary step “if generalizations are to flow from their [case study authors] activities” (p. 68). The second, and future, step Mosher identifies is the development of a community of research in a collective endeavor to develop a body of scientific administrative knowledge. Though there was debate among the early public administrationists whether this scientific knowledge would lead to universal laws or general principles (Dahl, 1947) it was assumed that this knowledge would come from empirical research and not literature or moral philosophy. Central to this attempt of the field to in practice be a science was methodology and the case study. The case study would be a tool in making explicit that which was common, repetitive, sequential, and orderly (Mosher, 1939). In this sense, the use of the case

study by the Subcommittee of Research in Administration is well within the purview of science, as described above, in understanding variation and establishing rules for organizing the world around what was decided as typical. The development of standards and techniques in writing case studies was a way of categorizing administrative situations that did not easily fall into the objective measurements needed for statistical analysis and “if successful, ultimately lead to generalizations, to the discovery of order in social situations, would be the establishment of premises and hypotheses, and the determination of definitions and work methods, including the application of more and more objective procedures in the analysis and treatment of data. Within such a framework, case studies may be made that may well lead to significant conclusions” (Mosher, 1939, p. 67).

Though public administration in the time immediately preceding World War II is often seen as a field seeking to be a science, by midcentury a professional spirit had taken some footing in the field (Waldo, 1967; Dubnick, 1999). Interestingly, within the hard sciences, professionalism during this same time was being suggested as a way of accommodating human subjectivity in relation to the desired objectivity in the natural sciences (Daston & Galison, 2007). Hence, the self-declared shift in public administration from science to professionalism is a shift alongside with—not away from—the scientific community. Implicit in professionalism is the role of education in training students for the profession. Though this will be developed below, it is important to note that even though the concerns of the field of public administration shifted from epistemic to pedagogical, the position that the case study held did not entirely change. In elaborating the above two

stages in the development of public administration case studies, Mosher (1939) suggests that though case studies were instrumental in researching administrative processes, case studies “have a significant value for teaching purposes” (p. 68). In the midst of attempting to discover scientific principles of administration, the case study and teaching was an undeniable part of the field of public administration. Even though the *content* of what should be taught changes, the *method of teaching* did not. Yet, the shift from a science of administration to the profession of administration does bring a significant refocussing on the pedagogical side of case studies.

### **Public Administration: Case Studies and Teaching**

During the 1944-1945 academic year, Pendleton Herring was tasked with organizing seminars at Harvard in governmental administration and public policy. Herring followed the lead of the Harvard Business Administration school and seminar members and developed cases as part of the course. “The cases dealt with a ‘man in a situation having to make a decision.’ Seminar discussion of the papers proved fruitful: the pursuit of alternatives, the facing up to decisions in confused situations were stimulating” (Stein, 1952, *xli*). The following year of the program seminar funds were used “to make possible the preparation of a substantial number of cases. Some were developed from printed sources—for example, records of congressional hearings—others were worked up with the aid of interviews. The cases were tried out in the seminar: case preparation, teaching and editing went hand in hand during the development of cases for the seminar” (p. *lvi*). Faculty associated with the seminar visited other social science faculty and gleaned tips

that could be tried in the seminar. Since text books and formal analysis were slow to create and slow to distribute, case subjects were chosen for this seminar for reasons of efficiency. “Speed and simplicity were the keynotes of the operation: subjects were selected for easy availability and for simplicity and interest of chief issue rather than by some analytic system of coverage; there was little attempt at elaborate construction of background, or a detailed cross-checking; in several instances the sources of information were limited to one or two participants. Approaching a decade after the founding of this seminar the seminar was a regular offering in the Graduate School of Public Administration” (Stein, 1952, p. *xli*). Yet the study of cases came to include a wider set of materials including public administration theory. “This [case] method of teaching demands a constant search for source materials, and consequently every opportunity is taken to learn about specific situations. Teacher, researcher and student alike acquire a curiosity to learn how people react to new systems or new methods, and why they react as they do” (Stene, 1950, p. 137).

“The decision nature of these cases laid in the space of dilemmas: personal ethic against hierarchical responsibility, program devotion vs. hierarchy, responsibility to Congress vs. responsibility to program” (Stein, 1952p. *xlii*). To foreshadow Farmer’s (1998) complaint regarding the micro myopia of public administration ethics being narrowly focussed upon individual decision making, we see in these cases “a sharp choice, with only a few of the underlying complexities brought to the surface. The cases are told with the spotlight largely on one person. Choice of subject and handling permit brevity in the tell-



ing” (Stein, 1952, p. *lvii*). Inspired by the success of the Harvard pedagogical experiment of teaching with cases and the limited distribution of cases due to the issues of confidentiality at Harvard, universities began to collaborate on the development of a collection of cases to teach public administration. Similar to the University of Kansas, Cornell, Harvard, Princeton, and Syracuse received grant funding from Carnegie Corporation to finance the project.

Some of the problems faced in the case studies represent not generalizable stories but the specific situations where overlapping principles render the reader in a problematic position. Though early public administration’s desire to be a science sought principles as rules to determine how government should be structured to function efficiently (Willoughby, 1929; Gulick, 1937; for a critique, see: Simon, 1946), the case study in the classroom could teach principles as best practices to administrators (Mosher, 1939). The mid-century articles about case studies suggest a different kind of case study than early public administrationists though the appropriateness of the case study in teaching is not questioned. The extended quote from Somers exemplifies this presentation of the previous generation of case studies and a science of public administration as a failed project:

The cases are the most effective available media for making graphic the problems of multiple loyalties, the difficulties which arise when personal loyalties, professional loyalties, and organizational loyalties prove irreconcilable. These problems must be faced in a life situation to be understood. One can talk wisely and persuasively about “limits of choice,” but this

concept, too, has no full meaning until one is thrown into a situation in which he finds the “right” choice is not available and there is, in fact, relatively little choice of any kind. The cases have proved an effective instrument for communicating the ardor, the high drama, the human dedication, triumph, and frustration which accompany significant administrative episodes...Students’ attitudes toward “scientific” administration have often been altered. They are not so confident that a proper garnering and review of the “facts” will offer a definitive answer. They more readily understand the phenomenon that different visions cast upon the same object will receive quite different images. Commonly used words like “neutrality” take on new values. The venerated abstract “neutral civil servant” is found to be a rare and anomalous figure when serious policy issues are at stake, and where discovered he somehow looks far less admirable or useful than the student had wished. (Somers, 1954, p. 117)

Somers continues in describing that the experienced administrator realizes that nothing is as black and white as presumed in past attempts at developing and teaching scientific principles of administration. Case studies provided an encounter with the administrative process, a process embedded in politics and one that requires constant negotiation. Case studies, in providing such a context, were understood as preparing the students for the reality of administration: “Certainly, nobody can emerge from a reading of these cases without a better sense of administration as a process and as politics. They comprise a

body of substantive knowledge and are a means of applying substantive knowledge to concrete situations” (Somers, 1954, p. 117). But as we will see, this body of knowledge is situational and not a unified, or even a collective, body of scientific knowledge. Simon (1946) critiqued that administrative principles are used to rationalize situations and are of little scientific worth because: “For almost every principle one can find an equally plausible and acceptable contradictory principle” (p. 53).

The midcentury literature describes administration as a process, like politics, yet the description of administration is such a quagmire of generality—administration is everywhere, so much that it may be nothing. As Waldo (1952) explains in reviewing Stein’s collection of cases, one approach to collecting cases would be to

somehow to “point” the case material so that it throws light upon the author usefulness of various alternative or complementary theories of bureaucracy and administration—those of Weber, Simon, Barnard, Selznick, and others. We are told in the Introduction [of Stein’s collection] that the cases will, among many other things, help perform this function. But from that point on the reader is left to his own devices so far as this objective is concerned. (p. 879)

Somers (1954) describes the cases in a similar state of disassociation:

As of mid-1954, the ICP had produced forty- six studies over a six-year period and had encouraged other sources to produce still more. Each tells an interesting and useful story. They have no designed relationship to one

another, methodological or substantive, and the totality of the series is rather formless. The structure, the narrative method, the approach to issues, and the degree and type of analysis vary markedly. (p. 118)

Wickman (1963), speaking of case studies in general, makes a similar suggestion, that the sense implied in the case study can be so common, that it can provide little guidance and lead to disaster. Dewing (1931) suggests that the case study method “asks not how a man may be trained to know, but how a man may be trained to act.” Yet whether the curriculum develops correct action or knowledge, it is clear that the student minds are what is shaped and further it is the task of the instructor “to take on the task of building some basic attitudes traditionally associated with a liberal education” (1952, p. 199).

Case studies in midcentury public administration seemingly embody bounded rationality as the intended mental disciplining. The space delegated for the individual to act in the learning of these cases is solely one who cannot reach a perfect decision and is acting on limited information; it is a negotiation. “Negotiation also emphasizes how administration is a problem of values rather than of science. The administrators in these cases are not technicians who select the most economic or efficient ways to reach a goal” (Wengert, 1952, p. 195). To use Simon’s (1948) language, in case studies students learn to satisfice. The descriptions of the intention of case study authors too, is framed as bounded rationally; the structures of the university and the limitations of the author’s cognitive capacity required authors to satisfice. The classroom is also nested within bounded rationality. The environmental limitations of textbooks and teaching materials were inade-

quate to address the complexity of government work and teachers found case studies to sufficiently, but not ideally, satisfy classroom demands. In other words the case studies took their form from convenience and practical concerns and not through epistemic virtues of rigor or objectivity. We are left to wonder if the bounded rationality is a description of the world or a product of our discipline?

### **The Structure of the Case Study and Public Administration**

Amongst the varying views of the case study, all impose singularity upon an event by presupposing unity as a “bounded-system” (Adelman et. al., 1976) which I suggests represents an event within the confines of the “small world” of the rational mind (Simon, 2001; Schnettler, 2009). The assumption of the value of the case study as an abstracted knowledge that transcends the multiplicity of actual events and the practicality of the case study is indicative of Enlightenment rationality and not related to actual events. In other words, the wide breadth and application of case studies is inseparable from the modern assumptions of rationality. This occurs in a two fold manner where the author of the case narrows a situation to fit the cognitive bottleneck of the rational mind. The author’s rational intention in the investigation is then captured through how s/he chooses to represent the small world of the case. The intention of the case being the starting point of analysis is mirrored by a prescribed rationality as the form in which one must approach the study. What we will see is in regard to public administration, what the case study does is help ensure that ethics is a rational endeavor.

Wengert (1952) suggests that Stein's collection of case studies broke the traditional categories and understandings of the field. This narrative, that the case study challenged the orthodoxy of public administration, is continued today (Yeung, 2008; Rosenbloom, 1995). Rosenbloom (1995) describes how the managerial tradition emerges out of "many public administrative scholars who worked in government during the war were convinced that the standard textbook approaches could not convey the complexity of administrative reality" (1995, p. 40). In this view, cases were an effective pedagogical device for the disciplining of administrators and the reification of a field of public administration. Yet we will see that the midcentury shift is also a foreclosing of a science of public administration and an opening for a practice of decision making. This bifurcating logic of posing the intellectual paradigm as different than the practice of teaching public administration does little more than reinforce the theory-praxis dichotomy present in the field. This logic will be explored at greater depth in later chapters but for the moment it is important to note that we can imagine a series of differences juxtaposed in Rosenbloom's explanation above: Practice [scholars working in government during war] against theory [pedagogy] which is opposed to this same dichotomous relationship in the claim that practice [administrative changes during New Deal and war] against theory [intellectual paradigm]. Changes in practice challenge practices of theory. Hence, it is of no surprise that Rosenbloom ends his survey of the history of case studies with attention to the changes in the practices of administration within the present in which he writes:

The development of the “reinventing” movement, which emphasizes the use of market-like approaches and cultures in public administration, bodes well for the use of cases in the near-term future. If contemporary public administration had a dominant paradigm, it would currently be undergoing a significant shift. As of yet, there are few prescriptions for implementing public entrepreneurship, enterprise-like management, customer-driven public administration, and radical decentralization. Case studies of the implementation of reforms can potentially tell public managers what to do and what to avoid; what works and what does not in specific circumstances. They can improve understanding of the changes that are under way. Cases may also help the field to frame concepts, theories and research in ways that advance systematic knowledge about public administration. (Rosenbloom, 1995, p. 44)

Previously discussed was a concern for the changing methods in late 19<sup>th</sup> century classrooms across academia and the creation of specialized disciplines was explored. This specialization required relevant teaching material to which the general textbooks could only create a state of dissatisfaction (Stein, 1953; for a critique of textbooks in law schools and business schools see Kimball 2006, and McNair 1954, respectively). In addition to the problems textbooks had in representing the complexity of administrative reality, textbooks and traditionally prepared lectures could simply not keep up with the changes occurring in the field from the New Deal on. Textbooks and analysis of govern-

ment reports designed for the classroom address topics that were often already familiar to students due to the lag between the events and publication and distribution process (Stein, 1952).

Stein makes clear that the early cases were experimental in the classroom, especially compared to the tried and true teaching by textbook and lecture. Wickman (1963), with a tinge of wit, suggested that the case study is ideal for lazy instructors for there was no need for preparing a lecture. Giving voice to the skeptics of the case study, Wickman describes how a certain kind of professor could use the case as a means “of raising issues and providing the instructor with a situation in which he can demonstrate the superiority of his reasoning and the depth of his wisdom...In time, students adopt a defensive posture. The issues presented by the case become secondary in their minds and the dominant objective then is to second guess the instructor and ‘dope out’ the instructor's solution” (p. 230).

The Harvard type of case study is dominant in the discussion of midcentury public administration and is best understood as narrative, brief, and focussed on decision making. Wickman (1963) brings attention to the MIT model where the facts of the case are not presented in entirety as in the Harvard cases and instead other students ask questions to investigate and probe the incident under investigation. Wengert effectively summarizes the midcentury shift in case studies and the correlation to the study of public administration and the increasing importance of decision making by framing public administration being as a process of negotiation:



Because negotiation is the general framework of the administrative process presented in these cases, they omit many of the traditional materials associated with the methods of administration. The mechanics of organization and the procedures by which large-scale activity is given form, the constitutional and legal materials relating to administration, the systems of personnel and budget administration might be named as among the kinds of topics to which the cases do not contribute. Whether these matters are regarded as not teachable or not worth teaching in a university course in public administration may be debatable. But it is clear that the challenge of this volume grows out of the choice of materials to illuminate the methods of negotiation in our public administration. (1952, p. 196)

Case studies in the mid-20th century take a new role within the field of public administration by shedding “traditional materials associated with the methods of administration [such as]...constitutional and legal materials relating to administration, the systems of personnel and budget administration” (Wengert, 1952, p. 196). Additionally, the rigorous debate whether case studies were appropriate for teaching that occurred in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century university is seemingly absent in midcentury public administration. The literature surrounding the publication of the ICP case book (Milne, 1953; Somers, 1954; Spann, 1953; Stein, 1953; Turnbull, 1953; Wengert, 1952; Waldo, 1952) are largely reviews of the ICP casebook and consistently address the content and issues around case studies but do not challenge the case study itself. Waldo’s review of the ICP casebook

describes this context well: “The appearance of this book is a major event in the development of public administration as a field of study...It is the reviewer's guess that the ‘case method’ study of public administration here presented will enjoy great popularity in the coming years, and that important further developments will flow from this popularity” (p. 876). In the context of the ICP casebook, Spann (1953) and Wickman (1963) who is coming from a business school, bring attention to the difficulty that can be placed on faculty in preparing background information and having to set aside large swaths of class time for case studies to be successful. Spann, in part, concludes that the shorter case study that requires little background information is likely to be more beneficial to the class. Spann was suggesting to the public administration community of scholars in the United Kingdom and though explicit about challenges and shortcomings is supportive of the use of the case study. Wickman warns that at first students will often be uncomfortable with case studies as they are difficult to take notes on due to the lack of clear facts and predetermined content like lectures have. And though Wickman is critical of the general acceptance of case study in teaching in business courses echoes the sentiment found in the public administration literature that there are no clear answers in the real world and case studies do a good job representing that indeterminacy.

More recently, White and McSwain (1990) retrace how the ICP case studies represent the rationalist technicism of the mainstream traditionalists of the time. They criticize the midcentury use of case studies to discipline students to the generic practitioner. Instead of getting rid of the case study, they suggest an expansion of the underlying pedagogical as-

sumptions—the content of education is not as important as the experience of education which shapes the lives of students. Hence, we should shape our students for concern of their future well being as administrators persons and not discipline them into what Catlaw (2006) describes as The Practitioner. Newswander and Newswander (2011) describe possible ways to implement an approach similar to White and McSwain's in using the case study as a tool in developing cognitive flexibility. The case study in this instance recognizes how it shapes the mind of the student and deploys it as a tool to enhance their cognitive capacities.

Generally though, the role of case studies has been largely left unexamined for how they function in the teaching of public administration ethics. Yet, a call for more and better research can be found in every decade since Mosher's suggestion in the 1930's for using case studies in generating a body of scientific knowledge about public administration (McCurdy & Clearly, 1984). The debate regarding the importance of case studies in research is still part of general debate regarding knowledge development in public administration (White, 1986; Stallings & Ferris, 1988; Jensen & Rodgers, 2001). The persistence of similar arguments and positions for over a half century is indicative of a project similar to Kuhn's (1962) *normal science* where all the revolutionary work has already been done and knowledge development proceeds in mopping up loose ends.

### **Midcentury Epistemic Shift**

The traditional view of science as building a corpus of knowledge concerning public administration is abandoned and replaced with a project of understanding decision mak-

ing and in turn, presumes decision making as central to public administration. In reviewing Simon's (1948) *Administrative Behavior*, Fritz Marx (1948) questions the possibility of creating a science of administration for reasons surrounding the application of rationality to areas that include non-rational elements, considering organizational structures in terms of incentives compared to democratic, and to assume a theory general to administration which avoids the specifics in the difference of public administration and business. Though Marx is critical of Simon for making "it plain that he [Simon] is eager to supply the bricks and straws from which one might one day erect a general theory of administration" (p. 64). This turn towards the rational bodes well for the role of case studies in an evolving university. In light of Marx's comments, consider Wengert (1952) when he says "the cases have scientific meaning. In their accounts of decision-making, the student can test a variety of propositions ranging from 'separation of powers' to any of the latest conceptual tools of the disciples of Weber. With freedom from the old, the way may be cleared for the invention and ultimately the testing of the new" (p. 198). Perhaps the "new" to which Wengert is referring is a well suited pair with the administrative theory of Simon. The cases do "follow a standard pattern: (1) Statement of the Problem; (2) Relevant Facts; (3) Possible Decisions; (4) the Decision; (5) Results; (6) Comment" (Spann, 1953, p. 40). The implication is that though it may be impossible as Marx (1948) implies to capture the non-rational elements of public organizations, if the methods developed to teach administrators about those organizations are rational, then the language with which Simon and Barnard enthusiastically support correlates. Simon's theory, "the bricks and

straw,” are not so much for constructing a general theory of administration as much as fabricating what Simon (2001) will later call a ‘small world.’ To put it more bluntly, the most efficient way to make sense of a complex world is to simplify it. As we will see below, the world at this time increasingly becomes more complex and case studies are used to simplify the world. Instead of creating textbooks and lectures that convey facts of public administration to a splintered public, case studies are a mechanism for leveraging commonly held rational thought toward understanding the field of administration. The ideal to which public administration becomes focussed is the typical administrator which will later be developed through *The Practitioner* (Catlaw, 2006a).

In the Simon-Stein chimera of theory and teaching, a drastic shift can be perceived happening in regard to ethics education: “[Students’] ‘quest for certainty’ has often been rewarded in their earlier experience by formal, systematic, and apparently complete treatises in public administration and other aspects of government and politics. To find themselves compelled by the cases to act on their own responsibility without the crutch of ready-made principles or self-evident truths or tight analytical systems can be a shocking experience” (Wengert, 1952, p. 198). The splintering of the university Wilson and others seemingly forewarn of in the moving of ethics from the center to the periphery of education is completed by the pushing of ethical concerns to isolated individual decision makers. This union between ethics and rationality will be developed in Chapter 2.

## **Midcentury Changes in the University and the Case Study**

Nestled within this discourse of ideas is another revolution in the American university system that continues the splintering forewarned at the turn of the century. The middle of the Twentieth Century witnessed a drastic change from the introduction of television and modern home appliances, as the number of students in the ten year period following WWII nearly doubled from 1.5 million to 2.5 million (Bolman, 1955), and within this growth a Malthusian fear of population increase was already being discussed. “We can walk out of the shadow of war only into the shadow of Malthus” (Shaw, 1947 p. 185).

During this time of decreasing resources and a fear of further increases in student enrollment, outside funding is clearly effecting university research and at times specifically related to case studies. First, in the Carnegie grants we see the establishment of research whose methods may be more toward development of decision making than science. Stene’s early municipal management case study research at the University of Kansas was also funded in part by the Carnegie Corporation (Stene, 1948). Nalbandian (cited in Galas, 1992, p.5) explains the impact of Stene’s case study when it was introduced in 1947: “It reflected a historical evolution in the academic approach to management and administration. [In the 1930s] The manager was seen as a scientist...But the case method rejected this idea and instead emphasized problem solving.” It is important to recognize how Nalbandian phrases the academic discourse of the 1930s as centered around managers. As such, the problem solving to which he reveres is managerial problem solving, i.e. decision making.

Second, through the establishment of multimillion dollar, multi-year endeavors the Ford Foundation intended to establish social science in specific relation to human behavior and policy issues. Within sociology, for example there was an interest by such foundations and government to establish a scientific social science which explicitly encouraged statistics and not case studies leading to a significant decline its use (McIntyre, 1970). Use of case studies as a scientific method had eclipsed leaving its pedagogical use intact. Case studies were used to teach how decisions *should* be made. This educational endeavor could, from time to time, be informed by quantitative sciences that studied human decision-making, but that is all. The midcentury brings the death knell of an inductive science to develop principles from observation and in its place rises a deductive science of decision making. The dominance of rationality in public administration is developed in Chapter 3.

Additionally the post-war period in the university was focussed on a practical concern related to the increasing enrollment in the university system. Students from a diverse background simply didn't have the scholarly foundation that students in the past did.

These veterans will present a new personnel phenomenon in higher education. They will be more completely unselected, "unscreened," as the services would have it, than any group that ever before found its way to college. The selective factors of tuition, incidental fees, books, supplies, and subsistence will no longer operate to keep out the economically unblessed. (Shaw, 1947, p. 18)

Woodrow Wilson's desire for the university and call for a science of public administration presumed an elite class of students, fresh from secondary schooling, that could be molded through mentorship and academic discipline to be progressive leaders of society. Here in the immediate post-war period the student body already has life experience, is not narrowly selected as appropriate for higher education, and has a fundamentally different experience with authority and ideology.

Stegner's (1949) description of the "anxious generation's" writing style is suggestive of the general mood of the G.I.s entering into the university following the war:

Perhaps the demonstrated dangers of following a political voice have led this generation to a certain caution in the making of heroes, even in literature. At any rate, though there are local coteries of the aesthetic, regional, "emancipated," or Stalinist-Wallaceite kind, there is probably no single attitude, no single way. It is still an unformed generation, unsure of its matter as of its manner. The things it writes about are as various as the people who write them, though the war, [was] the dominant common experience... (p. 185)

In addition to the variety of experiences regarding military service, the students themselves had a great variety of characteristics compared to previous cohorts. "Social and personal backgrounds of the student veterans may be expected to vary from primeval to gold-coast. Individual differences in such spheres as motivation will be greater than ever before. For the first time, all the veteran sons and veteran daughters of all the people will be economically able to go to college. This will be a mine-run group made up of very



normal folk, most of whom are more mature than the average college student” (Shaw, 1947, p. 18).

Estimations of university enrollment suggested that the growth enrollment would continue and by 1970 college students was predicted to be between 6 to 7 million strong. This continued growth only extended university administrators fears of limited financial resources and capable faculty (Goldstein, 1956). Further, the 1954 Supreme Court decision to desegregate public schools had a significant effect in the enrollment of traditionally predominantly white student bodies. This change saw a proportional growth in African American male students with their white counterparts but an increased ratio of African American female students to their white counterparts (Doddy, 1963).

The midcentury case study with its minimal research, short publishing cycle, low cost, and its focus on decision making instead of a central collection of facts was well suited for a university system experiencing rapid growth in diversity and increasingly limited resources.

The general atmosphere of changes in science, the environment of the university system during the reform era, and ethics underly the final concern considered herein: The case study. A method oft taken for granted for its wide use—from quantitatively informed methods to fictional thought experiments to portraying moral quandaries—the case method and case study is engrained in higher education. But this method was emblematic of the reform in education and the epistemic shifts in science, from deductive to inductive, from truth to fact. The concerns of ethics education from being the unifying cap-

stone to an elective to inform professional development coincide with the development of the case as a method of inquiry, but more importantly for the current study, it is a tool in instruction. To take on the double task of writing, public administration ethics is deterritorialized from the quest for a philosophical anchor and its legitimacy is rewritten as emerging from its method, not a conceptual foundation.

