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## CONVERGENCE OF SOCIAL MARKETING AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: DEMOCRATIZING VALUE CREATION

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### Abstract

This article aims to explain the interface between advances in civilization and advances in communication. The article also addresses the inadequacy of public administration literature to explain why communication media is important to its theory and practice. Subsequently, the article explicates why communication media contribute to the public administrator’s ability to improve the quality of democracy.

The literature on communication media and public administration provide conceptual data that indicates how communication media continuously contributed to the public administrator’s ability to manage large disparate social-economic units. Network theory and administrative communication theory indicate why communication networks improve institutional effectiveness and efficiency.

The literature confirms the need for clarity on how the interface between communication media and public administration increases public value and improves the quality of democracy.

Network theory is a viable strategy for increasing the public administrators’ ability to increase public value.

**Keywords:** co-creation, Structuration, governance networks, value creation, the agora

## 1. Introduction

“Public administration includes all activities carried out directly or indirectly by the administrative apparatus of government. Public administration is a discipline which consists of all those operations having for their purpose the fulfillment or enforcement of public policy” (Sarkar 2010, 1). Designating a date for the beginning of the practice of public administration is impossible because strategies for organizing society date back to the earliest practices of structuring complex societies. From its earliest stages, public administrators have been challenged by the need to effectively manage environmental pressures, the consequential economic challenges imposed by competition over scarce resources, the need for managing diversity as political systems expanded into ever larger regional political bodies, and the need to manage adversaries (which included contestations to claims of authority). The contemporary conditions public administrators are confronted with are

a striking resemblance of the factors initiating the paradigmatic conceptualizations of the field. This article argues that, although communication media have historically been an essential factor in the ability to effectively manage public administration challenges, the full relevance of the impact of communication media on the practice of public administration remains “a significant but neglected topic” in the literature on public administration theory (Waldo 1992, xi).

Historians say that revolutionary advances of civilization are sparked by advances in communication. It was communication that played a primary role in initiating human culture, in progressing civilization, and currently advancing civilization to the global level of social existence (Miller 2016, 27). Consequently, advances in communication have always meant that public administrators were provided more progressive means of establishing social cohesion (e.g. assuring adherence to policy and to the demands of authority while, at the same time, increasing benefits for and the satisfaction of all stakeholders). As the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century ends, practitioners of public administration are once again realizing that the possibilities afforded by advances in communication technology could improve public administration processes if utilized effectively.

Advances in communication media have prompted a communication revolution which is increasing the extent to which there are integrated services linked through integrated communication networks that clearly increase the effectiveness and efficiency of institutions and institutional agents making use of the advances. Analysts refer to this era as the age of “the network society” which is characterized by services that integrate the interests of individuals, private organizations, and public institutions. Such developments are resulting in the integration of social resources, initiating the co-creation of public value concept, the prospect of participatory governance, and co-creating a means of increasing social-economic benefits for more stakeholders. In other words, “Much of the recent approach to the management and delivery of public services has been based on the notion that the application of [communication media] can improve their quality” (Walsh 1994 69; Roy 2013, 12).

Thus, improving the processes of public administration increasingly involves engaging stakeholders within knowledge-generating networks facilitated by advances in information communication technology. This means that increasing the efficacy of public administrative processes requires developing technological age communication strategies, models, and theories (Lee 2011, 13–18; & Liu & Horsley 2007, 377–378). This article analyzes the impact that advances in communication media have continuously had on the practice of public administration, the notion of participatory political communication, on the engagement between civil society and public authorities, and on the collaboration within and between institutions. This article takes a historical approach to analyzing the impact that conceptualizations of political communication have had on the practice of public administration to determine the concepts and principles that contribute to the public administrator’s ability to increase public value.

This article argues that there should be a corresponding development of a framework for explicating the interface between public administration and communication media. Because of its potential for empowerment, as well as the repressive aspects of the applications of technology, social media is having an enormous impact on intra-state and interstate social-political activity. It is increasingly apparent that the use of advanced technology enhances the practice and processes of public administration. In response to this lack

of a developing framework, this article provides an analysis of how communication media contribute to co-creating an increase in public value by engaging stakeholder in communication networks. The social networks create a type of structure-agent interaction that is facilitated by advances in communication media and which enhances the public administrator's ability to increase beneficial outcomes for larger segments of society.

An analysis of the impact of advances in communication on the practice of public administration includes an exploration of the role that networked communication systems play in administrative communication practices, plus the impact that advances in communication media have on the efficacy of public administration. A special emphasis is made on how communication theory influenced the shift from the classical theory of public administration to the New Public Management and Postmodern Public Administration. This article highlights the concepts and principles related to effective political communication that were established as an essential aspect of Western civilization's foundational principles of public administration, which laid the foundation for the classical theory of public administration, and for classical notions of social action. The early concepts and principles related to political communication are relevant because they continue to be a viable means of explain the complementary connection "between substance and process and between individual and collective values" (Denhardt & Baker 2007, 123).