The conventional logic for research assumes ontology begets epistemology begets methods begets ethical considerations which are embedded in an institutional context, often an Institutional Review Board. The task of writing herein is an inversion of convention. The discussion in this introduction of the intersectionality of university reform, methods, ethics, and public administration cascades into a discussion of methods—specifically the case study—from which continuing threads of this institutional context weaves into the following chapter on ethics which then cascades into a chapter on rationality and epistemology. The confluence of these four streams, and the nested tributaries of thought within them, erodes a space in the field's representational ontology to discuss ethical theory as the result of these discourses and not theory to inform action.

## **Chapter 2: Public Administration Ethics**

### **Critiques of Public Administration Ethics**

This chapter problematizes the discourse of public administration ethics. This discourse has traditionally been concerned with educating public administrators in concepts and practices to help maintain integrity in public service and develop standards to understand the effectiveness of achieving those standards. But why? The working assumption in public administration ethics is that good government is achieved by proper behavior of administrators. The rational split between theory and practice encourages developing theory that is assumed to inform practice. This chapter investigates the critical scholarly positions in the field that address this instrumentality assumed in the field regarding ethics and the assumptions of good government.

Though some ethical critiques intend to unmask power relationships hidden by rational discourse (i.e. “administrative evil” in Adams & Balfour, 2009), I suggest that the contemporary critical positions in public administration are generative—they do not simply critique or unmask assumptions, but may create new relationships and alternative stable social orders. A growing body of work is developing opposed to the belief that the simple application of ethical theory to practice brings about ethical government. I suggest that critiques of public administration ethics may take on the form of rationality they critique, but also can be seen as an emerging alternative discourse that in ways overcomes rationality’s dichotomous relationship between thought and action. Examples of this alternative can be recognized in studies of localized knowledge, reference to empirical

knowledges from other fields such as neuroscience, and reflection on personal experience. These critiques in public administration ethics are using the objects, events, and relationships of and within the world to challenge the foundation of public administration ethics: rationality.

To begin, we consider the critical discourses of rationality in mainstream public administration ethics inherited from Western epistemology. Though there are many forms of rationality—instrumental, technical, scientific—they coexist with a representational ontology in which truth is understood in terms of accurate depictions of the world. Representation is a model-copy process of knowledge production where copies are evaluated according to their fidelity to the object of representation—the model (Catlaw, 2007).

Variation is accounted for in two ways, either bias exists in the “knower,” or the copy has measurable difference to the model. Objectivity through methodological rigor has traditionally accounted for the former (Daston & Galison, 2007) and the latter is assumed to be a “natural” difference or deviation. The break between the knower and the world splits evaluations of the knowledge into internal and external categorizations. Jun (2011) suggests the variety of forms of rationality belong to one of two kinds of rationality in Western thought: *theoretical rationality*—“an alleged direction of fit between our thoughts and the world” and *practical rationality*—“an alleged direction of fit...between our desires/moral beliefs and our actions” (Jun, 2011, p.94).

Since underlying modern thought are assumptions of rationality in the fit between our representations and the world, “moral philosophers have tended to regard rationality as

the foundation of normativity” (Jun, 2011, p. 94). In other words, since theoretical rationality verifies truth claims between our thoughts and the world, claims regarding the fit between our morals and our actions rest upon strong theoretical rationality. Therefore, there is no potential for any good action outside of the control of the rational mind (King, 2000). Good action requires good information to ensure what one expects to happen will actually happen. Doing/acting is therefore separated from thinking in order to maintain the necessary objective distance between mind and world upon which rationality relies. Good action is understood by practical rationality which is in turn dependent upon theoretical rationality for criteria regarding what is true. Harmon (2005) proposes this “dualism between thinking and doing serves as a micro-level analogue to all of the other dualisms of public administration’s standard narrative” (p.156). In a similar line of reasoning, Catlaw (2006) argues that the inquiry into the legitimacy of public administration falls along two lines: technical and normative concerns. The isomorphy of these binaries throughout public administration results from the model-copy structure of knowledge within representational ontologies (Catlaw, 2007). In other words, the initial split of rationality into theoretical and practical is replicated in all rational endeavors. Public administration transposes rationality’s bifurcating logics into a common categorization of the field between theory and practice and also transposes the reliance of the latter to be rationally contingent upon the former. Resistance to these dichotomous categories of rationality are the subject matter of the critical position against public administration ethics studied here.

The critique of a common public administration ethics being overly rational in one form or another has been thoroughly developed in the literature. I believe much of what follows resonates with Farmer (2001):

P.A. eth-talk should not attempt to “rationalize” ethics by making certain what cannot be certain and by making tidy what cannot be tidy at this time – on a kind of bureaucratic model. On the contrary, we can embrace the uncertainties and the untidiness. In picturing justice and ethics, we can admit of paradoxes, of tensions between claims, and of a sea of radical indeterminacy. In P.A. eth-talk, we can accept the realm of the ethical as it is – warts and all. (p. 75)

Except, what does this “as it is” imply? An assumption of positivism that is often critiqued is the naivety of the claim to see the world “as it is.” From what privileged position can Farmer claim an unfettered view, to be able to see “the warts and all?” Recognizing ethics exists in a “sea of radical indeterminacy” is not just accommodating epistemologies to account for indeterminacy and uncertainty leading to more ethical behavior. Instead, the world with which ethics is intertwined is intrinsically entropic and is impervious to rationality. From this realization, an emerging body of theory is re-encountering the question, “What is ethics?”

It seems that the more clearly a work in public administration ethics naturalizes the connection between thought and action, the more mainstream the work becomes. Then again, the contemporary critiques of rationality and ethics in public administration can be

seen as presenting a distinct alternative to the mainstream and are not simply trying to improve upon it. To understand the alternative forms of ethics we first critique practical and theoretical rationality as *transcendent* forms of ethics — conceptual models applied to past embodied events to guide future hypothetical situations. The alternative ethics is suggested as *immanent*—our knowledge and possible forms of action emerge from the world as an assemblage of concepts and material things from which an alternative to critique also emerges.

The relationship between transcendent and immanent forms of ethics is explored next in how how critique in public administration addresses the concerns of practical and theoretical rationality. As critique itself is a conceptual practice it cannot adequately engage the ethics of embodied actions and instead asserts the theoretical relationship between intentioned actions and expected results as uncertain. On the other hand, critical positions argue that knowledge which rationally informs intentions is itself contingent. Yet in staking such a position, critique can be seen as reinforcing the epistemic assumptions of which it is critical. A response in public administration has been to discuss ethics in relation to ontology instead of epistemology. The ontological turn in public administration creates a space for public administration scholars to approach embodied actions and practices in ways that are more than conceptual treatments.

### **Practical Rationality, Uncertainty, and Critique**

Practical rationality, the evaluation of the congruency between our intent and our actions assumes a stable environment in which intentions garner expected results. Uncer-

tainty is intimately related to public administration ethics since uncertainty is an inversion of the stability assumed in practical rationality. Practical rationality's reliance on theoretical rationality is undermined by uncertainty through an insistence that the very model of public administration ethics is flawed: Good knowledge does not lead to good behavior. The relationship between intended action and expected results is never certain. In other words, neither the quality of knowledge—nor purity of intent—insures that what one expects to happen, will happen.

**Uncertainty and the world.**

Waldo (1980) recognized that the problems of mainstream administrative ethics emerge from an intrinsic complexity and uncertainty in the world and regardless of what we know, sometimes things just don't work out as intended. Further:

moral or ethical behavior in public administration is a complicated matter, indeed, chaotic. While some facets of the matter have been treated with insight and clarity, nothing in the way of a comprehensive and systematic treatise exists... What may be reflected is the fact that a systematic treatise is impossible, given the scope, complexity, and intractability of the material from which it would have to be constructed and given an ability to find acceptable or defensible foundations of ideas and beliefs on which it could be grounded. (p. 472)

Waldo continues, "If we cannot clarify the ethics of the organizational world, perhaps it will help if we can advance understanding of the complexity and confusion. If ambigu-



ity cannot be eliminated, then a ‘tolerance for ambiguity’ becomes an essential operating skill” (p. 480). Because of mainstream administrative ethics’ deep ontological commitment to representation—objective conceptual depictions of the world maintain a fidelity to the world—the realm of ethics continually is directed toward our knowledge of the world, not our encounter with the world. This can lead to what Farmer (2001) refers to as the creation of “an illusion of certainty in such [that] forms core moral values and democratic constitutionalism” (p. 73).

Truly objective knowledge of the world is impossible and we should be leery of claims of certainty (Waldo, 1980), the modernist illusion of certainty (Farmer, 2001), and hard-core rationalism (Harmon, 1995). Public administration may be well served, ethically speaking, with learning to live with ambiguity, values, habits of authentic hesitation (Farmer, 2001), and encourage passionate humility and reflexive practice (Yanow, 2009). Yet there is risk in these approaches. An intrinsic condition of authentic hesitation or passionate humility—which both convey the importance of not imposing ones conclusions believed to be certain upon others—is that uncertainty can potentially be exploited by authority.

A juxtaposition of Norway’s response to their recent terrorist attack with “more openness and more democracy,” against the “Dead or Alive” chauvinism of G.W. Bush following the September 2001 terrorist attacks the United States, highlights how approaches to uncertainty can be fundamentally different. In the conflation of what is not known with what is unknowable a reversal happens where uncertainty is evaluated by what could

possibly happen as opposed to what is known from experience. By placing uncertainty in a hypothetical future and giving it a privileged position over a lived experience, uncertainty is motivation for action instead of cause for reflection. In the former, rationality is deployed to predict and hence control future events (King, 2000), while in the latter uncertainty is recognized as not something to be corrected in our knowledge of the world but as an inevitable condition of being able to know about the world. Howe (2006) suggests, “In a world increasingly experienced as uncertain, insecure, and contingent, some constituencies—including (some) secular, religious, and managerial ones—are tempted to shore up flagging confidence in their familiar ethical faiths with ever increasing doses of authority” (p. 423). Simply, manufacturing certainty in times of uncertainty can provide the illusion of ethical grounds for action. Further, recognizing the unavoidable uncertainty in life makes one vulnerable to authoritarian desires to capitalize on uncertainty for their own benefit.

### **Responding to uncertainty.**

Contrary to Waldo’s suggestion we develop a “tolerance for ambiguity” mainstream public administration ethics often strives to reduce uncertainty in a belief it strengthens the relationship between thought and action. Take for example Svava’s (2007) “ethical triangle” which is a model designed to extract a best approach to an ethical scenario through framing a problem with the consideration of multiple views. This approach, pragmatically, is a reducing of uncertainty much like a hiker might dial in their wilderness location through triangulation. Farmer (1995, 2008, 2010) suggests a similar ap-

proach to the problem of indirect access to reality through the idea of epistemic pluralism, but provides an alternative to simply reducing uncertainty. If Svava reduces uncertainty through triangulation, Farmer inverts the model by distinguishing understanding as not equatable to certainty. Instead of using multiple views to pinpoint a location, Farmer looks outward from the locale of uncertainty. Through epistemic pluralism, knowledge increases by understanding the terrain in which one is immersed, as opposed to the certainty of one's location in reference to the abstract parallels and great circles of latitude and longitude. In risk of extending this metaphor beyond its usefulness, knowing with certainty one's geolocation does little good. But, if one has a deep and expansive knowledge from biology, geology, history, astronomy, and anthropology, one may not know with certainty their location, but have enough knowledge to increase the chances of survival if one chooses to stay or go. Triangulation focusses on uncertainty in the surface problems of public administration, while Farmer's epistemic pluralism focusses on uncertainty through an outward orientation. Catlaw (2006) suggests that at the center of uncertainty is what Lacan calls the Real. The Real "contains all the contents of the external world that have not or cannot be brought under the purview of language [and the order of everyday life]" (McSwite, 2001, p. 122). Catlaw (2006) concludes with a relevant summary from a Lacanian approach to reorienting public administration ethics toward uncertainty:

In this time of fundamentalism and the temptations it provokes, a new realism rooted in a distinctly different mode of social relationship is re-

quired...not competing certainties. This realism puts the constitutive lack or Real at the “center” of its concern to maintain a dialectic that does not yield to the pretenses of an objective (morally or scientifically), nonideological claim on reality yet is “careful to avoid the trap that makes us slide into ideology under the guise of stepping out of it”...This realism confronts the world not in terms of models of representation or a priori commands for relevance, but, paradoxically, in terms of that which cannot be represented, the Real. In the contemporary moment, now more than ever what is essential is a realism that fights for this moment of aporia and resists efforts to seal off the world scientifically or morally. What is needed is not another model of relevance, but a struggle for the Real. (2006, p. 112)

To summarize, instead of privileging knowledge over action and in-turn requiring certainty for responsible action, critiques of public administration ethics approach toward uncertainty suggests knowledge and action as fundamentally entangled in a complex, chaotic, intrinsically unknowable world. In rational ethics practical rationality is evaluated by theoretical knowledge and uncertainty insists that this model is flawed. Rational approaches to ethics attempt to accommodate uncertainty epistemically and in turn elevate ethics to a transcendent conceptual discourse. The alternative approaches to ethics suggest that uncertainty is a practical and immanent reality and is not something to overcome via practical rationality. In the end, uncertainty undermines the legitimacy of one’s

rational actions and therefore is an affront to public administration's authority in achieving good government. Hence, uncertainty is necessarily sought to be reduced by mainstream public administrative ethics

### **Theoretical Rationality, Contingency, and Critique**

The relationship between rationality and authority within public administration is explicitly addressed in critiques intended to unmask the contingency of theoretical rationality on relationships of power. As such, institutions of formal power are not the natural resultant of enlightened progress. Denhardt (1981a, 1981b), Farmer (1995), and King (2000), through critical theory, postmodern, and feminist critique respectively, exemplify this in undermining the certainty of modern rational discourse through the uncovering of dominate power relations intrinsic in the rational mode of thought. For example, Denhardt (1981a) brings attention to the ontological assumptions intrinsic in organizations which overbear and assimilate unique individuals into abstract ontological assumptions that justify hierarchical organizational and epistemic structures. Farmer (1995) digs in deeper and exposes the limitations that are intrinsic in modern thought, limitations that mask the possibility of alternative discourses. King's (2000) critique takes aim at not the organizational, but a deeper patriarchal set of power relations that is not only manifested in the organizational content, but in the values that ground the epistemic virtues of western thought. In each of these cases rationality is presented as an artifice limiting the possible forms of human relationship.

### **The contingent natures of rationality and critique.**

Farmer (1995) provides a useful context to understand theoretical rationality—that our concepts should be objectively correct representations of the world—through Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of *arborescent* thought.<sup>3</sup>

The arborescent description reflects the fact that knowledge in the Western tradition is conceptualized in the form of a tree; arborescent means having the characteristics or form of a tree. Knowledge is divided in a hierarchical manner into branches and subbranches. There is an essential rootedness of knowledge, and there is a unity of knowledge. (p. 220)

Due to the arborescent nature of rational thought, critique of theoretical rationality in public administration can be seen as an inversion of the arborescent hierarchy of rational thought. As critique, this mode of analysis proceeds to unmask repressive constructs as contingent in the hierarchy of representational knowledge. Hence, for each construct exposed as contingent—instead of *natural* or *absolute*—less repressive representations will be revealed. If we peel away organizational culture (Denhardt, 1981a), hierarchical communication (Denhardt, 1981b), or patriarchy (Stivers, 2002), and if we recognize the regressive tendencies of a mode of analysis (Box, 2008), a more natural, free, fair, and progressive discourse emerges. In each of the forms of critique to free the natural, the unnatural must be made explicit and given form through identifying dominating attributes’ contingency.

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<sup>3</sup> Deleuze and Guattari’s work and its relevance to public administration is the focus of the following chapter.

Yet, the giving form to, and rendering domination explicit, is itself a rational process and also contingent. Critiquing organizations, or patriarchy, or regressive politics, the object of critique must be assumed as whole, as an entity with substance that can be peeled away. “The task of social theory becomes one of unmasking the false appearances generated in the present in order to permit expanded freedom in the future” (Denhardt, 1981b, p. 629). In other words, critique naturalizes the object of critique as the “bad guy” from which the critique will free the oppressed.

Farmer (1995), in recognizing the dichotomous nature of modern thought peels away the level of rational thought that critique is embedded by recognizing the varying contrary positions that are intrinsic in the project of modern thought. For Farmer, these contraries develop from basic contradictions in modern thought. What we see is it is the very mode of Enlightenment—of rational—thought which generates the object of, and conditions for, critique. When one has their eyes on the object to be critiqued, modernity, organization, patriarchy, politics, etc., the object is unmasked which may expose relationships to other objects and ideas that were not clear before. If rationality is the trunk of Western thought, critique snips off branches, twigs, limbs, etc., which then opens up spaces for other critiques to work. As such, we can connect how the critique of organization by Denhardt exposes the powers of domination on individuals that in turn, make connections to feminism creating a space for a feminist post-structural critique of the social. Though Denhardt’s work was published nearly fifteen years before Farmer and twenty years before King, since critical approaches subsequently unmask apparently

natural conditions and relationships in society, critique develops inverted to time. As critique fails to generate the freedom it desires, later critique must address not only the object of oppression, but must also peel back the subject of domination too—when critique unmasks something and liberation does not occur, the contingencies of that something are recognized as contingent themselves. In other words, unmasking leads to an increasing knowledge base, which is not substantive in presenting an alternative. One has to know an increasing amount of increasingly complex concepts to see the manners in which they are oppressed. Both critique and theoretical rationality generate *knowledge* which is contingent and as *modes of thought* they too are contingent.

Despite the best of intentions, critical scholarship can be seen as taking the representational *form* it critiques—critique is a form of theoretical rationality. Critique risks strengthening the assumptions in theoretical rationality and yet critique is useful in exposing alternative relationships between representations and the world. A rational engagement of critique—or critique of rationality—is itself rational and contingent upon representations.

Yet, the expedient structure of the critique of public administration ethics needs not be understood as a representational shortcut. Though Denhardt (1981a) speaks of organization, he could just as well be speaking to critical theory ethics when he says, “As we act individually to move ourselves and our organizations in the direction of greater choice rather than more regulation, we will begin to bridge the distinctions between subject and object, theory and practice. In doing so, we will be led to a new conception of organiza-



tional praxis, one based on enlightened human actions” (1981b, 635). In other words, critical approaches unmasking instrumental rationality is not unfettered because of a clearer view of reality, but exposes the integral relationship between representations and the world which are simplistically masked as dichotomous in rational discourse.

King’s critique of rationality’s connection between irrational and rational is an example of challenging theoretical rationality. Rationally, if an idea does not correspond to the world it is disregarded, but King (2000) suggests that ideas can be non-rational without being disregarded as irrational. The assumption in theoretical rationality King challenges is the reification of critical theories’ position that rationality has modes of control intrinsic to the structure of thought that is then carried over to the world. This method of control takes on individualistic concern in the consideration of the split between body and mind and in turn creates a system of control in which the body is subservient to the mind. As King describes,

Western notions of rationality have their fullest expression in Descartes’ view of the mind as an incorporeal thinking substance, radically distinct from the body. *Cogito ergo sum* (“I think, therefore I am”) implies that man is who he is because, and only because, of his mind. The irrational, according to Cartesian tradition, is anything that is not in the mind and must submit to the control of the mind—matter, nature, animals, body, emotions, and so forth. According to our received views of rationality, we control the irrational through the mind and the attendant functions of tradi-

tional rationality—objectivism, analytical means, and instrumental rationality. In this way, we accept and reify the mind-body dualism. (p. 274)

In this sense, the very tools in which we can investigate the world and interrogate our ideas come from a masculine position. This logic extends beyond epistemic claims and frames our ontological inquiry and hence, as King explains, “Those same attributes (of masculinity) are also emphasized and valued in social, political, and economic arenas. The result is a society that is characterized by violence, gamesmanship, exploitation, and a reverence for the rational. These characteristics define the context for how one behaves (the rules) when one is rational” (275). As one rationally queries into ethics one in turn reifies patriarchal elements enmeshed in socio-political norms. Hence the ethical task takes place peripheral to the epistemic-ethical dichotomy intrinsic to the field’s normative-performative split which itself is inherited from the split between practical and theoretical rationality.

### **Alternatives to a Rational Public Administration Ethics**

#### **From epistemology to ontology.**

Farmer (1995, 2003), Howe (2006), Harmon (1995, 2003), King (2000), and Catlaw (2007, 2006) are indicative of a growing body of research that challenges established ontological assumptions and epistemic claims. What occurs in this challenge is a shift from seeing uncertainty as an epistemic concern to uncertainty existing as an ontological condition. The distinction that should be explicit is that the alternative theories share a pluralistic ontology, that the conditions which they observe are not subsumed under any

transcendent categorical claim. Further, we can see this shift in concern from epistemology to ontology spilling into other spaces once dominated by transcendent concepts.

One such case is Catlaw's ontological critique of the transcendent concept of The People with which sovereignty is fabricated. Developing from Agamben, Catlaw (2007) brings attention to the intrinsic exclusion of natural life (*zoē*) from the political subject (*bios*) "with the imposition of specific, presumptively unified political forms onto life" (p. 13). Hence, instead of understanding uncertainty in some gap for which theory should accommodate, sovereignty exists specifically because of the "exclusion from the field of knowledge that produces the coherence and stability of that field and the problems to which it attends" (Catlaw, 2007, p. 16). In other words, the modern political subject is assumed to be natural, yet this presupposition functions by the specific exclusion of an unqualified (natural) life. "[T]he entry of *zoē* into the sphere of the polis—the politicization of bare life as such—constitutes the decisive event of modernity" (Agamben, 1997, p. 10). This politicization of bare life imposes a manufactured certainty which renders life rational in relation to the norms of social and political institutions. Such imposition constructs life in such a manner that possible forms of life are rationally derived from the this normativity and masks the uncertainty of unqualified life. "Uncertainty accompanies such a manner of life and governance; we must grow comfortable with uncertainty, including the uncertainty that dwells uncannily in each of us. It seems we can shrink from this uncertainty or make it our ally in a thousand everyday revolutions" (Catlaw & Jordan, 2009, p. 307-308). When Catlaw & Jordan (2009) suggest that we can make "uncertainty our

ally,” I read this in the context of Catlaw’s (2007) suggestion that “there is no natural or given relationship between political and biological and ecological existence yet states this as an affirmative commitment to a specific relationship between *bios* and *zoē*” (p. 193). The exclusionary mechanism of representational ontology is inverted from an assumption that uncertainty is in the world, to uncertainty being constitutive of human individuals. Catlaw’s (2007) suggestion for a political ontology where *bios* =  $\emptyset$  is a recognition that the social and political constitution of a *zoē* are contingent. Instead of positing any positive claims to an essential human condition, Catlaw encourages a “good for nothingness” where the absence of concrete, or fabricated, certainty becomes a ground for human relationship. Thus, in one form or another, an acute attention to taking into account that those things which are absent is necessary.

Claims to organize the world which account for the varying forms of human experience that assume some unity in their claim, no matter how holistic, are rationalist. The alternative suggests that any basic ontological claims that can be made are incomplete, that any appearance of a whole is such by an absence—an ontological pluralism of which the set of ontological claims is intrinsically an open set, where any claim of relation is only one of symmetry of outward relations, that no internal order or attribute justifies or sufficiently accounts for the relationships. In other words, pluralism in this sense connotes an observational over explanatory categorical. This shift represents a basic ontological change from an assumptive practice of privileging representations ordering the world to relational and provisional orderings. An example would be Farmer (2008) and

Harmon's (2003) use of neuroscience to gain insights into how the mind works without making essential claims about human nature. Harmon (2003) uses the work of neuroscientist Damasio to provide empirical insights into how feelings are present in all complex human relations without appealing to transcendent virtues or principles. The inverse is true, by using empirical evidence from neuroscience Harmon is able to convincingly argue that principles and virtues will never be sufficient to guide ethical action as action is contingent upon the immanence of emotion and not transcendent ideals. Additionally, Farmer (2008) reminds us that "decisions have a strong bodily component. To the extent that PA [public administration] wants to get things done through people, PA should surely care about the system upgrades that are facilitated by examining the neurobiology of people" (p. 290). Farmer also suggests that the empirical knowledge gained from neuroscience not only informs areas that relate to public administration, and I suggest ethics, but also generates knowledge that makes connections between the divergent tendencies of particularism and specialization found in academia (Farmer, 1995).

**Articulating alternatives beyond rationality.**

If the postmodern era is marked by deep uncertainty, and public administration ethics specifically deals with uncertainty, then a claim of resemblance is intrinsic to the applicability of postmodernity and ethics. Postmodernity, the claim of a crisis in representation, ironically represents the conditions in an ethical situation and extends the usefulness of public administration theory to contemporary times by being structured in such a manner as to generate alternatives to the canon of public administration.

Farmer (1995) constructs contemporary public administration as limiting through its modern tendencies. Modernity, for Farmer, is described as:

the age of the centered subject where postmodernity is the decentered subject. In modernity, the application of reason is considered to yield unlimited human progress, and a principal motif is rationalization. Modernity involves the rejection of traditional powers and values considered to be natural constraints. Substantive rationality is abandoned. The self is autonomous as it is liberated from superstition. Modernity is the age of the subject encountering the world and philosophy is centered on establishing foundations and epistemology. (p. 48)

Modern rationality and representational ontology lead to increasing knowledge of the world, knowledge that has a particular specificity in its nature. Rational knowledge is a sort of particularism which is “a leading feature of all contemporary disciplines and specialities; premodern universalism is no longer possible. In the context of public administration theory, the co-nested particulars that differentiate themselves in the field are American, public, and administration” (Farmer, 1995). Particulars are intrinsically problematic in representational ontologies (Daston & Galison, 2007) as each specific trait (i.e. American) functions as a categorical, which invalidates the specificity of the trait. Farmer (1995) provides the particulars of American Public Administration as contraries that exemplify this general problem of modern thought. “One set of contraries in such a focus is between any wish of American public administration to be as science and the re-

ality that American public administration is a culture bound subject” (p. 69). Another example regards the desire “to offer the widest interpretations and the reality that such interpretations are bounded by the focus of one nation” (p. 69). Additionally, the public character of public administration reifies public as opposed to private in a manner that restricts the field’s ability to recognize that these particulars, public and private, were constructed to differentiate two particular sets from a general set of social relations.

Farmer makes clear that the use of particularism generates limits that are derived from this intrinsic categorical problem (problem of categorizing), and not reflective of a substantive knowledge, for example. Farmer suggests what Catlaw (2007) and Daston and Galison (2007) will later associate to a critique of representation to areas of positivism.

An undertone in the arguments presented in this chapter implies that scholarly activity should seek to widen the gap between the rational representations of the world and the world. By increasing the gap between rational arborescent thought and the world, hierarchy collapses. In other words, by considering Denhardt, Harmon, McSwite, and King’s skepticism of rational instrumentalism we can imagine the alternative as seemingly chaotic—by increasing the gap between the world and its representations, by exposing the contingency, a space is created in which to the rational mind entropy would increase. But, to the critical mind, that entropy is only the freeing of the subject from the inessential that has been imposed upon them. There is a great hope in the critical approach, which even Garofalo & Geraus (1999) cynically admit, that with what appears as chaos,

humans will be free to basically organize themselves into humanly beneficial relationships.

McSwite & Harmon (2011), King (2000), Farmer (1995, 2001), Howe (2006), and Catlaw (2006) move beyond critique of instrumental rationality and begin to regard the possibility of an “immanent approach.” Instead of assuming a simple unmasking, rationality is not just critiqued, but framed as a misguided understanding of what is really going on, or should be going on. In other words, instead of relying on representational rationalities exemplified by scientific/instrumental/technical rationality, we have alternative ways of evaluating what is true. Breaking the direct correspondence between our thoughts and the world, these authors suggest alternative opportunities to generate useful knowledge. In Harmon’s (2003) critique of the possibility of instrumental rationality in principles and his (1995) laying out of the paradoxes intrinsic to reason, the movement beyond solely critiquing becomes apparent. For example, in regarding “principled morality’s essentially rationalist as well as its individualist world view” (p. 265), he criticizes principled morality for beginning with a fallacious rational distinction between fact and value. In the actual lived lives of individuals, facts and values are rarely clear. Principled morality relies on transcendent principles that are pre-assured to motivate collective and just action. Underlying this claim is the instrumentalism that assumes an overlap between thought and action with thought necessarily preempting action. Furthering the problems with principles is the intrinsic alterity of language and the impossibility of language to adequately represent and communicate representations of the world. Harmon proposes



that contrary to critiques of principled morality are qualities that can support a novel approach to public administration ethics sans the transcendent virtues and concepts (models/ideals against which actual individuals are evaluated) that are imposed upon individuals.

tentativeness, a focus on the concrete and situational rather than the abstract, and an acceptance of difference in relation to others— together suggest the basis for an ethos for Public Administration that embodies, simultaneously, the professions’s traditional concerns with the moral as well as the practical concerns of government. (p. 271)

Further, McSwite and Harmon, and King, Howe, and Farmer, extend these reasons not only as a critique to instrumental rationality, but also as an alternative to it. To do so, this group of scholars begin to take on what Bryant (2011) understands as an immanent ethics that is, beginning a way to understand the world—to make normative and factual claims—without referring to transcendent ideas. Deleuze suggested transcendence and immanence could be found in a distinction between morality and ethics, respectively:

“morality”...in very general terms, any set of “constraining” rules, such as a moral code, that consists in judging actions and intentions by relating them to transcendent or universal values (“This is Good, that is Evil”).

“ethics”... [a] set of “facilitative” (facultative) rules that evaluates what we do, say, and think according to the immanent mode of existence that it implies. (Smith, 2011, p. 124)

Though categorical, such claims of ethics are not universal and do not convey the rationalist's inherited assumptions of good and bad (Jun, 2011; Bryant, 2011). More simply ethics can make descriptive and prescriptive claims on action in relation to lived lives while morality imposes ideal claims of right and wrong upon lives. In traditional ethics and moral behavior, categorical connotes a normative claim in addition to the "nature of the rational reason in question – i.e., the fact that in all relevantly similar circumstances it applies equally to all moral agents at all times" (Bryant, 2001, p. 94). Instead of the concern of traditional ethics being focussed on the assumption that good knowledge leads to proper action, an emergent ethics is concerned with exploring the conditions that make possible mutually beneficial relationships and meaningful lives from which categorical norms of the good life could emerge. This ethics, through its reference to others, suggests that the social bond allows individuals to participate in their own becoming ethical through the encounter of events via relationship (McSwite and Harmon, 2011).

McSwite and Harmon (2011) suggest this notion of relationship as a potential catalyst (while at the same time modestly denying credit) for creating a new social order that is immanent with local context... micro-symbolic orders— "local contexts not based on common values, beliefs, sentiments of liking, and so forth. All of these are of past social bonds. These new contexts will be held together by Symptoms expressed in valid relationship" (p. 242). Though McSwite's language is contained within a Lacanian perspective, this shift is from the Symptom being a stable element, the greater social order contained within an individual, to individuals in relationship allowing for stable order to

emerge immanently. In vulgar terms, instead of an individual making sense of the world through a universal natural order of “the way things are” imposed upon them, individuals can make sense of the world through their own relationships locally contextualized. In the critique of rationality being the imposition of universals from the top down, McSwite provides another means of imagining a bottom up resistance to rationalism. Whether this will lead to an ethical method of constructing what Bryant (2011) calls “ethical ecosystems” we will have to wait and see. The work seems to be beginning in this process of creating knowledges that are useful, in understanding the elements of the world, and the social that we wish to include in our lives—and those we wish to exclude. The suggestion developed in chapter 4 is that the claims of ethical theories such as virtues, principles, consequentialism, and duty are descriptions of certain successful behaviors that occur in micro circumstances which are repeated and from these repetitions an ethical order emerges and provides mechanism for the exclusion of unethical behaviors.

Yet, this inclusion and exclusion can lead to a quandary, for selection is often a rational process. The inclusion and exclusion of elements do not refer to a difference of what is ethical and not ethical as in traditional ethics. Rather, one must seek to find connections between representations and the world. Instead of an expansive or comprehensive rational explanation between self and other, self and other are intensified through the filling in with other kinds of knowledges. Farmer’s epistemic pluralism, Harmon’s use of neurology, McSwite and Catlaw’s use of Lacan all intensify and challenge concepts of self and other by bringing attention to this gap between rational consciousness and the

world. To put this another way, the split that began all of this, the distinction between thoughts and actions, is the focus of alternative understandings of the relationship of actors to, and within, the world which informs an alternative to ethics.

The ethical terrain does not consist of exceptions to moral order or ethical codes, but instead emerges through exceptional circumstances which present new possibilities of thought and action. In other words, the ethical is not the designation achieved through fidelity to the standard of ethical; the ethical develops through particular conditions with a resistance against transcendent reasoning. The particulars in an encounter of concepts, actors, and situations is what I understand to be local knowledges: Knowledges whose locality is the unfolding of an event. Locality, in this sense, is not simply representative of a spatial boundary, but attributes and conditions that cannot be generalized without losing localness. Since local knowledges cannot be quantified or generalized, they cannot effectively be explained by theoretical rationality and in turn, are difficult to evaluate by practical rationality. Local knowledges are radically different than rational knowledge.

### **Ethics and local knowledge.**

Local knowledges are illustrated in varying forms in public administration literature. For example, Rich's (1996) study of garbage collection in Detroit. Rich develops the case that an organization's codes of ethics are determined by management and deployed in extremely undemocratic ways upon the lowliest of workers. He explains how there is no regard for the ethics of garbage collectors and a structured refusal to consider their view: policies are in place to preempt any consideration of ethical decision making in the

garbage collector's role; protocols were implemented to minimize communication between the customer and the collector; residents were encouraged to address all concerns to the waste management office and not to voice complaints to the collector. Additionally, protocols limited a collector's options to address resident's violations of the codes to either refusing to collect or tagging the offense (the tag itself directs the resident to contact the central office). Additionally, garbage collection requires specific knowledge that can only be gained through the actual process of collecting—sizing the weight of an object, determining if anything is detrimental or threatening to the collector or the environment, and being aware of possible illegal activities. Rich is specifically taking the local knowledge of Detroit garbage collectors and using that knowledge to directly challenge the assumptions of mainstream ethics and also to distinguish collectors in Detroit from other collectors. This latter move positions the knowledge of Rich's work as a form of resistance against the generalizing tendencies of the mainstream elitist ethics that he critiques in the former.

A different piece of empirical ethical work is Schmidt's (1993) analysis of a dam failure in which she extrapolates four different forms of knowledge from the ground up and the top down. In this instance ground up is literal—the workers in her study are working with a fractured bedrock on which a dam is to be built. In stabilizing the rock, workers have to apply, infuse, and inject grout into the varying sections of the rock surface deemed inadequate to maintain a stable dam. Grout, a mixture of cement and water, can be mixed with varying combinations of sand and salt to generate different strengths and

drying times. Grout is applied to surface fractures and can be injected into deeply drilled holes to create underground structures to stabilize the bedrock above. Throughout this process Schmidt shows how this hands-on knowledge, the knowledge of these holes, is impossible to generalize, and developing from Hummel suggests that “data cannot be treated as independent nor separate from the context nor subject to analysis” (Schmidt, 1993, p. 526) This type of knowledge emerges from the materials at hand and should inform our decision making and is contrary to the types of knowledge that is known through rationalist analysis that seeks to control the material. The knowledge is gained through practice and mentorship. This knowledge of the hole, is unique from the scientific, institutional, and governmental knowledge which rely on hierarchy and procedures of control informed by abstract and decontextualized knowledge. More importantly, I suggest Schmidt’s account of grout provides categorical instances of localized immanent knowledge that demonstrate the inadequacy, and frankly the inappropriateness, of rationalist application of transcendent concepts.

Patterson (2001) complements King’s (2000) critique by going beyond rationality, in this case a return to actual bodies, and uses the experience of disgust to bring attention to the masculine intrinsic in reason and the unreason in the feminine. “It is difficult to grasp these complex intertwines of meat and social meaning, but worthwhile to spend some time examining our associations with bodies and emotions and their mutual associations with gender. Evocations of mortality and fear, desire and sexuality, suffering and disgust,

and not incidentally, women, are not easily accommodated in rationalized public administration” (p. 206).

There is a tendency to “preach to the choir” and frame the resistance to rationalism, and its relationship to morality and ethics, for other scholars to engage. But, if all of this is true, wouldn’t ethical public administration need to build the lines of communication between practitioners? King speaks of creating associational public spaces, “practicing public administration with a heartfelt mind would mean creating a different way to administer and a different way of interacting with citizens” (p. 288). King exemplifies this local individual knowledge by sharing her own experience with local knowledge via an Akron neighborhood project in which she was a part. Additionally in McSwite (1997 & 2011), Howe (2006), King and Zanetti (2005) we hear of similar attentions to local knowledges through an engagement of individuals lives outside of the academy. This refocussing ethics upon local knowledge as opposed to transcendent ideals or categories is indicative of a change in the consideration of ontology in public administration.

## **Conclusion**

Theoretical and practical rationality render the world sensible and have drastically improved many aspects of human life. Yet this advancement in the human condition has come at a hidden cost to public administration through the field’s overt reliance on instrumental forms of understanding which inhibits self-reflexive practices around the social construction of the field (Farmer, 1995). Theoretical and practical rationality are products of the human mind to make sense of the world. Critical positions suggest that

this product of the human mind has come to substitute the uniquely human conditions from which it emerged. The critical positions, discussed above, hope to expose the contingency of theoretical rationality through rationality's reliance on assumptions of analytical engagement with the world, objectivism, and instrumentality. Forms of theoretical rationality are conflated with the content of the world and an uncertainty intrinsic to theoretical practicality spills into questions of morality and ethics. The correspondence of morality and action—practical rationality—may be a more direct approach in addressing the issues of ethics, but the world in which action takes place is understood through theoretical rationality. Postmodernity may have been effective in breaking the chain of representation, the correspondence between knowledge and the world and exposed rationality's weight upon the world. But, postmodern critique fails to give an account of how humans would start to reconstruct the world out of the entropy. In what I would suggest is a moving past postmodern critique, McSwite (2011), Harmon (1995, 2003), King (2000), and Howe (2006) through what could generally be seen as an inquiry into practical rationality that is not constricted by the theoretical rationality of modernity. If the project of Denhardt (1981a, 1981b) is to expose alternative rationalities to instrumental-technical rationality, instances of contemporary practical rationality seems to be emerging as the area in which the discourse is now addressing. How do we evaluate what we think should happen (morals and desires) with our actions? (Jun, 2011). This re-evaluation presents an opportunity to extend a reconstruction of the social to establish a new political ontology where human relationships inform political norms and not the inverse (Catlaw,



2007). We must understand the social in terms other than instrumental rationality if we are to be ethical. How are we in relation, in non rational ways? Public administration ethics may well be suited to be the agar for the development of this discourse.

The following chapter provides the logical mechanism that is arguably well suited for such a discourse. The representational logic engrained in traditional rational ethics assumes an arborescent structure (Farmer, 1995). An alternative logic, a rhizomatic structure that works via connections as opposed to representation, is useful in understanding how an immanent ethics could emerge from local knowledges. The last three chapters (4, 5, and 6) develop how the rationalist understanding of ethics—that good knowledge engenders good behavior—can be deterritorialized from rational ethics and reterritorialized as an assemblage. The theory of public administration ethics as an assemblage will be shown to open new possibilities for the case study.

## Chapter 3: Assemblages

### Introduction

In the first chapter, the commonly separated topics of the university, ethics, and teaching with case studies are drawn together to form a conceptual connection whose function is to demonstrate that changes in the university, ethics, and teaching emerge together.

The second chapter recasts public administration ethics within a critique of rationality.

Rationality is subdivided into theoretical rationality and practical rationality of which the latter is assumed contingent upon the former. This bifurcation of rationality is suggested by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) to be embedded in an arborescent (tree-like) form of

logic in which all other forms of thought have been succumbed. The dominance of ar-

borescent logic can be recognized in its prevalence in the previous chapters' discussions regarding the American university and public administration ethics. Yet, Deleuze and Guattari suggest an alternative to arborescent rationality that can be found in the rhizome.

This chapter explicitly shows Deleuze and Guattari's arborescent logic in relation to public administration and how rhizomes—a logic of making connections—are useful in generating an alternative understanding of public administration that is well suited for public administration ethics.

Changes in the university with funding, online classes and degrees, and a proliferation of for profit universities is symptomatic of the neoliberal push that claims to transfer bureaucracy to networks, government to governance, and democracy to entrepreneurship.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 work backwards and connects rhizomes (chapter 3) to the critique of

public administration ethics (chapter 2) to how we teach and the university (chapter 1). This proposal suggests an assemblage theory of public administration ethics where rhizomatic thought is connected to teaching through the creation of ethical ecosystems well suited for the changing university and public realm.

### **Discovering Trees, Roots, and Rationality**

It is autumn in southern Utah and the mountains are on fire with brilliant yellows of the aspen's leaves turned with the kiss of the season's frost. The aspen's brilliance is made all the more dramatic by the comparatively dark shades of the sub-alpine fir, lodgepole pines, and a scattered myriad of less successful conifers. That kiss of frost at these lower altitudes, still at 9,000 feet above sea-level, drops to below freezing levels that have allowed snow to linger from the last storm. The Fish Lake Plateau is a stunning backdrop for continuing the discussion regarding rationality, teaching ethics, and the university. An investigation that is fittingly addressed by this very setting if for no other reason than the proverbial not seeing the forest for the trees. For here, on this remote plateau, the trees present themselves as the embodiment of the problem of rationality that haunts Western thought: the break in levels of analysis between large (macro) and individual (micro) (Delanda, 2006). In ethics, how is a generalized principle applicable to specific events? In political ontology, how do the individual's desires become represented? In teaching ethics, how does a single case study convey knowledge specific to each individual student? In the university, how does one deem a unique specialization valid for knowledge acquisition that is beneficial to the university and society? As Farmer

(1998) points out in regards to public administration ethics the field suffers from an inability to develop a macro perspective and is overly focussed on the micro. Svava (2012) too suggests that a low road to ethics focusses on specific ‘do not’s’ at the micro level without giving guidance to the macro endeavor of public administration ethics. The problems highlighted by the previously discussed critiques are not matters of ethics, but of the way the world is rendered intelligible implying if how the world is understood is changed, so does ethics. The problem is a problem of rationality and is expressed clearly in the tension between micro and macro therefore providing an excellent starting point in seeing the world anew.

Micro and macro are opposing approaches to understanding social aggregation: on one hand we can imagine the trees in southern Utah in aggregate—the forest. And the parable reminds us that having too much focus in the details of individual trees we miss that the forest is something in and of itself, that is not reducible to trees. Manuel Delanda (2006a) identifies this tradition that moves from the micro to the macro as microreductionism—“society is simply an aggregate or sum of either many rational agents or many phenomenological experiences shaped by daily routine...the macro entity does not have emergent properties of its own” (p. 250). Contrary to microreductionism, macroreductionism is an attempt to render the macro in a manner that individuals exist only in the manner dictated by the macro. Hence, the forest described here, one of conifers and aspens, dictates to the individual trees that they are either conifers or aspens. In the context of social sciences, we have society as an aggregate of individual attributes, or we have

individuals being constituted by society. Delanda points out that some approaches attempt to be a middle ground by categorizing individuals as the product of society and also existing as individuals. We have the aspen, or the forest; we have the aspen and the forest. This metaphor extends to ethics as well. Focussing on individuals virtuous behavior assumes an aggregate will be ethical if individuals act on virtue. Principled and dutiful action dictates that individuals act by the standards of macro principles or obligations. Finally consequentialist theories negotiate the tension between the individual and the aggregate by trying to calculate the greatest benefit and least harm between the two.

Deleuze provides a radically different approach that goes to the roots of the Western tree of knowledge. The solution is not finding the right combination of micro and macro. Rather, the micro and macro problem is in many ways the shadow of a specific type of logic: the arborescent model. The problem is with identities and categories such as aspen and forest, respectively. Returning to Fish Lake Plateau, we can argue all day about the trees and the forest on the Plateau without ever encountering an actual tree. What Deleuze beckons us to do is to go to the trees. Walking amongst the aspen, he and Guattari (1987) ask us to look at the trees instead of relying on the arborescent model which is only the image of thought. The similarity with the arborescent model and actual trees becomes more tenuous to maintain with the more trees we [*sic*] look at, and touch, and watch bend in the wind. If we dig deep into the ground and uncover the roots of the tree, we begin to see that actual roots are even more complicated than their above ground counterparts. We see that these roots are rhizomatic and do not follow the structure of the

tap, radicle, or fascicular root, which are isomorphic of branches. Rhizomes spill out, extend above, and stretch beyond limits, barriers, and structure. *Pando* is Latin for “I spread.” In considering Pando, the case is clear that the arborescent model has very little to do with actual trees, and is rather arborescent because of the logic of branching, of differentiation. It is an abstraction.

If we begin to look at the aspen on the Fish Lake Plateau something spectacular is realized. These individual trees are an 80,000 year-old rhizome named Pando who last blossomed around the continents last glaciation 10,000 years ago.

When one understands rhizomatic growth and movement and the different conceptual and material spaces that Pando operates in, new sprouts emerge and connections form. When we think back to a leaf we know that we can take the same leaf and press it in the family bible, watch it blow away in the wind, carried away and plastered into a birds nest, be eaten by a caterpillar, turned into soil from the weight of a heavy snow and be captured on film. Our knowledge is as rhizomatic, interconnected, and complex as Pando. Likewise, our knowledge exists as different kinds of knowledge populating different realms, or as Deleuze and Guattari suggest, territories (1986, 1987, 1994; Deleuze; 2007; Deleuze and Parnet, 2007). To recognize Pando as connections of possible elements (from flora and fauna, to dirt and poets, etc.) within dynamic territories (biology, ecology, systems theory, literature, art, Utah, Rocky Mountains, this paper, etc.) is to see Pando as

an assemblage.<sup>4</sup> As such, the alternative approach to ethics developed in the previous chapter is well suited for being considered rhizomatically as individuals are part of the connections amongst events and different ways of knowing. The alternative ethics is rhizomatic, it considers the terrain of public administration ethics as an assembling.

*A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) explores how the many are wrangled into a One—how do we talk of social aggregation without destroying the multiple? Catlaw (2007), in considering Foucault’s concept of biopolitics in relation to representation, suggests that, “Because biopolitics takes Life as its object but obscures the fact that it is indeed taking particular lives as objects, this form of politics disperses the state of the exception through the social field and thus deploys myriad dividing strategies and models of representation throughout the social in order to fabricate the People—to create the unity our ontology commits us to” (p. 84). This concept of representation is ontologically opposed to the becoming multiplicity of Deleuze and Guattari and are contrasting poles on how to account for social aggregation. Macro and micro do not exist intrinsically to a problem. Rather, the problem is intrinsic to arborescent thought—how can a member of a population meaningfully represent the population while still accounting for other unique members of the same population? And inversely, how can a “category” represent an individual without generalizing the unique attributes that make it that individual and not another? The difference between the bifurcation symbolized by the branching tree and the

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<sup>4</sup> The assumed usefulness of Pando for this essay is not representational as it is pedagogical. The ecological complexity, the physical size and temporal permeance, are directly opposed to the arborescent knowledge criticized in this essay. Pando is a useful tool for challenging the dominant conceptualization of arborescent thought by imposing a massive timeless biological mass upon the precision and simplicity of the image of logic trees.

spreading of real rhizomes is central to Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) project of creating resistance to the dominant tree-model.

### **The rhizome and the tree.**

A rhizome has no beginning or end it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo. The tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance. The tree imposes the verb "to be," but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, "and...and...and..." This conjunction carries enough force to shake and uproot the verb "to be." ... move between things, establish a logic of the AND, overthrow ontology, do away with foundations, nullify endings and beginnings[!] (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 25)

This section develops the concepts of arborescent and rhizomatic to provide the theoretical background for the later discussion of assemblages and the concluding chapter on rhizomatic ethics and case assemblages. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that human knowledge can be understood as two different types of books. The first book, the root-book, manifests the arborescent reasoning which has come to dominate all other forms of knowing. "This is the classical book, as noble, signifying... The book imitates the world, as art imitates nature: by procedures specific to it that accomplish what nature cannot or can no longer do, the law of the [root]book is the law of reflection, the One becomes two" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987 p. 5). This bifurcating logic, rationalism, arborescent



thought, has many names in Deleuze and Guattari and is the “most classical and well reflected, oldest, and weariest kind of thought” (p. 5).

### **Arborescent.**

Arborescent thought assumes a transcendent unified concept from which a process of bifurcation diagrams the variation of the world. Maps of species, the classifications and distinctions of bureaucracy, the structure of academic fields, statistical models, stereotypes—categories used to explain the world—are all diagrams of the arborescent model of knowledge. If you follow this tree logic from trunk to the furthest node, the smallest twig, that node is defined through a process of how it is different laterally from other nodes at its same level, but also in difference from the parent node. “The arborescent description reflects the fact that knowledge in the Western tradition is conceptualized in the form of a tree; arborescent means having the characteristics or form of a tree. Knowledge is divided in a hierarchical manner into branches and subbranches. There is an essential rootedness of knowledge, and there is a unity of knowledge” (Farmer, 1995, p.220). In the tree model of knowledge, difference can only be explained in the bifurcating of what was already there. Outside of that forking line of reasoning there is nothing. Deleuze sadly notes that today there is only one dominant type of book, that the tree-book (arborescent thought) has pushed out all others.

### **Rhizomatic.**

The arborescent model of Western knowledge is an abstraction that is based on a specific human logic, and not the actual world we are concerned about. Deleuze and Guattari

suggest that we consider rhizomes for what they immanently manifest: movements, biomass flows, interactions between soil, water, sunlight, and growth. If we begin to think this way, the logic of the rhizome is one of connections connecting tree to moisture, connecting soil to tree, air to soil; the root mediates and at the same time is itself. Rhizomatic thinking maps connections amongst things and concepts instead of the application of bifurcating tree logic upon things or concepts.

Deleuze and Guattari have a fondness to literature that challenges the dominance of the tree-book and often look to Jorge Borges and Franz Kafka. For example, the concept of assemblages is first developed at great length in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986). The challenge this literature poses to the structure of our thought, and not just the content, is apparent in preface of Foucault's *The Order of Things* (1970) with, "This book first arose out of a passage in Borges, out of the laughter that shattered, as I read the passage, all the familiar landmarks of my thought—our thought, the thought that bears the stamp of our age and our geography—breaking up all the ordered surfaces and all the planes with which we are accustomed to tame the wild profusion of existing things, and continuing long afterwards to disturb and threaten with collapse our age-old distinction between the Same and the Other" (p. xiv). Additionally, de Toro (2002) argues that Deleuze & Guattari's *rhizome*, presented in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (1975/1986) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980/1987) is to be found much earlier in the writing of Borges. "Borges replaced the binary opposition 'reality vs. fiction' with 'mimesis of fiction vs. pseudo- mimesis of fiction' ...[he] uses the rhizome as a

writing device” (de Torro, 2002, p. 80-81). I suggest that Borges can again be useful in collapsing and challenging the taken-for-granted rational representations intrinsic to arborescent thought. Borges (1941/1998) in his short story, *The Garden of Forking Paths*, describes an alternative to the tree-book which gives insights into rhizomatic thought without falling prey to arborescent thought. In the story the protagonist hears a story of his ancestor [Ts’ui Pen] who was a revered governor in China’s past, a novelist, and a builder of labyrinths. Ts’ui Pen’s final projects were of legend, a novel and an unsolvable labyrinth “whose infinite series of time converge diverge, forming a webbing of time embracing all possibilities” (Deleuze, 1993, p. 62). The novel is chaotic and nonsensical and brings shame upon the family and the labyrinth is never found. Ts’ui’s novel and labyrinth are revealed to the protagonist as one-and-the-same, an infinite garden of forking paths that is played out through time. “In all fictions, each time a man meets diverse alternatives, he chooses one and eliminates all the others; in the work of the impossible to disentangle Ts’ui Pen, the character chooses—simultaneously—all of them. He creates, thereby, ‘several futures,’ several times, which themselves proliferate and fork...all the outcomes in fact occur; each is the starting point for further bifurcations” (p. 125). In the concluding scene the reader discovers that one of the infinite numbers of combinations in the labyrinth/novel is the plot of the protagonist. *The Garden of Forking Paths* is a story that contains another story of which the first story is only a small part.

The Garden of Forking Paths is an incomplete, but not false, image of the universe as conceived by Ts’ui Pen...[who] did not believe in a uniform

and absolute time; he believed in an infinite series of times, a growing, dizzying web of divergent, convergent, and parallel time. That fabric of times that approach one another, fork, are snipped off, or are simply unknown for centuries, contains all possibilities. (Borges, 1998, p. 127)

Borges' story is the type of story that, according to Deleuze (2007) is threatened by the conformity of arborescence. More precisely, Borges' Garden is a world where infinite possibility is just one small part of the story. Borges' Garden is an inversion, a reflection, of the arborescent world which only has one type of story: the singular path chosen from diverse options.

Borges' story is useful for understanding Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the second type of book, the rhizome, which is "precisely this increase in the dimensions of a multiplicity that necessarily changes in nature as it expands its connections. There are no points or positions in a rhizome...the number is no longer a universal concept measuring elements according to their emplacement in a given dimension, but itself has become a multiplicity that varies according to the dimensions considered" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 8).

When the story is told to the protagonist, Ts'ui Pen's novel and labyrinth are no longer separate, the two become one. And once the two become one, the novel is realized to be an infinite labyrinth through time, and the generational distance between Ts'ui Pen and the protagonist is dissolved.

“In a riddle whose answer is chess, what is the only word that must not be used?”

I thought for a moment.

“The word chess,” I replied. (Borges, 1989, p. 124)

Markula (2006) suggests that the rhizome is a puzzle where the relationship between pieces are in neither a one-to-one nor a one-to-many relationship, but many-to-many where no structure dictates how pieces should be ordered. In such a puzzle the missing piece is what draws together and orders the puzzle. Or, as in Borges' example, it is the missing word that makes the riddle intelligible. Subtraction creates order. “For Deleuze and Guattari, real critique and real creation are not differentiated, and the destruction of the image of thought and the elements constitutive of its power are immanent to the real genesis of thought” (Beddoes, n.d.). Rhizomes emerge with the removal of a dimension from the chaotic which Deleuze and Guattari suggest can be understood as  $(n-1)$  where  $n$  is an undifferentiated space and  $(-1)$  is a dimension removed. In the *Garden of Forking Paths*, a main character is confused by Ts'ui Pen's text as it seems chaotic and unintelligible until he noticed the word “time” was not mentioned once. The novel was absent of temporal limitations and upon that realization intelligible stories became apparent. The labyrinth-novel in Borges is not arborescent: forking paths that have only one possible route to the present. Rather, the labyrinth is rhizomatic: paths that fork, and cross, and are snipped short, in which all are chosen and made intelligible only by being once re-

moved. The *Garden of Forking Paths* is enveloped by the story within, taking the rhizomatic structure of the labyrinth and changing the dimensions and meaning of both stories.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) begin their *A Thousand Plateaus*, the consideration of aggregation with the root-book, with arborescent knowledge and immediately move into the consideration of the rhizome. Arborescent rationality is an abstract logic that divides representations of The One into twos and the two's into fours to impose an order upon the world based upon difference. It is a logic that can come to represent all of human knowledge as Borges explores in another short story, *The Library of Babel*—a universal library with every piece of human knowledge, whether true or false, is represented in text, on a page, in a volume, upon a shelf. As Quine (1987) eloquently demonstrates, this knowledge of the world boils down to a volume of two pages—one with a mark and one without a mark, everything representable becomes represented through the repetition of present or not present.

In the context of the rhizome and arborescent rationality, Quine's insight needs a qualification: binary logic, the epitome of arborescence, can only represent structured knowledge—it cannot approach the chaotic multiplicity that is nature. Remove the spine of that one volume of two pages; remove the law of reflection that turns the One into two; and remove the story as the container of the plot; remove the unique from the structure that orders it and the rhizome emerges. Binary logic in the form of digital representations is developed further in the latter chapters in regards to how these representations embody a rhizomatic alternative to arborescent thought.

### **Trees and rhizomes: Transcendence and immanence.**

A significant difference in Deleuze and Guattari's move away from representational logic is the difference between immanence and transcendence, which is isomorphic with rhizomatic and arborescent thought. This section develops these ideas as to discuss different concepts surrounding knowledge creation.

[Deleuze's] objection to relations of transcendence is that they involve founding negations (for example, that mind is completely separate from body). Such negations are the grounds for negative valuations, both in the sense of a 'lower' realm finding its value or redemption in a 'higher' one, and in the sense of the lower realm depending on the higher one for its definition. Deleuze's philosophy of immanence emphasizes connections over forms of separation. But this connection must itself be a connectivity between relations and not between different identities. This is because an external principle would be needed to ground those identities (for example, identity depended on the human mind—thereby setting it up as transcendent). (Williams, 2005, p. 126)

Immanence and transcendence are concepts that render the respective rhizomatic and arborescent modes of thought intelligible. In rhizomatic structures the structure is immanent though connections between plant and soil, and water and air in such a way that those distinctions function as connections not to differentiate. Structure emerges out of the connectivities of the rhizome.

Alternatively, arborescent, or rationalist, thought occurs from a transcendent logic of bifurcation and orders the world through differences between representations. One starts with the most abstract, general, or distant concept and then nests underneath it variations that occur that can be consistently mapped throughout the process. This arborescent model is considered extensive as it seeks to apply a logic that covers all variations possible under the initial conditions and in this sense is deterministic as any variation still holds common the abstract starting point of the tree.

Where arborescent rationality orders the world through representations, rhizomatic thinking is expressed through assemblages. Assemblages are mappings or tracings of rhizomatic relationships and connections within and amongst material and virtual intersectionalities. Rhizomes are creative as they make connections they intensify through connecting to things that are different than the rhizome itself and with each connection a rhizome changes. Since rhizomes are not describing content—*something that exists*—but rather tracing the connections between content, assemblages should be understood as *becoming* compared to being. In other words, rhizomatic connections expressed as assemblages make no claim to the nature or content of the assemblage separate from the conceptual tracings of relations. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) suggest this mode of thinking is “anti-ontology.”

The desire of making connections in Deleuze and Guattari (1987 & 1994) is one of rendering arborescent models of knowledge rhizomatic. In other words, instead of ontology imposing relationships through categorical organization, the rhizome takes relations



and renders them moot by negating the differences between things as generative of new assemblages and not a categorical ordering of existing things. This process unearths the neat and orderly structure of dominant arborescent knowledge, (family trees, Linnaean classification, bureaucratic organization, “root causes,” foundations, and the like), and discovering that real branches and real roots are tangled masses of growth and contraction. Tree logic is nothing like real trees, and rational thought is not how nature works. Natural relationships are not dichotomous, or as Deleuze and Guattari (1987) describe, reflect each other in a logic of representation. Consider a category and an individual in that category as having a necessary causal or representational relationship: An aspen is an aspen because of the category “Tree.” Farmer (1995) calls this “boxism,” where the category, role, organizational position, or stereotype is what is referred to in language and planning instead of the individual described by the box. But, remove those attributes of the category “tree” that are assumed to be necessities in understanding material aspen and the rhizome appears. In this rational pairing of object and concept—only consider that there is a relationship between object “aspen” and the concept “tree,” and do not apply causal or representational logic to them. It becomes possible to see an affective relationship between the pair rhizomatically yet without rationality’s logic of representation that binds together concepts and the material things they represent—there is no naturalized claims of truth. True and false are equally relative without the transcendent ordering of representations through arborescent thought. Hence thinking rhizomatically and expressing this thought in the form of assemblages is not only a form of resistance to arborescent

thought, but also a way of advancing our knowledge in postmodern awareness of the absence of Truth. In Deleuze and Guattari, resistance is not just ideological but also practical.

Deleuze and Guattari's concepts are intended to challenge the status quo and the arborescent rationality that orders our lives and knowledge, including academia (Farmer, 1995). "It is not enough to simply import and apply some of the concepts of Deleuze and Guattari and to make them fit into the ongoing knowledge creation an academic field seems to be about. Rather such a field is itself...created for the purpose of giving orders regarding the organization of bodies and the administration of signs" (Lohmann & Steyaert, 2006, p. 91). Gane (2009) suggests that Deleuze and Guattari's (1994) idea of concepts allow for a field to revisit core questions that have been forgotten through its evolution. This folding of the concerns of the past by revisiting texts through Deleuze and Guattari reworks old questions and investigations and allows for authors and concepts long assumed dead, to be engaged as contemporaries. In a time when the field of public administration continues an expansive growth from security to education, to health and beyond, assemblages provide a means to address the very questions from which the field emerged, such as what are appropriate roles and limits of government?

### **Assemblages in Knowledge Creation**

In arborescent thought, categorizations divide not only the university and industry through bureaucracies, sectors, and regions, for example, but also the manner in which the knowledge of the world is organized (Farmer, 1995). Geography, urban planning, bi-

ology, economics—each have subfields that inherit their identity through the tree-model of knowledge. Assemblages provide alternatives to the very way in which knowledge is created, organized, and used. This section considers how assemblages are conceived and ways in which they can be used.

### **Composing assemblages.**

Assemblages can become a corrective to the macro-micro problem by accommodating for the logic that moves individuals into populations of individuals, and those populations into greater assemblages, until you have a society which in turn, affects individuals (DeLanda, 2006a, 2006b). Each assemblage is a multiplicity that contains multiplicities and is contained by multiplicities. Larger assemblages are created through repeated patterns, “a statistical result” (2006a, p. 252) of process or behaviors between interconnected smaller assemblages. “[E]ach differently scaled individual entity (individual persons, individual organizations, individual cities and so on) is made out of entities at the immediate lower scale, that is the realizations among scales is one of parts to whole” (2006a, p.252). Increasingly larger levels of scale emerge as different from its constitute parts and in turn, changes those very parts. This process does not lead to a “‘society as a whole,’ that is, a vague, general entity or category, but simply another concrete, singular entity (an individual nation-state for instance, part of a population of such territorial states)” (p. 252).

If one follows the logic DeLanda suggests regarding the difference between reductionist and emergent forms of knowledge acquisition, the clear distinction in traditional

science between objective and subjective (knowledge of the material world absent of humans versus contingency of that knowledge upon human expression) is collapsed. Components of these knowledges, objects in the world (materials and their linear causes), and language (expression) no longer are oppositional but rather are contrasted as extremes along an axis between matter and ideas. The varying mixes of these extremes forms the first axis of an assemblage. The second axis is a territory which “originates in a certain decoding of milieus, and is just as necessarily extended by lines of deterritorialization” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 505). Assemblages are not simply multiple levels and methods of analysis, nor the widening of an object of research to include a wider swath of objects and events. Assemblages could easily include these but it would only be one axis, the other being the forces that order and disorder the territory that renders those events and objects intelligible.

Orthogonal to this dimension of objects and language are “variable processes in which these components become involved and that either stabilize the identity of an assemblage, by increasing its degree of internal homogeneity or the degree of sharpness of its boundaries, or destabilizes it” (DeLanda, 2006b, p. 12). Processes that reify and stabilize the assemblage result in strengthening the assemblage. Forces that destabilize an assemblage are those that act to deterritorialize the assemblage and though considered as forms of resistance against and away from established territories, the processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization are not separate forces. No longer do the objects of knowledge fit into neat taxonomic or essential categories derived from linear causality or

organic wholes. Assemblages are “a series of heterogeneous groupings in which the grouping itself could be distinguished as a whole from the sum of its parts. Importantly, such groupings are mixed, and social or cultural groupings are not distinguished from natural ones (or vice versa)” (Harrison, 2011). Delanda (2006b) cites Deleuze specifically in his understanding of assemblages which are “wholes characterized by relations of exteriority” (p. 10). Things can be taken out of their context, placed in another, with only changes occurring in the relations of that thing to other things. Markula (2006) suggests to think of a puzzle whose pieces do not have edges that connect to other pieces through 1:1 or 1:many relationships but rather a many:many with no clear edges to the pieces.

With this we can expand upon common understandings of context, where there is a correspondence—an extra-meaning to an object or expression—which implies a unity between object and form resulting from the lineage of objects and language. In turn, variation is qualified in a double sense, between objects and language and the difference between the differences (DeLanda, 2002; Deleuze, 1994). Instead of variation occurring ad hoc in the variation between things with a shared transcendent category, variation becomes central to Deleuze’s ontology in the possible relationships amongst objects and language. Deleuze and Guattari describe the moving towards the actual material world (as opposed to the conceptual virtual world) as molecular. In contrast, the enveloping of the molecular within forms is the becoming molar—a transcendent and inherited individual identity opposed to the actuality of an individual (DeLanda, 2002; Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). As assemblages become more molecular they are becoming more rhizomatic

and becoming more molar an assemblage is more embedded in the arborescent logic imposed upon it.

**What assemblages do.**

Assemblages are a way of ordering the world through a logic of selection (Delanda, 2005). Assemblages sort the things of the world, whether ideas, characteristics or objects/people, and behaviors that act to process or sort the axis of things. Order emerges from the relationship of an aggregation of the things; it is the statistical averaging, a shared, or immanent, characteristic. Where arborescent thought necessarily renders objects of the world as abstract representations, assemblages are the terrain in which the material meet the abstract. Dewsbury (2011) explains that, “Before a systematic image of thought can be configured a philosophical speculation must take place to bring together heterogeneous materials and ideas in unforeseen ways” (p. 149-150). Dewsbury reminds us that Guattari’s use of the word assemblage (*agencer*) implies a bringing forth the mapping of the assemblage at the same time as the assemblage’s creation. From biology, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) describe the assemblage as a process of *autopoeisis* in which the object of knowledge and the subject created emerge together.

Though assemblages can be considered as “things” which are representative of the world bound to epistemic questions of proper depiction (Dewsbury, 2011), assemblages should be considered for what they do, not what they represent (Dewsbury, 2011; Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). This break from representation is most clearly made explicit in Deleuze’s appropriation of Whitehead’s empiricism in which he claims, “the ab-

stract does not explain, but must itself be explained; and the aim is not to rediscover the eternal or the universal, but to find the conditions under which something new is produced” (Deleuze and Parnet, 2007, p. vii). Bryant (2011) calls this approach an ontological empiricism where the events of the world are used to challenge our categorizations and conceptual assumptions of the world. In arborescent thought, concepts are presumed to have a foundational unity which imposes a Oneness upon the world. “One starts with abstractions such as the One, the Whole, the Subject, and one looks for the process by which they are embodied in a world which they make conform to their requirements” (Deleuze and Parnet, 2007, p. vii). But, assemblages are immanent and as such challenge the unity assumed in arborescent models and such empirically challenge rational ontological assumptions of Oneness. “An assemblage emerges when a function emerges; ideally it is innovative and productive” (Livesey, 2005, p. 19). This function can be diagrammed to show the forces that reterritorialize, which may create lines of flight, or deterritorialize, releasing flows of desire (Harper, 2009). Assemblages have a fundamental “mechanic dimension [that] underscores the objectivity, lack of specific location, and primary role of being productive” (Livesey, 2005, p. 18).

Dewsbury (2010) highlights additional functions assemblages perform beyond Delanda’s (2006) concern in the emergence of individuals within intensive environments, and the affect of those environments upon the individuals that compose them. The first is that it is a way of thinking in the form of complexity theory, specifically Stuart Kauffman, which exemplifies using “assemblage as a mode of thinking; you thus research

through thinking assemblages” (Dewsbury, 2010, p. 148). Simply, where DeLanda’s use of assemblages is concerned with the world, complexity theory uses assemblages in our models of the world. In addition, Bennett (2010) and Stengers (2002) exemplify a third way of assemblage thought in evaluating our relationship with the material world, to “discern our place in the world and autopoetically gain our definition at the same time” (Dewsbury, 2010, p. 148). These three uses of assemblages shape a conceptual territory that assemblages occupy. Catlaw and Kim (2011) suggest an innovative way to consider assemblages. They suggest that, “if one accepts that every multiplicity is unique, the context must dictate a procedure. In words, the process of assembling components of a system of interest for a specific question must proceed before one concludes what simulations tell about the system or what we know about them. Therefore, how to bind our inquiry and to choose the relevant set of assemblages is what really matters” (p. 28). In other words, while many theorists are concerned with what assemblages can be used for, Catlaw and Kim suggest to consider what assemblages do. Just as in the case of assemblages in the context of ethical-ecosystems, assemblage research puts a new level of responsibility on those who are creating and using assemblages.

Assemblage thought is a fundamentally different approach to knowledge acquisition than arborescent thought. In the latter, knowledge is desired as it is believed to be a depiction of the world and provides a way to predict outcomes and control those outcomes. The epistemic virtue of objectivity allows for this to be possible: we can observe the world separate from it without bias; reason about the world separate from it; and then act



upon it. Since this abstraction and action is predetermined by the transcendent categories of arborescent thought, there are severe limitations on knowledge and agency. Objects of study must be able to be isolated from the individual studying it. And as rationality is the faculty of an individual, legitimate means of understanding the world are limited to individuals. The individualistic nature of inquiry creates a difficulty in sharing knowledge, especially since the objects of study must fit transcendent categories. Hence, a robust knowledge base and rigorous methods must be standardized to share ideas and findings. This creates significant problems as all the rigor and robustness contradicts the assumptions of an unbiased objective observer by embedding the individual observer in collective social knowledge. Because of this, not only is action limited to individuals with knowledge and training that can set aside said knowledge and training, and agree upon objects to study, the action sanctioned by reason is limited by the same constraints. There is a very small fraction of the world that can then be studied. Admittedly, these constraints place huge burdens on the efficacy of knowledge which, in turn, has allowed for immense application of a tiny amount of information regarding the world.

To review, we first see things as not isolated by the transcendent categories we impose upon them. The recognition of this is itself performative, as new territories of organization emerge as we try to re-render the world to make sense again. As the base transcendent ontological categories of living and non-living, human and machine, knowledge and matter are included into problematizing the focus of research, appealing to higher tiers on the organizational chart of reality, no longer works. We trace the branches back

to the roots of the tree and discover that they are sprawling, interconnected masses that intertwine together, break the surface and are themselves trees, creating an ecosystem that in turn provides the nutrients for the tree from which we began.

### **Attributes of Assemblage Thought**

Assemblage thought has some dramatic implications for traditionally conceived public administration scholarship. This section considers one such implication—the collapsing of methods with ethics, epistemology with ontology. If we consider epistemology as the verification of our representations, and ethics as the verification of our actions upon moral representations, theoretical and practical rationality (Jun, 2011), respectively, responsibility lies on the correct representational depictions. Bryant suggests that the etymology of eco (eco-logy, eco-nomy) may be helpful in reminding us that questions of assemblages, the question of collectives are tied to “accustomed place” such as the home, dwelling, or habitat. “Whether or not an etymological connection actually exists between these two terms (ethics and eco-), what is at stake here are questions of collective composition involving humans and nonhumans, such that the ethics is essentially a question of ethical ecology or the composition of collectives in response to events that buffet collectives” (Bryant, 2011, p. 29). Rationalism encourages responsibility by conflating reasonable forms of action to what is intelligible. Rationalist ideas of responsibility differentiate between options of true and false regarding the validity of representations. Alternatively, in assemblage thought, responsibility is intrinsic to creating and beckons a care for future people.

Epistemology, and in turn rationality, and modern science, is a process of making the chaotic world fit into our concepts. Hence, what we choose to be part of our “small world” (Simon, 2001) is not simply a theoretical question regarding correct depiction of the world, but whether or not the elements that we allow into our assemblages can be granted agency and therefore be held responsible if either theoretical or practical concerns fail. Assemblages avoid a naturalized whole that developed in parallel with the development of our rationalities: Humans have free will, have dominion over animals, are separate from nature, etc. (Harrison, 2011; Delanda; 2006a&b). Assemblages provide a means for including the more-than-human world which, in turn, radically changes how we approach normative questions that require scientific or technical expertise. In this sense, expertise no longer is a knower of powerful information that can apply it extensively to the world, but rather an expert becomes one who can render an assemblage, include and exclude, in such a manner to intensify the elements toward a desired future. As we name the world, we create our relation to the world in an autopoietic act. The question that becomes clear is if our creative acts are always becoming something for future peoples, how best to be responsible for our creations? In this sense, who and what is let into the door of our assemblages is increasingly important. Deleuze (1992), Day (2005), and Catlaw (2009) all suggest in similar ways that individuals entering and exiting into spaces brings about new forms of power in the form of access and the codes that permit passage amongst these spaces. In the following chapter this idea of codes and access will

be fleshed out in relation to digital technologies and the challenges to representation and knowledge that they engender.

**A need for assemblage ethics.**

Each assemblage includes different inclusions and roles of participants. On one hand, what Deleuze's ontology gives us is the potential to have multiple diversities in how people order the world to be intelligible. As society is increasingly complicated, societies need to increase their diversity to generate new ideas (van der Leeuw, 2010). Globalization portends a greater social/economic/and political normativity which decreases variety outside of the problem definition. If the problems that occur are global, how do we increase diversity beyond the global population? There is no lateral movement or interaction with different assemblages because all forms of human society are under a global arborescence. Fresh and novel ideas simply dry up in between the rows of the global socio-political mono-culture of neoliberalism. The mechanism to increase diversity is then one of rendering new connections within the population. But, this cannot be an arborescent connectivity. A set of the population carries the defining attributes of the population, and if the population is defined by global problems, no subset will adequately be able to generate variance to create diversity enough. Recognizing multiplicity provides an ontology that is useful for generating diversity, which is necessary to generate the novelty that is needed for overcoming problems that we will face in a shrinking world.

On the other hand, holistic attempts toward problem solving only increase the amount of knowledge, and hence, increase reliance on our selective mechanisms to determine

what is important and not (Sarewitz, 2010). Assemblages may provide an alternative to these problems by seeking out affects that intensify and bring about the desired result. The immanent function of an assemblage is leveraged by its practicality but also the normative evaluation of inclusion and exclusion. If we consider that it is impossible for a representational model to capture the necessary diversity to address complex systems, assemblage thought provides an immanent simplification toward problems. Assemblage thought can be a mechanism of building up compared to explaining down, looking for causal chains. Hence, by generating connections between and within systems, multiple concepts are generated that together push into new thresholds of understanding. We find voice for the important and exciting ideas and things we are doing without the need of imposing a singularity that accurately categorizes the plethora of ideas and practices into a fabricated whole. We are freed to talk about what we are doing without the rationalist obligation to identify what we are. Though this seems mundane, to be relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century one cannot exist in a silo. Instead of identifying what public administration is and then determining how to be interdisciplinary, relevant to practice, and how to “reach out” to our communities and the general public, assemblages map connections without necessarily starting from what public administration *is*. This is increasingly important—perhaps even necessary—for the rapid and radical changes we are experiencing today. The following chapter traces these conditions and their connections to public administration, ethics, and teaching.

If the ethical terrain we face in the field, as I suggest, is a product of our rationalist mode of thought, it seems we have a practical and normative ethical concern to consider other modes of thought and what they do for public administration. In other words, we have a rationally ethical obligation to be rational and not privilege a single mode of thought. Assemblages bring rationality from transcendent position and recognizes it to be a real actor within the rhizome of public administration. We are able to map the connections between rationality and other concepts and material things. In an increasingly complex networked world, to understand the relationships between logics, knowledges, and things is paramount in a field intimately concerned about these assemblages.

With assemblage ethics we also recognize that the approaches we use to *teach* are also a mechanism in shaping the ethical terrain in which we, including our students, find ourselves in. Abu Ghraib, The *Shoah*, drone warfare, natural and human disasters, corruption. These are all parts of our world and traditional ethics in public administration asks “Why did these things happen?” Once the failure is found, we can begin to learn and educate our students to do better or prevent such failures from occurring. Yet there seems to be a deep irony here. Assuming that being ethical is taking responsibility, why do we teach case studies that discipline students to identify in *others* what went wrong and prescribe what *others* should have done?<sup>5</sup> Case studies reinforce that to be ethical we should look to *others to place the blame* which is the result of our own teaching. Using case studies I am implying that the ethical failures and real horrors of the world occur outside

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<sup>5</sup> Popular public administration ethics books, such as Adams and Balfour’s (2009) *Unmasking Administrative Evil* and O’Leary’s (2006) *Ethics of Dissent* both exemplify the field uses case studies to problematize blame in such a manner to reinforce the study of others to find ethical failures.

of my classroom—I am looking for others to represent problems in the field in which I am a part. Alternatively, assemblage ethics blurs the line between the act of teaching and the content of teaching. How am I responsible for that horror? How are the practices and content of my teaching ethics create and are created by such events? Assemblage ethics involves recognizing education is an ethical performance that spills out of the classroom into the world. Before furthering a theory of assemblage ethics for public administration in chapter 4, the terrain of public administration as it relates to assemblages is sketched out.

### **Assemblage Theory in Public Administration**

Public administration, not unlike all academic fields, has clear lines and traditions of what is desirable regarding the scholarly content of the field. To understand what possibilities may exist for assemblages in public administration, the dominant arborescent model is described. Academia, in general, is shaped by arborescence in the manner departments and fields of inquiry are hierarchically nested and related to each other within an assumed unity of knowledge (Farmer, 1995). Within this general and singular concept of academia, public administration finds itself inheriting elements of arborescent thought.

American Public Administration seeks legitimization from the form of thought it imposes. The arborescent model of rationality fabricates The People through a logic of exclusion (Catlaw, 2007) leaving the actual people from being governed absent. This rendering the sovereign transcendent places authority, knowledge, and action in relation to the concepts that are in the realm of sovereign action. Political action inherits the same

problems of abstraction, instrumentality, and the inability to create new possibilities that constitute arborescent knowledge. The People, and its many forms, exist separate from the object of governance. In other words, the knowledge that might emerge from local conditions rhizomatically is impenetrable by the logic of The State. No matter the American-ness, the Public-ness, or the strength of the Administration's authority, local knowledges—immanent movements and collections of actual lived conditions—will always resist as American Public Administration is a field of abstractions. In other words, assemblages are rendered absent from public administration in order to maintain the legitimacy of the field—and through extension—the practice of public administration.

The two specific examples described in chapter 2—Schmidt's (1993) account of dam construction and the varying types of localized knowledge involved, and Rich's (1996) account of the ethics of garbage workers in Detroit—demonstrate the inability, often intentional refusal, to incorporate assemblage thought. In these cases knowledge is immanent with practice/activity and develops through connections of agents, objects, social relationships, environmental conditions within the realm of governmental activity. Specific policies and managerial decisions did not simply deny the knowledge that emerged, but foreclosed the possibility of granting the existence of the possibility of assemblages. Arborescent knowledge, through the bifurcation of its process of rendering the world intelligible, enforces an authority that claims what counts and does not count in the world. We see that not only does arborescent thought function through differentiation of the



world, it differentiates itself as the only source of legitimacy and imposes *being*—existence—as an absolute ontological condition.

This arborescence can be seen at work in relational ontology which suggests a general category to compare and connect varying specific ontologies. Arborescent thought—The One being split into many—is performative in relational ontology where the ultimate process of being is “a-whole-becoming-through-many” (Stout, 2012, p. 393). Deleuze might suggest that this movement to classify ontology as relational is doing something different than looking at the base assumptions of being. Instead, it extends the transcendent arborescence logic—which once ordered the world—to also be the ordering process internal to the world. The transcendent logic of rationality that imposes a singularity upon the world which is then analytically split for instrumental reasons is naturalized in *being*. The split between mind and body, of the world, and our understanding of the world is resolved in relational ontology. Much of the ontological discourse in public administration is a seemingly logical continuation of arborescent thought and modernity. Where:

In modernity, one moves from expression to signification: from a world where differences are real and distinct and give birth to signs, to a world where each event has its ground and origin in one organising system.

From real and distinct differences one moves to formal difference, and to an idea of humanity that is nothing more than a formal function. Man is not a being within the world so much as a capacity to signify, exchange and communicate. (Colebrook, 2005, p. 201)

Ontology in public administration often is deterritorialized from localities and virtual and material intersectionalities from which it emerged and in turn the ontology is reterritorialized as *justifications for when theoretical and practical rationality do not garner expected results*. Hence we can see explicit instrumentality given to ontology as to improve our research and field in general (Raadschelders, 2011, Haverland & Yanow, 2012; Stout, 2012). Stout (2012) articulates this use of ontology in the field crystal clear:

If the nature of reality is in conflict with how we perceive it, then our socially constructed reality will be incongruent and thus problematic. If our institutions are based on faulty assumptions, then the results will be similarly problematic. So, the goal is to think through how ontology, political form, and resulting practices can be aligned in a logical manner that leads to desirable results. (p. 391)

The structure of arborescent thought is impregnated into the very foundation of existence and as such it manifests the expansive logic of arborescence into ontology: “it frames presuppositions about all aspects of life and what is good and right” (Stout, 2012, p. 390). Recognizing that the field presupposes wholes which are then analytically subdivided to create instrumental knowledge (King, 2000), rationally the field should presuppose theory as a whole, which in turn is analytically broken apart to create better knowledge to inform practice. In this sense, much of the ontological debate in public administration is being rational about being rational—at least in the expression of this scholarship. This is radically different than a Deleuzian perspective in which rationality’s inabil-

ity to rationally account for itself is a fissure in which alternative forms to rationality emerge. To be rational about being rational is not to rationally approach rationality, but to recognize the rational need to have additional modes of thought.

As a non-representational theory, Deleuze and Guattari's theory is orthogonal to the conventional public administration discourse. To use Deleuze and Guattari is to validate the possibility of an alternative to the very form of thought that gives legitimacy to the endeavor of American Public Administration. This alternative is what Deleuze and Guattari (1986 & 1987) term a minor position, one that doesn't exist in opposition to, but in the spaces in between the dominant theory. Some of contemporary public administration theorists (Catlaw, 2007; Catlaw & Jordan, 2009; Catlaw & Holland, 2012; Farmer, 1995; Harmon 1995, 2005; Harmon & McSwite, 2011, King, 2000; Howe, 2006; McSwite 1997) often speak from a minor position by speaking from alterity, but toward the territory of the state. These theorists, in one form or another, have challenged the universality of rational arborescent thought assumed in orthodox public administration theory and share the concern for local knowledges and immanent ontological considerations in the alternative ethics presented in chapter 3. For example, Catlaw and Holland's (2012) recent piece on the animal subject in public administration speaks to this when they state that animals are everywhere in the field of public administration, yet they are absent. Animals occupy a space discarded from the ordering of the field. Though animals are present in the objects and language with which public administration operates, they are excluded from the assemblage of the field beyond objects to be acted upon. Catlaw and

Holland, by subtracting this passivity from the assemblage are deterritorializing public administration from a responsiveness to the People and are reterritorializing it as an assemblage concerned with, and constituted by, more-than-human life.

We can also see this in play in Stivers' analysis of the settlement women, where a feminist approach to public administration is one of reterritorializing a state that was deterritorialized from social policy to administrative procedures. "the story we continue to tell about the birth of the field of public administration neglects policy in favor of administration, thus replicating the dichotomy the bureau men set up. What price are we paying as we continue to depend on so narrow an understanding of our origins?" (Stivers, 1993, p. 528). Her responses are on one hand speaking to the inclusion of additional people and ideas, and on the other is concerned with the power of who gets to say what about the role of government. Though Stivers uses feminism, she is clearly not using feminism as a lens to critique public administration, but as a tool to deterritorialize the field on two fronts that image from the context of her 'critique': 1) widening the inclusionary axis of the public administration assemblage to include a more diverse population and a history 2) by placing a critical self reflexivity on the edge of the territory of power. This latter concern is especially potent as it demonstrates a concern for the field that emerges from a minor history of the field and is simply not argument over who's right. Stivers' position is political as it comes from the position of exclusion and presents to The State, an alternative.

In these few cases we can see a different approach to the arborescent logic that is intrinsic to the field. But, to differentiate between the field and an alternative is to only reinforce the arborescent logic. The examples here come from a minor position, a space found between the branches of the field. Animals are everywhere, but they are nowhere. This statement is not the logic of “either be this or be that”—the deterministic and extensive logic of the tree. Catlaw and Holland (2012) say, “Yes, and...” Stivers (1993) says that in a history of arborescent logic, where the field thought it must say “either/or” within this field we see that there is still, “Yes, and...”

These two speak toward the state from a minor position, existing in the in between space between the masculine and anthropocentric, respectively, of the field. Though these efforts to shift the territory of public administration are speaking from this minor position to the state, the majoritarian consideration of them is limited to arborescent logic. As the minor encounters the major, the bifurcating ordering of arborescent rationality seeks to envelope or discard the minor. For example, we can see Stivers’ (1993) concern for social policy as a significant concern for public administration to be adapted without taking into consideration her minor position as a feminist. As social policy studies becomes an increasingly important element of public administration, to the point of recoding the field as public affairs, it could be suggested that this has occurred. We can similarly see the movement to deterritorialize public administration from an anthropocentric position by simply being enveloped in a well intended increased care for non-humans, without any serious shift in the human-centric nature of the field.

There is an alternative to these critiques from minor positions. Minor positions occur from a space that is set aside from inclusion in the major discourse or exists in the void between several dominant discourses. Deleuze and Guattari are adamant that being in a minor position is not sufficient, one has to become minor. This includes taking the space one is given as an absence and though a generative inversion where the space of exclusion becomes the space of genesis. The subtraction becomes the positive—the masculine is juxtaposed against the feminine and not presupposed to the feminine. A process is played out, a procedure where the term that defines the representation is extracted and representational. Patriarchy is the placing of the female as minor, becoming feminine, subtracts patriarchy from the assemblage presenting a new relationship between masculine and feminine.

As mentioned above in Borges' story, what is the one word that cannot be mentioned in a riddle about chess? We can represent this riddle as the puzzle of public administration. A riddle that strives to claim legitimacy in a many:to:many relationships based on representation. The one word that cannot be mentioned in solving this puzzle, the piece that is absent that draws together the assemblage of public administration and democracy: The People—the word that is not representable in this riddle is representation. Catlaw's (2007) *Fabricating the People* is a becoming minor; a becoming representational as it represents the concept left un-interrogated—representation. Is this the way out?

Can feminist and non-anthropomorphic minor positions become the spaces in which alternative forms of governing emerge? Instead of the settlement women being examples

from the past that can inform the present, they become the field's contemporaries, showing us how we can become feminist, governing within the spaces of patriarchy. We can also imagine assemblages where governing does occur beyond the human-centric world. In these few instances we can see a way out of the riddle, where pluralism is not a condition within representational government, but is a necessary condition for re-presenting governing. In other words, pluralism is not just an epistemic concern regarding selecting methods of aggregation within a many-to-one relationship. Pluralism is also intrinsic into political ontology, of which, representation is just one possibility. This rhizomatic knowledge exists as a many-to-many pluralism. In this sense, we can begin making connections, replacing isomorphic renderings of one-to-many and many-to-one forms of arborescent rationality. Amongst these forms are the traditional view of higher education with one professor teaching many students, one university with many colleges with many departments, one case study being used in many classes. Rationalist ethics as critiqued by Farmer (1995), King (2000), Harmon (2003), Harmon and McSwite (2011), and Box (2008), amongst others share a fear of the intrinsic oppression built into any ethics that fundamentally exists as a one-to-many logic masked as goodness. The one-to-many relationship of the university, case studies, and ethics can all be recast in a rhizomatic many-to-many relationship which learning, practice, theory, and ethics are connected and inform each other.

## **Chapter 4: Arborescent Logic, the University, Science, Teaching, and Case Studies**

### **Introduction**

This chapter brings together the varying threads so far discussed regarding the university, public administration ethics, teaching, the case study, and rationality. The changing terrain suggests that perhaps an alternative to public administration ethics and arborescent rationality begins in an alternative to teaching public administration ethics.

#### **Revisiting education reform and ethics.**

Perhaps Woodrow Wilson was not a pedagogical luddite at all. As discussed previously, the detractors of education reform near the cusp of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries forewarned of a splintering society which I take as being foreseen by Wilson. Sloan summarizes the confluence of knowledge, ethics, the university, and society during this time:

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries two developments were to have momentous consequences for higher education and modern society in general, as well as for the teaching of ethics in particular...the splintering of the culture of learning into many different, self-contained disciplines of knowledge. The other development...was that one of these branches of knowledge, namely natural science, began to be regarded as the one and only valid mode of knowledge. (1979, p. 37)

The university and moral philosophy would no longer hold the privileged position in drawing together students' education into a unified moral vision. As previously discussed conservative traditionalist educators had the belief that senior seminars in moral philoso-



phy could discipline many individuals to share a single social vision. Yet this pedagogical approach came at the cost of glossing over difficult and controversial topics which could cause dissent (Sloan, 1979). After the reforms, ethics had been relegated to a secondary position as an elective course. To accommodate structural and social changes Cox (1913) proposed a change in the method and pedagogy in teaching ethics through using the case study. Cox believed that case studies in ethics “brings us into direct and vivid contact with reality... We meet men in concrete situations being judged favorably or unfavorably by the authorities of the group to which they belong; and we realize pragmatically the exact value of conduct... give us the means of objective judgment” (p. 342). With a shared body of ethical knowledge, generated by the studies of cases, the teaching of cases was to become a Socratic investigation from which many individuals could focus upon, discuss, and develop a set of practical heuristics (Cox, 1913). Cox stirred up quite a debate around the teaching of ethics (Cox, 1913, 1914; Powell, 1913; Overstreet, 1913) which is endemic to the greater university’s movement away from classical approaches to education and toward embracing science.

Ethics, in its widest sense, is the name given to any systematic attempt to answer these questions [of morality]. Such answers do not constitute an art but a more or less complete science...

...the data which the science of ethics must describe, organize, and explain are empirical data of the same order as the data of the other special sciences. The ethicist takes these data and by comparison, by generalization

of observed principles of connection, by the formation and testing of hypotheses—in short, by the methods of procedure called induction—he attempts to understand them. Ethics, dealing with phenomena or facts of experience by inductive methods, is an empirical science. (McGivary, 1903, p. 631, 647-8)

Ethics, alongside the field of public administration, evolved within the changing university to focus on empirical questions and in turn adopting scientific methods best suited for the endeavor (Sloan, 1979, Haines, 1977).

### **Revisiting Science and Early Public Administration**

Where representational unity once existed in the university and liberal education, the early 20<sup>th</sup> century interest in science placed representational unity in what was believed to be an objective body of knowledge (Daston & Galison, 2007). Mosher (1939) described how the newly instituted case studies were optimistic about the potential to create a body of scientific knowledge in principles of public administration as described in chapter 1. The intent was to bring together case studies of recurrent events in administration with “agreed upon objectives...pooled and classified by those who are interested in discovering sequence...[with the] general objective of developing patterns of approved practices in dealing with repetitive type situations to which the term principle can be descriptively applied” (p. 68).

The systematic categorized scientific body of administrative knowledge had failed to come to fruition by midcentury at which point case studies shift their focus to individuals.

A behavioral turn in public administration brought human decision making to the foreground as the hope for a general theory of administration faded. Case studies were a research method that function to systematize common sense (Simon, 1965) which is a rational inversion of Mosher's (1937) desire to systematize common administrative practice. By categorizing information from repeated administrative practices, knowledge emerged that could invalidate a practice of administration itself (Clapp, 1940). This constitutive change is possible because the presupposed possibility of a unity in knowledge is directed toward a future field of public administration. Yet, with the shift to common sense, instead of common practice, the knowledge generated would only inform administrative practices to *accommodate* human behavior. Since human behavior is far more enduring than administrative practices, this shift functionally provides a foundation for a stable field of administration.

### **Revisiting the Midcentury Case and Public Administration**

In language that directly challenges the above faith in a science of administration and explicitly breaks down the possibility of administrative principles the editor of the mid-century Inter-university Case Program (ICP) case book explains that: "This [book] is a collection of cases that offers an incorrigible resistance to any highly systematic categorization" (Stein, 1952, p. xxvi). Further degrading the scientific endeavor of administration, Somers (1954) notes the objectivity and neutrality of science in regard to the portrayal of the public administrator. "Commonly used words like 'neutrality' take on new values. The venerated abstract 'neutral civil servant' is found to be a rare and anomalous figure

when serious policy issues are at stake, and where discovered he somehow looks far less admirable or useful than the student had wished” (p. 117). The midcentury case studies provide commonly accessible content that shows the political, negotiation, process, and messiness of the “real” practice of public administration. “The cases have proved an effective instrument for communicating the ardor, the high drama, the human dedication, triumph, and frustration which accompany significant administrative episodes” (Somers, 1954, p. 117).

Yet though the midcentury public administration literature refuted the past hopes of being a neutral science of administration, **the method of teaching** retains the same implicit arborescent one-to-many logic in its pedagogy. Stein (1952) in the introduction to the ICP case book explicitly states one of the intentions is “to make generally available a body of varied case materials useful for teaching purposes, for Scholarly inquiry, and for analysis by practitioners in the field of public administration” (p. *xlii*). Note this “body of material” *is not the unified body of knowledge* that emerges from a science of public administration. In a radical departure from a hope of a body of knowledge, “the student of these cases cannot in fact build on them systematic dogma or principles that purport to be scientific by virtue of the data in the cases” (Wengert, 1952, p. 197). The effects are two-fold: On one hand the abandonment of a systematic body of knowledge granted the pedagogical and practical impossibility of creating neutral administrators. The case studies now reified the flux, process, and negotiation of administration with the intentional emphasis on individual administrator’s decision making (Waldo, 1952; Wengert, 1952).

This was well suited for the behavior emphasis Simon (1965) describes where the case study was effective in understanding small controlled situations that occurred in organizational contexts. On the other hand “the case book asks the teacher to take on the task of building some basic attitudes traditionally associated with a liberal education” (Wengert, 1952, p. 199). I take this to be exemplary of Wilson’s fear of the splintering university. The values once imparted upon students through the liberal education, which implied a wholeness of the university, becomes a task delegated to professors. The task of the one university is delegated to many professors. Instead of the field of public administration assuming many professors will teach from a collective body of scientific knowledge, the field becomes focused on individual professors teaching to many students. The one body of knowledge that informed many professors is splintered again as the absence of a unified body of knowledge requires each professor to gather material to teach to many students. In the traditional university system, professors would teach from the canon of classics—a unified body of texts that represented a tradition. In the ICP case book the editor intentionally selected a case for inclusion because it could be used to teach any number of different contexts of administration. In the past the material, the canon, was associated with one tradition, with the midcentury case study the material lost that 1:1 association with each case representing the plethora of topics the professor sees fit. This recursive bifurcation in the 1:1 relationship being split into one-to-many relationships occurs again with the focus upon individual practitioners that encounter an enumerable set of events, dramas, and tough choices.

The chief aim of the cases is to enable the reader—usually a college student and often a potential participant in public life—to get the ‘feel’ of administration before actual job experience. Even more important, its aim is to facilitate the earliest attainment of Wisdom: a sense of the all but infinite complexities of administration and policy formulation, of normal and abnormal timespans for collective action, of the many variations of gray that lie between the blacks and whites of ethical absolutes, of the uses and abuses of such things as clearance, hierarchy, functionalism, and so forth.

(Waldo, 1952, p. 878)

In other words, the assumptions of the midcentury case studies imposes new burdens upon the teachers of administration, it legitimizes it by suggesting good administration as the individual practitioner’s attainment of “Wisdom.” A unified and virtuous education is split into specialized bodies of scientific knowledge, and again toward individually attained wisdom. In each movement of this fracturing the teaching of knowledge changes as well—the presumed pedagogical approach had the arborescent structure of fabricating a “whole” to accommodate the many: One university for many students; A body of knowledge for many practitioners; A disciplined mind for the multiplicity of administration. Yet amongst this recursive bifurcating logic present in the university, pedagogy, and ethics the possibility of extra-hierarchical connections have the potential to emerge. The next sections begin to trace these connections and recast their trajectory as rhizomatic. Perhaps the varying trees of knowledge are not splintering—perhaps trees are spreading.

### **Assembling the university from arborescent to rhizomatic.**

Wilson's reforms at Princeton attempted to meet the challenges created by arborescent rationality seeping into structures once assumed to be stable. For example, having mentors live with students and creating cohorts (of sorts) are not necessarily indicative of traditionalism, but instead had the potential to remanufacture stability in a time of rapid change and fragmentation. Wilson's desire to draw together individuals into a singular vision—into a collective identity—can be seen as a resistance to the infusing of arborescent logic into the structure of the American university system. With the reforming university system, that singular vision of the 'wholeness' of the university or of individual students is lost and a logic of splitting the one into the many, as in the development of specialized fields and elective courses, is infused into the education with each student. Farmer (1995) notes this arborescent rationality as boxism—splitting spectrums of diversity into specific hierarchically organized containers which themselves contain subcontainers. In response we can see the hope in science to create a collective body of knowledge as grounding the field of public administration and creating stability during the rapid change and growth in the practice of administration during the New Deal Era. Later in the mid-century, placing the attainment of knowledge upon individual administrators positioned individual rationality as a stable pedagogical place to confront the change happening in the student body.

The centrality of arborescent logic in the splintering changes described above is still continuing today: Efforts to push to online education delivery disperse the institutional

stability of the classroom to the burden of individual students; Online education relies on students to, in one form or another, self-educate under the guise of the university; The classroom itself is only a small part in the nodes of an ever increasing network of students and instructors. We see this logic even in the vision of the contemporary university in such things as knowledge commercialization—the third-mission of the university beyond teaching and research—disperses public knowledge into the market (Ozga & Jones, 2006; Baycan & Stough, 2013). The influence of reforms has created an environment where it is easy for those who are familiar with American public universities to sympathize with Curran’s (2009) summary that: “State universities have gone from ‘publicly funded’ to ‘publicly supported’ to ‘publicly endorsed’” (p. 1). The funding too has splintered.

The last three decades have shown an underlying technological utopianism that is symbiotic with the Information Age where knowledge exists in purely techno-functional forms of information, which itself is a commodity (Ferneding, 2003). And in this, I suggest, we see an adaptation of a new representational logic: Binary.

Where in arborescent rationality the either/or of bifurcation helped sort the world into representational containers, in binary *bifurcation is the representation*. As discussed above in Quine’s (1987) insights into Borges *Library of Babel*, binary comes to recognize all that is representable and these new representations have no obligatory correlation to the world. In simpler terms, arborescent rationality compared representations to what they represent, for example: How does Michelangelo’s *David* represent a man [*sic*]? To answer this we analytically separate *David* into attributes that are shared with man and



compare the closeness between the representation [*David*] and what it represents [man]. Man is a transcendent concept that acts as a container to hold all the different representations of man. We can then generalize the concept of man to human and now be able to compare representations of women, men, and intersexes. Binary logic asks a much more abstract question: Can Michelangelo's *David* be represented? Can man? Woman? Quine's point is that anything we can say is a representation and therefore can be coded into binary. Arborescent rationality compared the fleeting things of this world with relatively unchanging transcendent concepts and hence maintained a basic order in knowledge.

In other words, the arborescent logic that privileged transcendent concepts over the world through one-to-many relationship loses the ability to render a stable ontological order. Regarding the topics at hand, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has demonstrated that the traditional university and institutions such as tenure no longer hold the privileged position of singularity in the one-to-many relationship in education—their unity has fractured (Bosquet, 2008). Online universities, for profit universities, open universities, massive online open classes<sup>6</sup>, a ballooning non-tenure-track-faculty including not only adjuncts but novel positions such as *professors of practice* are all demonstrative that the splintering of education occurs not only in regard to students and society, but the institution of education as well (Doane & Pusser, 2006; Bosquet, 2008; Fogg, 2004; Benjamin, 2004). Online for-profit universities or brick and mortar public universities? Tenured or Adjunct? Each claim their position in higher education as unique and yet in that specificity is a represen-

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<sup>6</sup>For a visual representation of the various players and their roles in massively online open course (MOOC) see: <http://chronicle.com/article/Major-Players-in-the-MOOC/138817/>

tation of the general. With multiple claims on authority—a privileged position of representing education—we see the erosion of the hierarchical structure of arborescent rationality. “As the global market spreads and the late capitalist commercial ethos envelops the world and permeates our societies, institutional authority is going to be slowly evacuated. Deinstitutionalization will be the defining motif of the university’s structure in the next century” (McSwite, 2001c, p. 418). Today, American education might best be represented as a many-to-many relationship, with each form having no essential boundaries or content.

### **Assembling ethical practitioners.**

In the current logic of American education, we have a rhizome. Yet, in public administration many professors, researchers, and practitioners have been disciplined in an arborescent ethics fabricating individuals as autonomous agents. Menzel (2005) demonstrates this disciplining in summarizing the progress in public administration ethics where research is theory informed and empirically investigated to create knowledge to inform ethical action. In the field of public administration ethics, an arborescent logic of difference is deployed to categorize practice into ethical/unethical, what works/doesn’t work, theory/practice, and so on and so forth. This occurs at the theoretical level which then cascades into research design and possible forms of administrative action. Here public administration ethics, too, has a naturalized wholeness which is then subdivided into different theories, research endeavors, and sub-topics (Menzel, 2005).

As the object of study, public administration ethics assumes a prefigured body, The Practitioner, upon which arborescent rationality is coded. The Practitioner's body, and the arborescent logic that fabricates and subdivides it is described by Catlaw (2006a):

The wrinkle that always plagues the universal figure of The Practitioner is, loosely put, the normative and ethical dimension of the administrative situation. Thus, once efficiency was exposed as a value (Waldo, 1984) rather than the a priori goal of The Practitioner, the list of appropriate values for The Practitioner expanded—efficiency, equity, openness, accountability, democracy, innovation, entrepreneurialism, etc. It is at this juncture, which is a theoretical not historical one, that the concern with administrative ethics emerges. (p. 191)

The fabrication of The Practitioner in the United States is the purview of the academic field of public administration and is connected to shifting representational order described above. The midcentury student had taken on the responsibility of attaining knowledge compared to scientists building a body of knowledge to share with students. And today the millennial student gains access through higher education to networks of information. This shift is not simply a change of priorities, but a complex change in the logics that order priorities from a general representation what society should be like, to a general knowledge that is representational of the world, to decision making being representative of the student.

The midcentury university and public administration had an intersection with the changing and rapidly growing student body (Shaw, 1947; Goldstein, 1956; Doddy, 1963). The focus upon individual decision making and the belief that the burden of learning was in students attaining knowledge created a hollow ontological representation of The Practitioner. The Practitioner who was solely responsible with the burden of their ethical behavior *was first a Student solely responsible with the burden of their own learning*. Shared between Student, Practitioner, Prison, Hospital, Family is an individual that moves between what Foucault refers to as spaces of enclosure (Deleuze, 1992). “The different internments or spaces of enclosure through which the individual passes are independent variables: each time one is supposed to start from zero, and although a common language for all these places exists, it is *analogical*” (Deleuze, 1992, p. 4).

Our factory-like model of the university casts mid-career administrators into standing reserves for MPA programs by enclosing them as The Student which becomes standing reserve for public service as The Practitioner. This standing reserve of Practitioners is then stamped and formed into the profession of Public Administration. **Case studies are tools of enclosure—boilerplates which streamline disciplining by providing standard texts which deterritorialize events from the world and are reterritorialized as tools in the assembly lines of university classrooms.** The midcentury reforms in education were aimed at educating The Student—the common representation of students. In other words, the plethora of life experience was not built upon, but accommodated for. Though MPA students are often mid-career and have life experiences, the pedagogical shift in the

midcentury case study accommodated this life experience by providing narratives for students to apply their experiences. The cases were designed so that regardless of life experience, every student can participate. Further, in the standard MPA curriculum there are core classes to teach, each a separate space, often taught by specialists in that topic, and though some classes have prerequisites, each class the student starts over with new readings, new grade books, new assignments, in a new semester. A personalized MPA education that builds off specific and unique characteristics and experiences of individual students in a cohesive program of study where classes, work, internships, and projects are interwoven and inseparable from each other may exist in the near future, but now it does not. Like The Soldier in bootcamp, The Student started from scratch upon entering into the university. “The individual never ceases passing from one closed environment to another, each having its own laws” (Deleuze, 1992, p. 3). These vast enclosures of space are constitutive of disciplinary societies whose purpose was to “to concentrate; to distribute in space; to order in time; to compose a productive force within the dimension of space-time whose effect will be greater than the sum of its component forces (p. 3). Spaces of enclosure are structures that impose a qualified subjectivity upon individuals. The aspects of biological individuals which can be disciplined, molded into different enclosures, in aggregate create the very authority that requires their subjectivity. Arborescent logic, in considering the autopoietic relationships of subjectivity and authority, designates the general as an ontological container hence naturalizing the those subjugated by that authority.

School, Government, Military are all transcendent categories which are evaluated by how closely actual individuals approximate idealized attributes which constitute the enclosure. The university succeeds when administrators become Student and the graduated Student is most similar to The Practitioner. This logic is explicit during 1952 in the discussions around the ICP's case book. Waldo, Stein, Wenergt, and others all make much of the case study's ability to prepare students to be administrators even though the case study is only analogical to public service. This assumption that public administration ethics is a preparation of students for practice is still explicit in the National Association of Schools of Public Administration & Affairs' (NASPAA) *Member Code of Good Practice* "preparation of students for professional careers in public service, emphasizing both the values and ethics of public service, and the development of professional skills and knowledge" (2009, n.p.). In turn, good government is achieved when a critical mass of Practitioners are in government.<sup>7</sup> The Practitioner and the field of public administration ethics assumes that the quality of government is the result of an aggregation of good knowledge that are tied to generic situations. Yet the Practitioner, and ethics in general, is necessarily isolated from constitutive changes resulting from aggregation or the rendering of events as generic. In other words, the transcendent concepts of Practitioner, public administration ethics, and generic events are assumed as wholes which are then arborescently subdivided where no challenges are presented upon the concepts themselves. Al-

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<sup>7</sup> The similarity between this sketch of public administration ethics and how the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's definition of herd immunity is insightful. "The goal is to decrease the spread of infectious diseases by increasing the rate of immunization of the general population." (healthypeople.gov). Simply replace 'infectious diseases' and 'immunization' with 'unethical behavior' and 'education,' respectively.

ternatively, rhizomatic ethics, events, public administrators, and universities are assemblages that are not stable and continually challenge conceptual wholes. In this line of reasoning we can acknowledge these assemblages as assembling and being assembled by each other without the need for transcendent ontological categories.

### **The terrain of representations and ethics.**

Representational logic, as previously described, structurally migrated from being centered in the mission of the university, then the method of the case study, and then into the rational capacity of individuals. The latter today is what Howe (2006) might suggest is a minimalist strong ontology, that the individual at the center of the public administration ethical discourse is often constituted via “minimal stories that all Americans could in principle endorse” (p. 425). By taking the lowest common denominator that is shared amongst a presupposed people, a unifying category is created to establish the boundaries of the field of public administration. The minimal condition of individuals having a capacity for rational decision making fabricates a boundary of who is included in a population. This constituting a people exists through a representational inclusion which functionally and conceptually is necessarily exclusionary (Catlaw, 2006b, 2007). With the binding of rationality with individual public servants, the good life is encoded within the efficient administration of the state (Waldo, 1948).

The representational logic engrained into the field of public administration assumes that accurate representations help close the gap between world and mind (Catlaw, 2007). In this light, the case study, in its one-to-many pedagogy, fits well with rational ethics that

assumes an arborescent one-to-many relationship, within a one-to-many bureaucracy studied by the plethora of administrative specializations under the field public administration. But, if the concepts of universities, knowledge, individuals, ethics, etc. are similarly and immanently composed in many-to-many relationships, then abandoning the one-to-many case study and pedagogy might be the most rational course for public administration ethics. Ironically—assuming the validity of analogical similarities—it may be rational to be non-rational.

### **Rhizomatic Ethics and the Assembling of Ethical Ecosystems**

The rational ethics critiqued in Chapter 2 emerges with twentieth-century one-to-many education and is isomorphic of Chapter 3's arborescent logic within which rational ethics is embedded. In other words, public administration ethics and education are *auto-poietic* with arborescent rationality and hence, essentially self-reifying. As such, the ethical terrain of administration is assumed to be known and alternative forms of the ethical are automatically rejected a priori. There is a deep-seated uncertainty in this formula: How can one know if a problem arises for which public administration ethics is well suited to address, or if the problem arises because of public administration ethics? Can public administration ethics be conscious of its own *ethicity* or can it only ethically evaluate specifics under its purview? Rational ethics is a question of boundaries which therefore limits the teaching of ethics to concerns within the conceptual containers of the field.



The alternative forms of ethics that are emerging in public administration all suggest a moving beyond—but not necessarily abandon—rational limits. As discussed in Chapter 3 one form of this is the move from arborescent to rhizomatic thought. Instead of establishing conceptual containers to order and teach rational ethics, rhizomatic ethics is a project of tracing the connections between concepts and to diagram out the logic that projects those tracings. In other words, ethics is not directed toward the material world but a virtual space—ethical practices are conceptual. In this sense, the practicality of ethics is that it shapes concepts rather than inform practices. Good knowledge does not engender good action, rather the possible forms of action are contingent upon the construction of knowledge and the construction of knowledge is the result of embodied experience.

Therefore, ethical theories describe the conceptual relationships between practical and theoretical rationality and in turn are a space in which the possible forms of human relationships are imagined. This ethical space creates or restricts virtual and material relationships through selecting what is representationally included and excluded. These spaces are understood in terms of the connectivity between representations and in turn, conceptually function as an *ethical ecosystem* and is radically different than Foucault's and Deleuze's spaces of enclosure (Deleuze, 1992). As the process of representation is one of inclusion and exclusion of “what counts” these ethical ecosystems are ontological projects in the weak sense (Howe, 2006). Howe, citing White (2000), explains that weak ontologies are “Ontological commitments. . . entangled with questions of identity and history, with how we articulate the meaning of our lives, both individually and collectively”

(p. 422). In the language of an immanent ethics, we can differentiate *strong ontology* as universal claims of extensive categories of reality from *weak ontologies* which are immanent categorical understandings of events and assemblages that intensify individuals' view on life, the Universe, and everything. Weak ontologies give individuals an "ethic of forbearance and agonistic respect toward the ethical inspirations of others precisely because one acknowledges the contestability of one's own inspirations, even as one offers them as worthy of endorsement. One can make this acknowledgement because one further acknowledges that the possibilities of ethical enactment far exceed one's ability to know, understand, or imagine them" (Howe, 2006, p. 423). Weak ontologies do make claims regarding the nature of things, but the claims are contingent—the categorical claims of ethical ecosystems are immanent and not universal. A movement from strong ontologies to weak ontologies prioritizes affect over representations and moves the field from arborescent to rhizomatic ethics.

So far I have discussed how the transcendent concepts of university, The Practitioner, and ethics, are problematic, or undesirable, because of an intrinsic arborescence. Rhizomatic ethics, or assemblages were presented in spaces between these concepts as a challenge, but also as a possible alternative way of understanding what all this means. In the next section we continue to reassemble transcendent concepts as assemblages in manners of connectivity within rhizomatic ethics.

## **Assembling Individuals**

Assemblages do not presuppose a social context—like case studies—do which assumes a singularity in an event (Deleuze, 1994) that stamps ethics upon administrators nor disciplines bodies into a field of practice. “Rather, in each instance, it is the aggregate of the parts that constitutes the whole assemblage. The specific connections and compositions of components constitute a specific and immanent whole. Thus the ‘social’ is equally assembled and does not precede, in any total or fixed form, the various assemblages in which its elements encounter bodies (or technologies)” (Currier, 2003, 328). Though arborescent rationality “individual” is a preconfigured context which dictates certain performances and access to specific knowledges, this pretext is absent in assembling individuals.

Bodies as assemblages find particular configurations within broader assemblages in the connections, linkages and exchanges with the other component elements of those assemblages...In assemblages, the ‘social’ as a whole does not function as an overarching structure, which orders the component parts, just as the ‘body’ as a whole does not order component matter and energies. (Currier, 2003, p. 328)

Individuals as assemblages are not autonomous actors informed by external knowledge, but are, in part, constituted by forms of knowledge and action. Probably the most accessible form of assemblages in relation to individuals is through digital technologies since binary logic deterritorializes representations from stable contexts. This is a familiar

process for anyone who spends time online where “friends,” “check-ins,” “chats,” and “likes” come to represent relationships of individuals and local knowledges absent of a formally presumed context necessary to render the representation intelligible. The epistemic context to understand a representation and the ontological presence to recognize an “other” is supplanted with a global network of technologies so advance they escape rational explanation.

Information Communication Technology (ICT) as a mechanism of connecting knowledge and efficacy in the assembled individual, deterritorializes both notions of knowledge and efficacy by rendering an individual’s capacity to store and process information as permeable and connected to other individuals. The networked intersection of knowledge and action in the individual creates new political subjects and terrains. Often the network is suggested as an effective metaphor for describing an isomorphy in our knowledge that crosses varying levels of analysis. Internet, social networks, organizations, bodies, and minds all communicate with each other, therefore they are similar. Yet, recent research in psychoneuroepidemiology demonstrates how the biochemical and neurological levels of human “individuals” are in continual connection with other individuals. For example, the very smell of each other changes biochemical and neurological activity within each other (Catlaw, 2009). This bodily affect is not the only place in the individual that interconnectedness can be empirically verified. Recent neurological research has shown the presence of neurons that mirror the activities of other individuals. “Mirror neurons in the same affective brain circuits are automatically mobilized upon feeling one's own pain and

the pain of others, and this neural circuitry, the basis of empathic behavior in reaction to the distress of others, is virtually instantaneous (Olson, 2013, p. 22). If you are observing me type, the part of my brain that is active and attending to the task of typing is also active in your mind. Your neurological activity mirrors mine.

There are no clear nodes, or levels, except for the conceptual differentiation that we make by saying individuals, minds, bodies, communities, governments, universities, knowledge, nor efficacy. “Individual identity is experienced as an unregulated, disintegrated flow of identifications or parts of a personality that never seem to add up to One” (Catlaw, 2007, p. 168).

## **Conclusion**

Again, we see analogical similarity serving to order and categorize the world. In a representational ontology, an epistemic priority is placed on correct depiction which then other ways of knowing the object of study (Daston & Galison, 2007). In regard to networks, the network depicts our conceptual ordering which reifies representations as virtual instead of correlated to things. To adapt the concept of network to reflect empirical conditions of individuals and governance could engender a radical ontological shift away from representation (Catlaw, 2009). In understanding ethics and responsibility in assemblage thought, the metaphor of network has little use. Rather than worrying about epistemic claims on developing correct depictions that analogically represent attributes, assemblages are a recognition of which attributes are selected and have an intrinsic responsibility in creating perceived order. Instead of understanding individuals by which onto-

logical category, or enclosure, they are placed within, individuals are assemblages of knowledge which create and are created by innumerable forms of knowledge.

Rather than suppressing or denying them, the unbounded body and its affects are viewed instead as loci for knowledge as a way to understand the affects that we project as well as a site to examine those that are transmitted to us. This necessarily entails openness to the other because, literally, the other always–already is inside us, coursing through our veins much like social norms and identities are sedimented into the constitution of our own sense of self and its possibilities. It also means that responsibility for affect and the emotional life of an organization must be shared because that life is a collective product—one composed by the dynamic interplay of singularities in the world. (Catlaw, 2009, p. 492)

In arborescent thought, power, and hence responsibility, can be gleaned through traveling up and down hierarchical structures (see Rich, 1996; Schmidt, 1993). The question of power and responsibility is fundamentally different in assemblage thought by being “operational on an immanent level and do not function as an overarching structure, through which the component elements of an assemblage are ordered” (Currier, 2003, p. 328). Ethics, in part, becomes a process of diagramming the rhizomatic relationships of individuals as assemblages and to envision what possible forms of human relationship may emerge. How to diagram rhizomes in an ethics class will be taken up in chapter 6.

In summary, the creation of an individual is the deterritorializing of attributes out of a space of virtual and material intersectionalities and reterritorialized as individual. The field of public administration, ethical practitioners, and individuals are all deterritorializations of perceived patterns within virtual and material intersectionalities that are reterritorialized as said concepts. From this perspective, the isomorphic structures of networks pervasive today are not a natural structure of reality, but a naturalization of a certain position of subjectivity. Though the network literature is in a majoritarian position in the field of public administration, the network is undeniably a creation of the human intellect. Yet, the network implies a position of subjectivity, it is an indicator of powers that create subjectivity and individuals. Networks are not simply a tool for individuals to use or manage.

I suggest ecosystems are an alternative concept for describing the relationships between individuals, ethics, and public administration that is more useful for teaching ethics in the university setting. Ecosystems clearly bring forward the contingency individuals have on their biology and relationships. Individuals are created within ecosystems, but also are an integral, creative force of ecosystems and this *autopoietic* relationship is highly contingent. And yet the ecosystem is a familiar concept which has an immediate accessibility to it. In the following chapter the question of technology is explored in the changing terrain of knowledge and information technologies. This will prove to be an unsettling challenge to not only the relationship between knowledge and action, but also to the possibilities of teaching administrative ethics. The concluding chapter will return

to the case study, university, and administrators and suggest some propositions in which the ethical-educational terrain might be re-imagined.



## **Chapter 5: Assembling Representations, Knowledge, and Technology**

In rationalist ethics, technology is mostly absent from the discourse. Understood only in its instrumental sense, technology is often understood as only extending the capabilities of humans without changing the nature of those capabilities. To be able to conceive individuals as assemblages, how these individuals connect is a primary concern of ethics. Yet, in contemporary society, the pervasiveness of digital technology has fundamentally shifted the role representations play and to understand the political subjectivity and power relations today is to engage in a technological discourse. In the previous chapters we discussed how science became the tool to advance social progress while avoiding difficult normative discussions about progress itself. Technology now holds this honor and is oft assumed to be the engine of social progress today. Over a century ago, the growth of science fundamentally changed the university, public administration, and ethics. We should expect technology to do the same. We will consider technology as understood in terms of representational ontology and arborescent thought. To do so, the intrinsic instrumentality in rationality is correlated to representations and knowledge. We will then interrogate these concepts with current technological trends.

If arborescent rationality used representations to categorize and order the world we can understand rhizomatic thought as presenting representations as connections in mappings of the world. In the former, the categorical task was universal: to create order. In the latter, the categorical task is rendering representations interoperable for reordering. Categories under arborescent rationality were naturalized and in turn universalized. Or-

dering information into rational categories created knowledge by binding material and virtual intersectionalities with stable representations. The former representational logic was mimetic where the categorical assumed to be reflective of reality, the more accurate the representational depiction the more universal the claim of representation (Catlaw, 2007, 2009). In the latter, representations only refer to accessible aspects of the virtual and material intersectionalities that can be used to connect to other representations.

Where information was intended to lead to the development of a body of knowledge, information today continually deterritorializes bodies of knowledge. “The goal of technology...is the increasingly flexible and efficient ordering and reordering of resources, but not with the objective of using those objects to satisfy desires. Instead, technology orders and reorders resources for its own sake. This condition applies to digitized information that is presumed to be ordered and organized such that anyone can, under any circumstances, and from any place can access and collect it” (Austin & Callen, 2008, p. 327). Managing information is the managing of knowledge (Jones, 2010). Today, what increasingly counts as information is what can be represented not conceptually, but digitally. Representational knowledge is attained as one works through the established order, with the higher, or deeper, one traverses the tree of knowledge, the more one knows. Knowledge is no longer something to be attained, but rather accessed and we are increasingly at the mercy of corporate networks, firewalls, and paywalls requiring the right codes for the privilege of access (Catlaw, 2007; Deleuze, 1992; Day, 2005; Gehl, 2011b). With the advent of *Web 2.0*, users have access to, but not possession of information and

these users' access of that information generates profiles and preferences which themselves become representations of individuals not possessed by those individuals. "Rationalized identities in Web 2.0 arise from the metrics of capital and consumption: user profiles, categorized social connections ('friends,' 'co-workers,' 'family'), credit scores, searches, purchase histories, media consumption, desires, fantasies, demographics, and movements through space" (Gehl, 2011b, p. 1241). All of this information is connected via the operations of networks and generates knowledge, knowledge that informs governance.

### **Digital Representations**

Digitalization is an encoding of the world into binary representations and filters what can count as information—what cannot be digitalized is not information. Digital representations—information—are hollow, absent of substance and constitute nothing of a thing in and of itself and only gain meaning through the decoding, indexing, and processing via proprietary applets and codexes or databases behind institutional firewalls. Arborescent rationality assumed essential characteristics were captured in representations yet digital representations care nothing for essences and only notes the presence or absence of an attribute which can be arbitrary. Digital representations can easily accommodate arborescent representations, but arborescent orders cannot account for digital, or rhizomatic, ordering. Hence, rhizomatic techniques of information management are well suited for contemporary knowledge management while arborescent management is insufficient. Because of public administration's reliance on arborescent rationality and the intrinsic

instrumentalism of knowledge within public administration, the field finds itself in a double bind. To have the necessary knowledge to inform rational action, public administration must find alternatives to arborescent rationality, yet since the assumption that good action follows from correct knowledge is itself rational, to find alternatives negates the necessity of finding an alternative in the first place.

### **Digital Decisions and Behavior**

A prime example of structuring digital information can be found in *recommender systems*. This technology generates predictive information in a personalized manner for web users. Each time a user begins to type in a search query into Google and Google recommends results, has a spelling error auto corrected, or is given an answer to a question via a support webpage, they bumped into one of these systems. Recommender systems use aggregated digital information based on users' online behavior to generate specific results for any given user. In other words, the recommender is a many-to-many structure where many individual users inform many individual users.

A recommender system is an information organization tool which extracts knowledge of individual users of a specific (online) resource based on their activity within that domain, and uses this knowledge to generate for them individual recommendations. These recommendations are made based on the broad assumption that people who have agreed on some things in the past will likely agree on things in the future. Because these systems classify content based on how it is engaged with by previous us-

ers, they have emerged as an effective (and profitable) way to organize content on the web, the web itself being resistant, almost by its very nature, to the imposition of top-down, ontological classificatory control. (Murphy, 2010)

Rational ethics teaches individuals to correctly encode categories upon virtual and material intersectionalities where boundaries between ethical and nonethical are fabricated. In the emerging identities of contemporary digital technologies, the concern is not just behavior justifiable by a rational explanation. The concern of contemporary information technologies is interoperability, personalization, and prediction. *Decision Support Services* are technologies already deployed in healthcare and business to provide relevant information to users when users are expected to need it.

In this trend, ethics perhaps could be conceived of similar to alerts that are notify a user if ‘odd’ behavior is noticed with that determination occurring from the user’s behavior in aggregate with all other users—all users in a system inform and are informed by all users that system. Perhaps a user’s behaviors would be supplemented by technologically embedded information and workflows for organizational dissent, external review, ethical codes, and transparency. With the confluence of big data, rationalized identities, and neuromarketing Wilson, et al. (2008) portend the dangerous possibilities emerging upon the notion of free will. The underlying assumptions of agency within rational ethics may be moot considering the ability to develop technological interfaces that direct administrators ‘to choose the right choice’ before the administrator is cognizant that a choice exists.

Selinger and Seagar (2012) describe around two-dozen recently released apps which they describe as external moral compasses, or “behavioral-steering technology—digital Jiminy Crickets” (n.p.). In the sphere of public affairs, professional career based training could ensure that users (administrators) follow protocol and understand the *Terms of Service* regarding the software platform. In this sense administrators are not taught, or learn, ethics but rather learn to modulate their behavior to software code. Frick (2012) calls this a *good behavior layer* in mobile apps that encourages beneficial behavior while discouraging or retarding detrimental behavior. The New York State Bar Association (nysba.org, Jan 11, 2012) released a free app to “that allows judges, lawyers and law students to access instant ethics advice from their smartphones” (n.p.). Public Relations Society of America (prsa.org, Mar 14, 2013) likewise has released an ethics app.

The app will give professionals at all levels, who are committed to upholding the principles of ethical communications, easy access to real-time guidance to know that what they’re doing is right and, if they face questions, the support they need to justify their counsel... We believe our app is something that young professionals will benefit from using as they learn to practice in an ethical fashion. (n.p.)

Heaton (2012) and Pahlka (2012) all describe the surge of non-profit, local governments, and businesses that are providing apps from service delivery, to transparency, to citizen engagement. Jennifer Pahlka’s 2012 TED Talk *Coding a Better Government* is telling. She speaks a language familiar to public administrators and yet she is an IT pro-

ject manager gives not even the slightest acknowledgement to the field of public administration. The Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University, which houses one of the larger repository of freely available ethics case studies, recently held a student competition to develop the best ethics app.<sup>8</sup> These technological extensions of human capacity are designed to increase one's efficacy in the world, but with these extensions comes shifts in the very understanding and forms of knowledge that directly effects *how* we might govern.

communication via web is indeed creating new contexts where the dimension for 'decision-making' with respect to each individual becomes more publicly shared as it is re-attached to the very communicational content (i.e., information) researched and diffused by such users in ever more visible ways. Moreover, as good governing consists not only of managing a business, organization, or state profitably, but also of managing people and serving them as a leader, therefore, we can see that governance and leadership go hand-in-hand. (Lima, 2012, p. 965-966)

These digital technologies also have substantive change in our relationship to technologies and may affect our being in the world which is integral to understanding our action in the world (Austin & Callen, 2008). Additionally we may see increases in the capacity of administrators to handle increasingly complex tasks due to digital technologies'

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<sup>8</sup> <http://scu.edu/ethics/practicing/focusareas/technology/internet/appcontest.html>

ability to simplify and manage data which entails large swaths of the role of traditional bureaucracy (Austin & Callen, 2012).

The conceptual transformation of information from knowledge to digital data engenders a shift from individuals to users. Good information these days is data with the assumption that data does not *inform individuals* but is *used by users*. This is an inversion of the traditional assumptions of instrumental rationality in the field of public administration. Where the assumption was once that we need better decision makers which meant good information and disciplined decisioning, today's assumption is that we need administrators who use information better. Further advances in decision making are not occurring in the field of public administration as they are to the exponential growth of decision making in computer sciences. As discussed in the previously in regards to Borges' *Library of Babel*, digital technologies are capable of capturing all knowledge that is representable. Public administration ethics, a field reliant upon representational knowledge to inform action, needs to move from working to create good representations to selecting amongst the infinite combinations of representations. Significantly, this selecting cannot occur rationally. In the *Library of Babel*, all possible information is present, meaning fact and opinion, and since all information is present, so are all the possible connections between fact and opinion. Corroboration does little to verify the accuracy of a representation.



## Ordering Digital Representations

To account for the increasing complexity of the relationships of information and technology, the *Semantic Web* is becoming increasingly powerful.<sup>9</sup>

The Semantic Web represents a new level of abstraction from the underlying network infrastructure, as did the Internet and the Web before it. The Internet allowed programmers to create programs that could communicate without having to concern themselves with the network of cables that the communication had to flow over. The Web allows programmers and users to work with a set of interconnected documents without concerning themselves with details of the computers that store and exchange those documents. The Semantic Web raises this to the next level, allowing programmers and users to make reference to real-world objects – whether people, chemicals, agreements, stars or whatever else – without concerning themselves with the underlying documents in which these things, abstract and concrete, are described. (Hendler & Berners-Lee, 2010, p. 158)

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<sup>9</sup>Berners-Lee, Hendler, & Lassila (2001) provide the following overview of the Semantic Web:  
“-To date, the World Wide Web has developed most rapidly as a medium of documents for people rather than of information that can be manipulated automatically. By augmenting Web pages with data targeted at computers and by adding documents solely for computers, we will transform the Web into the Semantic Web.  
- Computers will find the meaning of semantic data by following hyperlinks to definitions of key terms and rules for reasoning about them logically. The resulting infrastructure will spur the development of automated Web services such as highly functional agents.  
- Ordinary users will compose Semantic Web pages and add new definitions and rules using off-the-shelf software that will assist with semantic markup” (p. 36).

Of the innumerable chunks of data relevant to public administration, how does one select which information to consider, and when is it enough? The Semantic Web provides the language and interface for managing the complexity intrinsic to assemblages and events by being able to diagram material and virtual intersectionalities that by their rhizomatic structure were unable to be represented in arborescent logic. The exponential advancement of information and communication technologies suggests an increase not only in the amount of information managed and efficiency in storing and ordering that information, but also an exponential increase in the kinds of activities that counts as information to be managed. “Technology...can be understood as a means of freeing up some of that cognitive capacity so that it can be used to deal with experienced environmental complexity. If we can use technology as a means of managing some of the activities necessary for survival, then we have left-over cognitive capacity to apply to problems, old and new” (Austin & Callen, 2012, p. 416). Digital technologies, such as the Semantic Web, are increasingly effective at sorting large chunks of complex data which removes increasing amounts of work from the administrator. If the field insists on establishing more information on how administrators make ethical decisions in light of formal codes, laws, and informal norms, the field is creating more data to inform ethical decision support code. As a 2012 *Slate* article is entitled “Don’t like your government officials? Automate them!” which describes how India is fighting corruption through the digitalization of government information *and* processes (Sridharan & Ravi, 2012).

Today, information is data and data is used. Cynically one could argue that the only people using the data generated from scholarly research are other scholars doing research and with increasing costs and limitations on sharing scholarship even academicians are challenging the role of scholarly journals (Lin, 2012; Epstein, 2012). Practically when empirical research is conducted on individuals and the evidence suggests that good administrators are acting within theoretical norms, arborescent knowledge is being generated which is digitally representation in and code. Ahlqvist et al. (2013) present the concept of a “live paper” as a challenge to traditional, what would call arborescent scholarship: “readers can ‘use’ the paper, and their interactions with the live Data and Methods can allow them to ask and answer questions, and explore alternative conditions or scenarios through direct and instantaneous engagement with the experiment. The live research paper environment allow these operations to be examined, ideally step by step, by reviewers and readers alike, and to be executed under the control of the readers, accepting readers’ interactions and parameters input. In a sense, a paper written/implemented with these live elements resembles a software application” (p. 65). Pochoda (2013) describes how the analogue system of journal management resulted from the professionalization of academia and scholarship in mid-twentieth century America. As director of the University of Michigan Press Pochoda’s insights speak specifically to the argument presented herein this chapter and hence beckons extended quotation:

The scholarly print publishing system itself proved stable or at least sustainable (relatively if not rigidly homeostatic) for a half-century. The sites

depicted increased or decreased in their quantity...but remained unchanged in their nature and function...the analogue scholarly publishing system – engaged in the production of books that are *bounded* (literally, bound), *identifiable* (clearly and immutably authored and titled), and *stable* (the container and the content of each book remained fixed) – is itself *stable, bounded, continuous, well ordered, and well policed.* (p. 364)

Knowledge was clearly organized in via publication through arborescent rationality deploying clear containers, limits, analogue ordering, expansive, and disciplined. Along side the shift from arborescent structures to rhizomes, Pochoda notes the same movement in scholarship:

Before our eyes, publishing roles that have been stable and separate for centuries are suddenly becoming volatile and interchangeable: overnight, authors become publishers and/or distributors; distributors become publishers and literary agents; literary agents become publishers; readers become critics and authors. No traditional publishing role, much less traditional publishing entity, seems stable or settled in the fully digital publishing universe: the digital system, by its nature, empowers its components to shed rigid identities and labels and be not a this or a that but both, and more, simultaneously and sequentially...In contrast to the analogue publishing system, in which the relationships among the components tend to be linear and limited, the pattern, the solution set, manifested by any ‘digi-

tal' system is not necessarily obvious or easily characterized. The analogue system is relatively static in its components and in its connections, while the digital circuit is in flux in multiple dimensions. It is intrinsically a network of shifting connections, a set of shifting sets, a community of shifting communities. (p. 370-371)

The increasing complexity of digital publishing is rhizomatic and incapable of being represented and organized in the arborescent structure in academic publishing that emerged in the mid-twentieth century. This is a task naturally suited for the Semantic Web which “can assist the evolution of human knowledge as a whole...in naming every concept simply...lets anyone express new concepts that they invent with minimal effort. Its unifying logical language will enable these concepts to be progressively linked into a universal Web. This structure will open up the knowledge and workings of humankind to meaningful analysis by software agents, providing a new class of tools by which we can live, work and learn together” (Berners-Lee et al., 2001, p. 43).

### **Assembling Administration Ethics: Automation**

The repetition of certain tasks were suggested to be prime material for case studies as the possibly could share some aspect that could be principally understood (Mosher, 1939). Today, repetitive tasks are seen as mundane and procedural, which informed by legal and institutional expectations are prime territory for automation. “Mundane, everyday information retrieval frees an immense store of capacity for individuals and within organizations. From this view, technology might better be considered as a factor that can

contribute to the creation of a space and the freeing of time in which authentic, robust and engaged discourse can be structured towards more effectively responding to wicked problems” (Austin & Callen, 2012, p. 414). It is inevitable, at this stage in history, that this automation will be an artifact of the Internet and hence subjugated to the pervasive surveilling of the Web and the intrinsic technologies associated with big data, rationalized identities, and predictive algorithms.

### **Technology, Administration, and Ethics**

In light of changing the concept of information and possible consequences of said changes, how does one teach public administration ethics? The perennial question of “Can ethics be taught?” A qualified yes and no. To a large degree contemporary concerns of ethical behavior from transparency to administrative discretion to external review can, and I predict will, be addressed by technology, not education. And to understand what this means for public administration ethics the instrumental rational view of technology must be qualified.

Recall that rational ethics studies and reifies barriers which differentiate between the categories of ethical and unethical so that administrators know which barriers should be crossed to ensure access, opportunity, and equality to the public and avoid barriers that block access, opportunity, and equality. As discussed above, Deleuze (1992) argues that task is part of expansive spaces of enclosure in which individuals are molded to fit in schools, prisons, factories, governments, etc. Today, Deleuze argues, we have entered into *societies of control* where “what counts is not the barrier but the computer that tracks

each person's position—licit or illicit—and effects a universal modulation” (p. 7). These forms of administrative behavior that will be automated will be ethical not for the will or intention of the administrator, rather the administrator's behavior will increasingly be modulated by technology to ensure ethical behavior.

To make sense of the implications of this shift, we use the assemblage logic described in chapter 4 to deterritorialize ethical theory from informing action and reterritorialize ethical theory as mapping events, individuals, and knowledge/practices that emerge from physical and virtual intersectionalities. This rhizomatic ethics, or assemblage ethics, has affinity with Catlaw's (2009) use of *code sharing* to describe networks. In other words, instead of assuming that there is an expansive unity in ethical discourse that can inform behavior, the unity of ethics emerges from shared concepts or codes that themselves emerge from the relational discourse of public service. Codes are the “bodily and/or mental disposition or capacity to ‘read’ a situation or text of the world” (Catlaw, 2009, p. 490). In this sense, the teaching of ethics is the creation of shared codes regarding the ethical terrain of the relationship between thought and action.

As the terrain for political struggle expands and the fractured, constructed nature of political collectivity becomes more apparent, the field's traditional understanding of accountability and responsibility and its underlying assumptions cease to be effective guides for action. Public administration needs to be reconceived beyond its typical quarantine of government and technical business of “running the constitution” (Rohr, 1986; Wilson,

1887) or the “political science of making the fragmented and disarticulated state work” (Frederickson, 1999, p. 702). Public administration emerges here as a much more generic, far-reaching study and practice of networking as code sharing. (Catlaw, 2009, p. 493)

In the aspect of ethics as a rational endeavor informing good behavior, codes become mechanisms for deterritorializing ethics from instrumentality and reterritorializing them as connecting codes within ethical ecosystems. Instead of dominant models of ethical codes being guidelines to restrict behavior (Svara, 2012), ICT may transform ethical codes to *ethical code* which instead functions through connectivity instead of discipline. Along this line another form of ontology in addition to Howe’s (2006) distinction of weak and strong may become increasingly important in public administration. Strong ontology, as described above, is often thought of universal and transcendent forms that order the world into categories of what counts as something and doesn’t. Weak ontologies were presented as contingent alternatives. Ontologies in ICT are yet again different and are used to make sense of localized code or programming. Ontologies in ICT are emergent and attempt to establish shared understandings of concepts to create interoperable systems. Since this is quite a different use of the term than in public administration literature, the following widely cited explanation by Gruber (1993) is quoted at length:<sup>10</sup>

A body of formally represented knowledge is based on a conceptualization: the objects, concepts, and other entities that are presumed to exist in

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<sup>10</sup> Google Scholar indicates this article has been cited 10,973 times as of April 22, 2013.



some area of interest and the relationships that hold them (Genesereth & Nilsson, 1987). A conceptualization is an abstract, simplified view of the world that we wish to represent for some purpose. Every knowledge base, knowledge-based system, or knowledge-level agent is committed to some conceptualization, explicitly or implicitly.

An ontology is an explicit specification of a conceptualization. The term is borrowed from philosophy, where an ontology is a systematic account of Existence. For knowledge-based systems, what “exists” is exactly that which can be represented.

When the knowledge of a domain is represented in a declarative formalism, the set of objects that can be represented is called the universe of discourse. This set of objects, and the describable relationships among them, are reflected in the representational vocabulary with which a knowledge-based program represents knowledge. Thus, we can describe the ontology of a program by defining a set of representational terms. In such an ontology, definitions associate the names of entities in the universe of discourse (e.g., classes, relations, functions, or other objects) with human-readable text describing what the names are meant to denote, and formal axioms that constrain the interpretation and well-formed use of these terms. (p. 1-2)

ICT Ontology seems similar to the construction of ethical ecosystems through intentional selection of what relationships, functions, and types should be represented. Yet, “formal axioms that constrain the interpretation and well-formed use of these terms” reminds us that these new orderings are in code; It is mathematical and not analogous. To change these systems one must have access and expertise to not only read, but read/write code. Though the Internet has heralded in a new age where everyone is an expert, everyone does not have the access codes that a small group of expert programmers and network administrators do. In arborescent thought if an expert could determine similitude between things categories could be expanded or contracted to accommodate the discovery. In the ontology of ICT, no expertise is needed to make connections between things, but for a thing to count in the first place, a programmer or network administrator must have sufficient privileges and access to include that thing in their ontology. Digital representations, ICT ontologies, networks, apps, and information in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are new logics of control.

### **Codes, Challenges, and Administrative Ethics**

Traditionally, public administration scholars assume that information informs practice. Yet in this brave new world, information is used without intrinsic limitations such as good knowledge informing proper action. For administrative ethics literature to truly aid in democratic governance, it should be open access, to remove intrinsic assumptions of expert knowledge. Yet the information generated by scholars of public administration ethics is often housed behind firewalls enforced by new forms of expertise and control.

Consequently, if an administrator is to be rationally ethical, to inform their action with the most current and ‘best’ information out there, they need access codes. The previous discussion of apps exemplifies this condition as the administrator is a “user” of the app with a unique username and password. Gehl (2011b) reminds us that the information the administrator [user] accesses—even if generated by other administrators [users]—is remotely stored, protected, and administered. In this sense, the very structure of public administration ethics as an academic field is prohibitive of the informed ethical behavior for which it advocates. The implication for scholars of public administration is that to be ethical they must publish only in open access journals. As open access journals do not have the prestige of the traditional journal, they do not carry the weight in tenure review and can have prohibitive financial costs for authors. The intrinsic inability of one-to-many arborescent thought to accommodate contemporary assumptions of information exists in the research topics of public administration ethics, the access to research, and even in the university structure itself. In each failure of arborescent orders, new forms of control have emerged which pose new challenges for the field of public administration. Perhaps the most significance of these challenges oscillates around practices of access. Questions of ontology, epistemology, pedagogy, and methodology are increasingly questions about access.

**Ethical access.**

Beth Noveck (2012), Barack Obama’s former CIO explains the significance of opening data and making it accessible in the context of running government and provides al-

ternatives to the one-to-many structure of rational thought and its corresponding instrumentalism. Open data does more than inform individual behavior and is not simply the abstract organization of repetitive processes. Instead data, as Noveck suggests, is the fertile source for innovation and progress. I suggest that her words are equally true for not just public administration as a practice, but also an academic field.

When data are open—namely legally and technically accessible and capable of being machine processed – those with technical know how can create sophisticated and useful tools, visualizations, models and analysis as well as spot mistakes or mix and mash across datasets to yield insights. As Matt Parker, put it: ‘By making data open, you enable others to bring fresh perspectives, insights, and additional resources to your data, and that’s when it can become really valuable.’ Solving complex challenges requires many people with diverse skills and talents working together. In modern society, we weave our collective expertise together, enabling us to make complex products such as cars and computers that we cannot make alone. The more complex and diverse the products, the more successful – measured both in terms of wealth and well-being – the society over time.

Educating our young or curing cancer are the cars and computers of governance. They are complex social problems that require us to bring our diverse talents to bear. But our centralized institutions of government do not adequately leverage our collective knowledge to improve governance

and solve problems. We can't foster complexity if we limit public participation to voting in annual elections or commenting on already written rules. There's no excuse for failing to take advantage of people's talents, abilities and desire to play a role in governing ourselves and our own communities. (n.p.)

Noveck is speaking of the Open Government Directive which is “a distinct break from previous ways in which we have thought about governing ourselves and others and, in doing so, seeks to open a new space for the invention and deployment of a new regime of government and concomitant ‘techniques, languages, grids of analysis and evaluation, forms of knowledge and expertise’” (Catlaw & Sandberg, 2012, p. 3). Open data is an exemplar of the information central to the future of public administration ethics and with it new expectations of the relationship between knowledge and practice are ushered in with which the field is poorly equipped to interrogate. The combination of open data and digital technologies is in many ways the inversion of Mosher's ideas around a body of knowledge emerging from case studies. Interestingly though Noveck and Mosher share an optimism of making government better through our collective intellect. Perhaps of greater importance is both see novelty emerging from what is oft considered the mundane: repetition.

On one hand we see a drastic change in what counts as knowledge. Though knowledge generally construed has for the most part been grounded in a representational ontology in the field of public administration. Those things that could be represented by lan-

guage counted as something in the world. But, in the past representation was grounded in the human mind. Rationally communicated a representational ontology breaks down to being able to communicate 7 (+/- 2) 'things.' Van der Leeuw (2010) describes how in the past, reaching this cognitive limitation required an innovation of innovation to be able to compress complexity into the small world of the rational mind. Digital technologies may be making the "natural" limitations of representation tied to the human mind and language moot as machines take on the task of representation. In the industrial revolution, machines allowed humans to far exceed the natural limitations of their physical capacity: What a person could physically lift becomes mostly irrelevant when one uses a forklift.

In this day and age—in the Information Age—machines have done the task again. The act of governing creates more information than those governing can process. The direct challenge from the information revolution upon governance is not storage, per se, but selection and access. Technologies such as recommender or decision support systems, the semantic web, and ICT ontologies have all emerged to address these challenges described above. In this new order, the level of ones intelligence or the amount of knowledge they possess is irrelevant if they do not have the right access codes. The relationships between information, knowledge, individuals, education, and ethics are not hierarchical, they are not static, nor are they necessarily rational, but they clearly exist outside of spaces of enclosure and instead function within, and part of, new societies of control. More nuanced arborescent bifurcations in our knowledge of public administration ethics will not prepare our students in societies of control. As teaching remained central

to the field of public administration when scientific principles of administration were put to rest, teaching remains our concern today as we bury the arborescent rationality in public administration. Our teaching should recognize the rhizomatic connections between our students' lives and intensify these connections for the contemporary conditions in societies of control.

## **Chapter 6: Concluding Thoughts on Teaching Public Service Ethics, Rhizomes, and Ethical Ecosystems**

### **Ethics Education, What is it Good For?**

“Can ethics be taught?” This question plagues public administration (Hejka-Ekins, 1988; Mainzer, 1991; Menzell, 1997; Kennedy & Malatesta, 2010; Frederickson, 2012; S). In books, journal articles, in debate over NASPAA’s accreditation (NASPAA, 2009) the topic of ethics education is repeated. Yet, this question is as old as modern university education (Cox, 1913; Haines, 1977; Sloan, 1979). “Can ethics be taught?” should perhaps be secondary to the question: “Why should we teach ethics?” The easily imagined response is: “we want our organizations to be ethical.” Whether cities, universities, non-profits, this too is an immediately apparent response. When the question of wanting our organizations to be ethical is tied back to the question of why should we teach ethics, we begin to see an important relationship between knowledge and our actions in the world. Extracting from this quasi-thought experiment the relationship between practical and theoretical rationality becomes apparent with the former dependent upon the latter. To have ethical organizations, we believe that we need good knowledge to be ethical. The long lineage of Western thought has a similar pattern, a bifurcation between knowledge and action that is replicated in mind/body, theory/praxis, politics/administration and so on. This is a familiar distinction to us and academicians are well trained in how ontology, epistemology, then informs methods. What we do in the world, if rational, is done so because it reflects knowledge we have about the context of our actions. Yet, in this line of



reasoning, we presuppose a general term of the ethical to inform what we specifically want our organizations to be like. The abstract and transcendent informs the concrete and immanent. Within this is also the implicit notion that we will use ethics to transform an unethical, or maintain an ethical, organization. Ethics leads to doing.

But what if we ask different questions:

“What can you do to your organization?”

“What do you want your organization to be?”

“When asking about ‘you’ in your organization, who is included?”

And perhaps the most fundamental question:

“What can we do in the classroom to help our students and their organizations? If not employed in a public organization, what good will public administration ethics do for them?”

The assumption of administrators trained in ethics is that their presence in organizations, current or future, will make the organization more ethical: Public administration ethics inoculates organizations through via repeated injections of The Practitioner into their file and rank. Public administration ethics is a social technology to help organizations operate within accepted socio-political norms. Yet, it seems to me that ethics education should do more than educate individuals to inform future action.

What does public administration ethics do for me as faculty of a public university? In all honesty, the administrative ethics courses I have taught in the past rarely, if ever, con-

sciously informed by day-to-day practice. If the content of the course is not relevant to me as a public servant, I have little faith that it will do much more for my students.

Though the use of the case study was intended to prepare students for the real world of practice (Waldo, 1952; Stein, 1952; Wengert, 1952) the case studies' focus upon decision making frames the ethical in terms of problems which have intrinsic contradictions and are unresolvable. The ethical problems central to case studies are isomorphic to ethical dilemmas in an introduction to philosophy class where the dilemma is "a dear pedagogical tool used by philosophy professors to torment undergraduates by requiring them to jump through hoops by applying various ethical theories to particular situations..." (Bryant, 2011, p. 22). By teaching case studies not only are faculty disciplining students but also themselves to frame ethics in terms of dilemmas which in the final say require an administrative authority to choose one option over the other. Is this ethical? To use my authority as faculty to discipline the framing of problems as unresolvable excepting for the insertion of administrative authority seems to only reinforce an authoritarian power relationship.

Following the logic assumed in the field of public administration ethics all faculty that administer student groups, research centers and projects, internships, recruitment, or that do any of the university service required for tenure should be taking an administrative ethics class. Yet in this instance a human resources (HR) training program on compliance/fairness for staff and faculty seems sufficient. And since many public organizations have an HR office—or access to a university, state, county, city office—that

does ethics workshops, the need for a separate field of public administration ethics seems minimal. Whether ethics is reference to good behavior, the good life, or the delivery of goods (and services) reference to the good fails to generate alternatives and instead limits possibilities of ethics, life, and reifies the existing order (Catlaw & Jordan, 2009). In other words, if the varying forms of understanding ethics reinforce institutional conceptions and practices of what is good, then why should ethics education be separate from an organization's structural capacity to enculturate employees and evaluate its performance?

### **The Changing University**

We as faculty have been burdened with adapting to changes in society for over a century and the incentives for doing so are often from university presidents, corporations, and the hypothesized needs of students. The fear driving change far too often comes from a fear of becoming irrelevant which engenders a competitive response within universities to be more relevant than other universities, and within universities the same drama is reproduced in colleges and departments.

“The new purposes of the university will be far more instrumental than we can presently even imagine. The location of what we now call management and production activity (i.e. administration and teaching/research) will be pushed to the most decentralized level—to the very boundary between the organization and its recipient environment” (McSwite, 2001, p. 418). In this new university, instrumentalism may continue its position as the dominant decision framework. For example, consider Florida where the Governor desires to connect job demand in needed sectors to the cost of a degree in that field.

“The message from Tallahassee could not be blunter: Give us engineers, scientists, health care specialists and technology experts. Do not worry so much about historians, philosophers, anthropologists and English majors” (Alvarez, 2012). Reminiscent of the education reforms over a century ago inspired by the neutrality and intrinsic progress, the reforms today are just as inspired but the neutrality and intrinsic social progress has moved from science to the market. As reforms then pushed specialization and empiricism in education, it should be no surprise that we will see the reforms happening today under the guises of access and opportunity. Possibly similar a century ago, the younger generation of faculty will avoid contentious debates over university tradition, roles of students/faculty, and societal relationships. As McSwite (2001) foresaw a dozen years ago: “The main impetus for change will come, however, not from competition, but from the fact that, as new generations are socialized into the world of the future, a market-oriented consciousness will naturally come to pervade faculty ranks. The kinds of innovations implied by the market will appear attractive to new faculty” (p. 421). This concluding chapter considers how some of the challenges to the university can be reterritorialized as lessons for a public administration ethics class. The intertwining relationships of the university, public administration ethics, and rationality discussed throughout these chapters provides the impetus for such a suggestion. Additionally, it is well within the purview of these topics to present a tangible activity to start a discussion rather than yet another ethical theory to try to explain and categorize these challenges.

## **Assembling Assignments**

The changes my cohort of faculty are pursuing at Idaho State University are inspired by our varying PhD programs. The two of us from Arizona State University, like McSwite suggests, see potential in market-orientations. We recognize that the job market in which we want our students to enter is only part of our profession as we recognize our university is also in the market of higher education and is not doing so hot. *Washington Monthly* 2012 rankings placed ISU at 253<sup>rd</sup> out of 281 universities.<sup>11</sup> For my cohort, to help our students succeed we must help our university succeed. The Dean of the College of Arts and Letters at ISU has set College wide departmental goal of 3% increase in recruitment, retention, and graduation rates to counteract a 3% across the board cut. One of the ideas that we both picked up in our education at ASU and that the administration at ISU is continually discussing is the universities “brand.” Below this idea of branding is taken up in relation to the university and market orientation. Instead of arguing against this logic that appears endemic to universities today, branding is re-conceived as a class assignment in ethics and suggested to be useful in understanding assemblage thought and ethical ecosystems. “Branding” is an intentional gathering together of relevant bits of an individual or organization to convey a unified and stable identity and a topic directly of concern for public administration ethics.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> [http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/college\\_guide/rankings\\_2012/national\\_university\\_rank.php](http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/college_guide/rankings_2012/national_university_rank.php). Of course metrics like these are contestable and many aspects of ISU are excellent.

<sup>12</sup> The relation to ethics here is a pedagogical tool to interrogate a form of perceived stable knowledge. For an extensive treatment of the topic of public relations in public administration curriculum, see Lee (2009).

Next, I propose public administration ethics education should toss the case study, and not lightly. The boilerplate logic of enclosure and discipline contained within the case study is increasingly irrelevant today. In disposing of the naturalized position of the case study case studies are understood differently than a representation of the administrative world to prepare students for practice. We as instructors should recognize what a case study does in the classroom and why we use them. We use case studies to start class discussions, integrate contemporary situations into the classroom, connect with other faculty to explain how we approach topics, and even to help students feel less overwhelmed by a topic in connecting their life experience to class material via a narrative. But case studies also separate knowledge and action to encourage rational thought in the belief that being rational is instrumental in being ethical.

Considering the forms of knowledge that were believed to inform action over the last century we can clearly see that public administration ethics includes the task of finding stable locations for the knowledge to inform action. The simplest reason for this stability is that public administration ethics is concerned with regime stability. The instrumental rationality of the past required that ethics education do what it could do to create stable locations where good knowledge was available and actions informed by this knowledge engendered expected results. As the university and society has changed there has been varying attempts to create stable locations of knowledge and as each failed to garner the expected results, a new loci of knowledge emerged ending with the rational mind. But,

this too has eroded and we are now seeing the rise of rationalized abstract identities which are now perceived as the source of good knowledge.

Rationalized identities are digital representations created through extrapolation of sets of data that represent specific attributes of individuals. This new stable space is not from logics of enclosure as with the traditional university and The Practitioner. Branding is considered again, but at the level of the student in the fad of personal branding. The concept of personal branding is deterritorialized from the self-help success driven direction of social media entrepreneurialism and reterritorialized as a contemporary way of understanding different elements of public administration ethics. A student activity of creating Twitter, Tumblr, Pintrest, and other social media tools provides a mechanism for students to understand their online identity. Nested within the university branding activity, this activity extends the ideas of assemblages and Deleuze's (1992) *societies of control*.

In the past, stability was achieved through arborescent rationality that isolated conceptual containers from change through the establishment of clear boundaries. In a complex society stability is achieved through connectivity with the greater internal and external connectivity the greater the stability. Hence, the skill sets students should have are not ones that are contained within an enclosed space but are instead practices that allow students the ability to draw out from the chaos of material and virtual intersectionalities in which they live. Stability emerges from the form not the content—the stability of knowledge is not in the knowledge itself, but in processes of knowing. Simply, learning is more important than knowing. With an ever increasing reliance on technology, the final

activity requires students to push ethics to an entirely instrumental position by asking students to build an “ethical app.” Since the university is becoming increasingly instrumental, and public administration ethics has a history dominated by instrumental rationality, this activity requires students to think creatively about the interconnections associated with viewing the ethical terrain in terms of ecosystems as opposed to dilemmas. In doing so students must first learn how to learn differently since there is no predefined content designated as the material for the assignment. The ethical app is a tool to help visualize or create an ethical ecosystem that the students desire to bring about, such an app can be the starting point of a discussion and action as opposed to dilemmas whose point is to end discussion with an administrative decision.

### **Rebranding branding.**

The importance of “branding” the department, the college, and the university are continually the topic of concern for the university administration and is seen as necessary to meet the above goals regarding recruitment, retention, and graduation. Though creating the university brand has traditionally been done by the marketing arm of the institution I suggest that branding is a creative act which is a creating of an ethical ecosystem and should not be left to university administration to rationalize. The reason for this, I suggest, is that branding is used by the university to delimit the boundaries of the university in order to provide a clear product for consumers. Sevier (2001) blatantly explains: “If [prospective students] don’t know you—and don’t know what you are all about—you will not be included in their choice set because, in their minds, you are not a brand but a



commodity. And because you are a commodity, prospective students, donors, and other audiences will differentiate you from other commodities on two variables: price and convenience” (p. 77). Sevier insists that branding is a question of making the university relevant, that the school fills the students need. This view of education sees education as a product to be marketed where the university is a factory determined to minimize the cost of production while maximizing the value of their product.

The demarcation of clear boundaries in education is an arborescent task of developing categories that accurately depict the areas of society in which the university is concerned. Nicholai et al. (2012) describes how there are traditionally three general spheres in which the university sees itself: knowledge production, student learning, and a social charter. Each of these are defined, respectively, in a binary tension: Knowledge for problem solving or generating revenue; democratic citizenship or “return on investment; and serving public and community interests or profit and growth. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) describe how arborescent logic insists on defining what something is while the rhizome says should be replaced by the rhizomatic “and... and...and...” which is evident in the boundary work occurring in the university around the above dilemmas and spheres of activity. Nicholai et al. suggest that the general resolution of these dilemmas, to varying degrees, is to the recombination of what was once diametrically opposed: “re-combine the goal of creating basic knowledge with profit maximization...democratic training and accountability metrics in student learning...the public good with economic gain in the social charter” (p. 206). The dilemmas are contested borders requiring recombination to be a

continual process and as such universities require continual innovation in their self branding.

Since the universities brand, identity, and boundaries are constantly in flux due to the constant necessity of being branded as relevant to the needs of the community and market, the MPA graduate potentially too is in flux. If the identity of an MPA program is too closely bound within the greater university the MPA graduate is either required to continually self-monitor themselves and re-enroll in school to upgrade their education or potentially become out of date—irrelevant—as the university reasserts a new mantra of what is relevant and necessary. The university is no longer sensible as a space of enclosure, like the factory as discussed previously. On the other hand, the university in the knowledge economy, the information society, post digital revolution, is exemplary of Deleuze's (1992) *society of control* where “perpetual training tends to replace the school, and continuous control to replace the examination” (p. 5). Where the previous university educated students into The Practitioner, today's university develops networks of knowledge transfer and markets of knowledge capitalization with organizations, businesses, and communities. Public administrators do not so much acquire knowledge as they gain access to networks and markets with the right codes, passwords and user accounts. The MPA, once a recognition of being disciplined, perhaps can better be understood as the password to gain access to certain jobs, meetings, and discussions regarding ones community.

The university identity, or brand, is of little worth for generating a stable space for placing knowledge though the tangible representation may be stable to what it refers is in flux. Yet the process of branding can also be seen as an intentional selection of what to include and exclude in the building of an ethical ecosystem for the exact concerns developed above. To understand this point we return to the idea of the case study and teaching practice.

In the case study, class discussion is inward and narrow creating a conceptual space of enclosure. Without reference to what the law dictates, students have to justify their actions. Case studies in placing an individual at the helm to make a difficult situation reinforces what McSwite (1997) calls deferring to the Man of Reason, where unresolvable problems become handed off to The Practitioner to act on others behalf. Case studies prepare future practitioners to be the authority to be the stopping point of irresolvable problems. Yet case studies are flexible and can be easily deterritorialized from its assumed instrumental rationality and reterritorialized as imaginative fiction as is done in the following class activity.

**Activity:** Groups of students write a fictional case study where members of the student body are asked by university administration for input to rebrand the university and the MPA program. Instead of presenting a dilemma that needs resolution through administrative discretion, this activity takes the terrain of a practical dilemma and asks students to project what possibilities may emerge from this space. Specific concerns are directed at what the rebranding means to them as students and future graduates. Students are

asked to pay specific attention to the importance of the university to brand itself in relation to the above spheres of research, student instruction, and social charter that Nicholai et al. (2012) outline. Additionally, students must include a conceptual map of the connections between the different values they wish to include and individuals/groups/organizations/governments/communities/etc within and outside of the university. Students are then asked to diagram what they think the relationships between values and the world currently are and then compare the two. Groups present their rebranding to the class after which the class discusses the implications of changing concepts which define spaces in which they are a part. With instructor's assistance, if need be, class discussion is directed so students gain a larger picture of what their MPA education means and makes conceptual connections that may bring that education closer to what they desire it to do.

**Rationale:** The activity encourages students to view the terrain of public organizations not as containing difficult or impossible to resolve ethical dilemmas but instead as a space in which their identity, community, and future is intimately connected. Students learn what a representation means and what it could mean.

The connection: Organizations are assemblages of which are in part composed by individuals who are composed by the same organization.

### **Ethics Education: From Individuals to Dividuals**

Rhizomatic ethics is code sharing with considerations to the above assumptions of access, what to do when granted access, and self reflexivity. The goal of the MPA program is should no longer be to fabricate The Student into a model of a Practitioner only

for them to start anew when leaving the university. Though this was an effective method of education in disciplinary societies, in the societies of control the individual has been succumbed to the individual: “Whereas the disciplinary society moved discontinuously from space to space (school, home, work, prison) and therefore was inscribed both across individuals and masses as they formed and re-formed with these spaces, the current “society of control” is concerned with what Deleuze calls the “dividual... a play on the words “divide” and “individual” — is the infinitely divisible collections of data about subjects which can be extracted and manipulated across space and time” (Gehl, 2011, n.p.). Public schools once formed Students through discipline and structure; schools today manufacture test scores. The university that once functioned like a factory turning standing reserves of high school graduates into college graduates now too exemplifies Deleuze’s dividualization. Consider Michael Crow’s description of the contemporary university and the use of analytics:

...to be a public university means engaging the demographic complexity of our society as a whole. It means understanding that demographic complexity. It means designing the institution to deal with that demographic complexity. And it means accepting highly differentiated types of intelligence: analytical intelligence, emotional intelligence. Students are not of one type but are of many, many types. Taking all of that and overlaying it with hundreds of degree programs results in so many variables and so many dimensions of complexity that you actually can't operate the institu-

tion unless you make a fundamental switch and say to yourself that, at the end of the day, it is just about analytics. You have no other way of moving forward. So to be able to deal with all of our complexity at ASU, we decided to change the nature of our decision making away from trying to operate a traditional enterprise on a traditional basis and toward being an innovative enterprise driven by analytics... Without analytics, we can't understand what's going on, we can't understand the complexity of what we're trying to do, and we can't measure our progress. We needed tools to help us make better decisions—about everything. How should we design academic advising? How should we design individual courses? How should we design the overall pedagogical structure of the institution? Every facet of the institution requires robust analytics. (Crow, 2012, n.p.)

No longer is the student formed within a space of enclosure, the student is multifaceted and the university modulates itself to accommodate variation and this is achieved through digital representations of dimensions of the students with the more types of information extracted the more “complete” the picture is of a student. Crow insists these representations are the source of knowledge for the administration to run the university. He is able to make this claim because behind institutional and digital firewalls stable codes sort and order the extracted data from students with very little recourse from students except to modulate their own behavior to key off good codes and avoid flagging bad codes. These identities persevere as students leave university to keep record of the

student but to also inform models regarding future cohorts of students. Dividuals do not start anew like individuals did in moving from one enclosure to another and the students today are well aware of the impossible task of erasing digital footprints, signatures, and identities. Since erratic behavior will be flagged, the successful dividual self regulates their behavior within expected norms.

Yet the self regulation of rationalized identities extends beyond the analytics of the university. Interoperable Web 2.0 systems from the likes of Google and Facebook, connect and spill into once unique spaces and store every represented behavior or trait for recommender systems, social interaction, notifications, and future analysis. Gehl (2011a) describes how these technologies lead to an individual's self awareness as a *personal brand*: "All of this continuous control and data collection has fragmented the self into data, and this is only amplified on the Internet...personal branding is concerned with the migration of the individual's personal data to the Web. However, this is not imposed upon the personally branded from without, but rather is consciously chosen by them. In this sense, subjects who brand themselves are adopting control logic to their own ends, willfully dividualizing themselves" (n.p.). The digital identities created by our students follow them into their career as administrators.

The recognition that the stable representations of an administrator functionally brands the administrator, brings astute attention to Thompson's (1992) importance of appearances in government ethics: "Officials who appear to do wrong actually do several kinds of moral wrong: they erode the confidence in government, they give citizens reason to act

as if government cannot be trusted, and, most all, they undermine democratic accountability” (Thompson, 1992, p. 257). Traditionally, private and public lives were demarcated by physical spaces and different roles which have all but eroded today. “Although the rising workforce desires network privacy, technology, law, and prevailing business practice do not currently support that approach” (Abril, et al. 2012, p. 124).

Our students today do not have the privilege of distinct spaces and identities. Though self help gurus tout that personal branding will “lead to financial and personal success” Gehl’s (2011a) is critical and yet his summary of that literature sounds very much like ethical behaviors public administration ethics would be interested in: “Self-examination resulting in differentiating oneself via textual and hypertextual representations [manufacturing boundaries that have eroded online]; Adopting the language of transparency and authenticity; Making connections with others by offering quantifiable affective exchanges; Most importantly, engaging in autosurveillance...[where] the personally branded have chosen to constantly monitor and groom their images in an attempt to control how they are perceived” (n.p.).

### **The dividual and branding.**

But it is not only students that perhaps should be conscious of their online identity. It is assumed that departments with more recognized faculty have greater brand power and will attract more students. Here again we are reminded of the connectivity between individual identities and the institutions in which they are a part. McSwite suggests a correlation between the university and Hollywood that is useful in understanding this relation-



ship: “Hollywood, California, remains important as a place, a physical locale for the pool of resources that making the movie product requires. It is important to be represented there in the continuing flow of interactions that energizes the processes involved in the production of movies. However, now, it is not the studio mogul but the consuming public, through market choice, that creates stardom for actors. What counts in settings like these is the ability to perform and produce; the only reliable base for power is success in the marketplace” (McSwite, 2001, p. 421).

John Boyer, an instructor at Virginia Tech epitomizes these themes of scenes and celebrities and market choice. A graduate of the institution in which he teaches holds a Masters but no terminal degree yet has 3,000 students enroll in a single face-to-face class. His “life mission” is “motivating, educating, and inspiring students to be fully engaged in the rapidly globalizing 21st century. In our increasingly connected and complex world, personal (and even our country's) success depends upon a global awareness and global engagement to meet the challenges of our time” (thejohnboyer.com). The *Chronicle of Higher Education* describes the method behind Mr. Boyer’s classes and we are again reminded of the assumed importance of brands from individuals to institutions:

Decentralize the rigid class format by recreating assessment as a gamelike system in which students earn points for completing assignments of their choosing from many options (1,050 points earns an A, and no tasks, not even exams, are required). Saturate students with Facebook and Twitter

updates (some online pop quizzes are announced only on social media).

Keep the conversation going with online office hours.

And snag big-name visitors by turning the enormous class into a digital hive that swarms them with requests. Other recent guests have included Emilio Estevez and Martin Sheen, whose recent movie focuses on the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage route in Spain, and Jason Russell, creator of “Kony 2012,” a viral video about the brutal Ugandan rebel leader Joseph Kony. (Parry, 2008)

While limited resources in the midcentury brought increased external funding into the university we see today that the neoliberal desire to overcoming ‘artificial’ limits, such as funding, is extended to the very boundaries of the university. “Government and international agencies can promote the growth of entrepreneurial universities with a broad interdisciplinary scope and mission, and support the birth of an entrepreneurial scientist who integrates knowledge and innovation” (Dzisah, & Etzkowitz, 2008, p. 113). If one is not a celebrity instructor that draws in high enrollment, one better be an entrepreneurial scientist—either situation brand recognition is key.

In addition to branding individuals and institutions we can see how the connectivity of popular brands—innovative companies, cutting edge research universities, celebrity faculty, hip towns—together create what Gibson & Clocker (2004) refer to as *scenes*. Similar to art and music scenes, academia can be understood as composed of these scenes which are “sites towards which creative producers, companies, investment and (intellec-

tual) capital gravitate, and from which academic knowledges have a better chance of achieving transnational distribution and reaching high-level policy makers” (Gibson & Klocker, 2004). This connectivity between personal brands, university brands, and scenes begs a question: If successful individuals, research, and teaching happens in these physical locations as scenes, are individuals, research, and teaching in turn connected to the spatial trends in urban theory and design? What role does space play in our education, learning, and research?

At the core of self branding are underlying assumptions of capital and self-interest (Gehl, 2011a) which only plays into the detractors of public servants. Though this egoism in the form of self-branding may be of relative importance to entrepreneurs, the field of public administration ethics being concerned with regime stability should seek ways to demarcate digital identities between self-serving egoism and virtuous public service. Catlaw et al. (2012) suggests a democratic *bios* that provides an alternative to the egoism of self branding. By focusing on the form of process compared to the content of process new relationships become possible beyond traditional containers like public-private. To focus upon the content is to take an arborescent approach to ethics to evaluate the truth in the representation while a rhizomatic approach places values on the form of process. It is not the brand that matters, but the process of creating and understanding identity. Recognizing the process of dividualation, administrators have the potential to create virtual identities of themselves, their organizations, towns, etc through the abstracted and stored processes of their day work creates. The continual abstraction of more granular data of

individuals is meaningless until it is ordered by someone with the right codes. Administrators by their very public nature are encoded in manners to draw together intricate relationships of data.

**Activity:** Students are required to create accounts under a fictitious identity on 3 social media sites such as Tumblr, Pintrest, Twitter, Reddit, etc. Students are required to create their own personalities, interests, families, and jobs for their fictitious identities. The class is given a specific topic that is relevant to their community and students are required through their fictional social media accounts to “like,” “link,” “share,” “tweet,” or “post” online content related to the topic for a month. At the end of the month students collectively map the connections around these accounts and are required to assess the fictitious individual behind the account.

**Rationale:** The concept of leaving a digital trail, dividualation, and personal brands are abstract. The idea of personal branding may seem like a great idea, but what does it actually say? This assignment by asking students to create digital identities can see first hand how identity is created online, what this means regarding private and public lives, and what messages do these identities convey. One off comment by itself may seem harmless, but when several are tied together, when connections to questionable material appears, when an individuals “friends,” “circle,” or “followers” are all associated with a specific interest or group a different story emerges. If rationalized identities are the necessary source of knowledge for successfully managing our organizations, it seems that students need a hands on experience of dividualation

### **From case studies to assemblages.**

The app assignment emerged out of class discussion in my Public Administration Ethics class at Idaho State University in Spring 2013. In each of the group presentations, the class discussion that followed was lively and included phrases like: “You could do this...” ;“Did you consider...”;“I like what you did here” so on and so forth. What we discovered is that the ethical is abstract but not abstract enough. By rendering an ethical dilemma into a mobile phone app the ethical is deterritorialized from the ethics space of enclosure and is reterritorialized as something tangible that students can see and interact with. It gives the students something to work with, to play with, to imagine using. Students have to pull out of material and virtual intersectionalities what they believe is important and reterritorialize that abstract desire into tangible interactions of residents. The assignment is one of selecting what to include and from that set rendering codes that immanently connect individual bodies in the community together. Further since mobile apps rely on repetitions and patterns students are presented tangible ways of seeing how order can emerge and can understand the complexity and logic behind assemblages.

Where the case study necessarily must end when The Practitioner decides and authoritatively arrests the discourse. The furthest any discussion that can go is the review of whether or not the decision was correct and this discussion too must arbitrarily end. The app assignment is a different game as it is the catalyst for further discussion. A student might ask how the app is going to be funded which leads the class toward a long discussion on obligations of government, intellectual property, open data, and community

relationships. Another student suggests using a crowd-funding website like kickstarter.com to push the idea out to the public and business community. Here the students become the opposite of Men of Reason, where the idea that they are working on is presented in an open way to non-Practitioners to decide.

The class begins discussing intellectual property and the assignment is amended to require all the groups to put basic copyright protection on their projects using an open access copyright tool called Creative Commons. The case study disciplines students to use theoretical knowledge to inform a decision. The app assignment uses theory to build intellectual property that traces connections to the community and is an interactive representation of an ethical ecosystem.

In this instance, a case study can be used that exposes the problems of a city's webpage. The digital divide—the ethical concern regarding disparities between those who have Internet access and those who do not—is a popular dilemma to apply to a situation and inevitably the case will ask students whether they do or do not support moving city services and records online.<sup>13</sup> The point behind such an exercise is to discipline students to weigh different values and perspectives and then make a decision in the best interest of the public. This, I suggest is ethical masturbation. The intentions are honest and in the short term it is enjoyable but it is momentary and does little to extend into actual relationships with others.

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<sup>13</sup> See Markkula Center for Applied Ethics Case Study “The Case of the Cyber-City Network” <http://www.scu.edu/ethics/dialogue/candc/cases/cybercity.html>

**Activity:** An alternative approach to discuss the problems with online technology besides the case study is to render it as a Call for Proposals. The city is pushing services online and is seeking proposals for innovative mobile phone applications that provide access to the services but does so in a way to leverage social media toward engaging citizenry that do not have online access or the opportunity to participate. Class is broken into groups to design an app. The assignment requires them to write a white paper framing the problem in terms of ethics literature, write a second white paper on how the app solves not only the problem but also increases the community's social capital. The groups present their app to the class as a proposal for consideration.

When this topic was presented as an ethical dilemma in a case study the issue was assumed as irresolvable and hence The Practitioner is trained to be the final authority by making an informed, but ultimately arbitrary, decision which ends the activity. As the app assignment the dilemma is recast as the terrain of creativity and innovation requiring opening up the conceptual space for feedback. Instead of preconceiving the stakeholders as “wholes” the assignment requires them to consider them as individuals since they are working with digital representations of abstracted data. What bits of data are the students looking for? What does that data really say? What novel combinations of individuals can we compose to inform a problem?

**Rationale:** The underlying assumption in the app assignment is that residents should be able to govern themselves but are unable to because of a failure in the social order to provide access to a subset of the population. The discourse moves from “Make the right

decision” to “What can we do?” and in turn allows for class discussion to make connections between material and virtual intersectionalities. Theoretical considerations around ontology and representation become tangible things students are *doing* as they consider what data should be captured and what it means and how it is related to other representations, and perhaps most importantly students make the connections between how representations are related to the world in which they want to help bring about. The ethical is no longer about knowledge leading to action. Rather students recognize how concepts relate to each other and how that shapes how we perceive and understand the world in which we act.

Connections: Individuals and brands are connected through the student's intention in proposing a technological solution.

## **Conclusion**

During its history university teaching of ethics sought to place the knowledge to do good in a stable space. Yet, looking back perhaps it was the desires and practices of individuals who created such spaces. As such, we can see how a rhizomatic ethics places stability in the codes that connect things together. In other words, the stability is in the form of ethics and not the content. In form, ethics itself is empty and void of content rendering ethics as a social process of manifesting what is desired. Rhizomatic ethics is therefore not a body of knowledge that informs public servants to do good. Rather, rhizomatic ethics itself is instrumental: Public administration ethics is a social technology. Ethics are tools and nothing more. Ethical theories and practices are social technologies that have



the potential to transform communities and individuals, but the intrinsic value of goodness is not in ethics nor does ethics point to a transcendent notion of the good with which knowledge of the theory brings us closer to. Ethical theories are real things like hammers though one is material and one is virtual. As such, the proper way to conceive ethical theories is not as information to be possessed, but as something active in shaping relationships between things connected in the intention of the holder.

Instrumental rationality renders the world simple as the connection between expected results has to be logically derived from knowledge and the rational capacity of the human brain is itself small. Knowledge as an instrument is an inversion of simplicity. In the opening chapter I discussed how scholarship can be understood linearly. Each step of knowledge reduces future uncertainty by a normalized projection. Knowledge as instrument places the tool of knowledge in the immediate future: “I will use knowledge to do \_\_\_\_\_.” The use of knowledge in this sense is based on desire of the stakeholders and the uncertainty of results in the projection is of intrinsic concern. Traditionally we can see how ethics as a mechanism of accommodating uncertainty in intrinsically complex systems (Tannert, et al., 2007). They suggest that there is ontological and epistemic areas of uncertainty that spill out from objective knowledge while subjective knowledge leads to uncertainties in rules and morals. Their case is an exemplar of arborescent rationality as each of the bifurcations described above are mapped directly to a different form of decision making: categorize and order systems to understand areas to reduce uncertainty. Proper action is derived from good knowledge. This is reasonable when conducting re-

search in the intersection of techno-human intersectionalities, but the application of such models to public administration ethics, assumes that the spaces of uncertainty are known and are informed by decision making.

Yet, if decision making is the core of public administrative ethics, these are spaces well suited for automation and innovation making the space of public administration ethics inversely related to progress. The more success, the less need for ethics. Technological systems are excellent at repeating mundane tasks without question or boredom and case studies have been effective at representing those tasks in a manner easily transformed into computer programs for a long time (Simon, 1965). The discourse of public administration ethics is around education—a retooling of student into Practitioner—which is necessary to maintain a high saturation of ethical leaders as Practitioners retire or move out of public service and as government grows. Education is resource intensive and if the mantra of the times is to “do more with less” public administration ethics may stop being part of a university education. Perhaps it will be accomplished through on-the-job training. Training is still resource intensive and just redistributes costs from the university to an organization or government. The more training required the more an organizations overhead grows.

Technological solutions though are scalable with very little increases in overhead. They can be increased to accommodate need without retooling or heavy investment. This hypothetical situation suggests that ethics could move from the social technologies of rules, norms, and education that makes an organization ethical to the design of how to

implement these technologies. Decision making in the sense of deciding the optimal or best choice or course of action among many is becoming outmoded by technologies such as decision support and recommender systems. If public administration ethics does not move past instrumental rationality, it too may become outmoded. To think rhizomatically we gain a language that is more than rational. We can still be rational and instrumental, *and* we can understand and relate all the things we do in the classroom, our research and as a field that resists being generalized into arborescent categories. Recognizing the connections that are important in moving toward what an organization desires, while designing which of those connections are suited for human, technological, public, private, solutions, or obsolescence is the ethical terrain for which our universities and MPA programs are exceptionally well suited. To teach ethics is to forget the trees and the forest and engage with our students the wondrous complexity in which we are a part.

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