Section two provides a historical overview of the ways in which communication media have been employed by public administrators to generate knowledge and power (Oppenheim 1997, 51–60; Miller 2014a, 1–7). In other words, section two is a historical overview of how public administrators made use of advances in communication media to generate a knowledge that is effective for managing society's challenges.

Section three explains how an understanding of the connection between power, authority, and communication contributes to developments in approaches to public administration. Section three also emphasizes the role that communication media play in integrating private-public networks in social action. In addition, section three explains the essential role that communication media play in structuring and mediating structure-agent relationships. It explains the role of communication media in the evolution of public administration theory to include the possibility of complementary structure-agent relationships and in creating polity that enhances the quality of democracy.

Section four concludes as a critical analysis of issues raised in the article and summarizes why there is a need for a place of communication media within the theory and practices of public administration. The concluding section also emphasizes the relevancy of integrating communication theory into future developments of public administration theory (i.e. a framework for explaining how communication media generate an increase the level of satisfaction for all stakeholders, and how communication media contribute to increasing social capital).

## 2. The Historical Perspective of Public Administration and Communication Media

*The most concrete forms of communication history have always concerned themselves with the relationship between communication and governance, especially the emergence of forms of representative democracy (Nerone 2006, 258).*

As the history of political science indicates at the initial stages of civilization, “there occurred a series of phenomena that would have lasting importance to the history of [humanity]” – the rise of political power and advances in communication media (Oppenheim 1997, 31). Together, they became the means for successfully managing the pressures resulting from a peculiar mixture of geopolitical, economic, diversity, and environmental challenges that public authorities have continuously been confronted with. “A study of the first phase of civilization [reveals] that welding together disparate ecological and economic areas was the product of two forces” – communications and surplus (with surplus meaning an increase in society’s material advantage). This constituted an entire infrastructure through which ideology could be diffusely communicated for, without such advances in communication, generating surplus is not possible (Mann 2005, 2–4 & 310–313; Corner 2016, 265–273). In other words, “the fundamental infrastructure required for the exercise of organized and diffused power is communications” (Mann 2005, 136 & 157).

Communication can be defined as mutual interaction to exchange information to increase beneficial outcomes, how to enhance relations, how to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of endeavors, and how to procure something wanted (both instrumental and consummatory) (Miller 2016, 26–37; Dewey 1929, 183–184). Political communication is best defined as the “role of communication in the political process” (Chaffe 1975, 15). As authorities were increasingly pressed to govern over larger regions, public administrators realized that advances in communication are an important aspect of their ability to extend power and influence over time and space (Innis 2006, xxxiv–xxxv). Communication media were the means authorities used to disseminate information necessary for the administration of society and for keeping themselves in touch with information pertinent to the stability, flourishing, and the growth of the society. During the early stages of civilization, authorities understood that acquiring a monopoly of knowledge and power is dependent on the medium of communication on which they were built (Innis 2007, 192). An analysis of the early experiments with instituting social and political economic policies for increasingly larger social-political units indicate that there was a progressive development in notions of how to exercise authority over a society – which was manifest in terms of implementing communication media through which ideology, power, and influence could be transmitted throughout the social system (Mann 2005, 2–4 & 310–313).

Although the practice of public administration was evident with the emergence of complex societies, the first conceptualizations of the role of communication in public administration appeared with the earliest attempts to employ deliberation as a means of social decision-making in larger city-states, such as attempts to create social cohesion in the early Greek *polis* (Miller 2013, 243; also see Osborne 2006, 53–56). A study of the strategies of classical Greek civic managers provides insight into the role that communication played in enabling public administrators to create integrated power networks in order to establish institutional means of attaining human goals. Section two analyzes how and why

communication was essential for generating, transmitting, and disseminating a particular type of knowledge that enhanced the power and effectiveness of public administrators.

The foundational philosophy, principles, and conceptualizations of managing a civil body for Western Civilization were influenced by the personal example of Socrates, developed into political philosophy by Plato, and refined into a theory of civic administration and political economy by Aristotle. The “foundational principles of Western Civilization’s approach to public administration stem from the notion that the agora (i.e. the commercial and administrative heart of the city) is a site where *politike koinonia* (civil society) engages in dialectic deliberations regarding good governance as part of the endeavor to achieve *politeia* (the good life or the good society)” (Miller 2015, 19; Powell, 2007, 35; Aristotle 1998, 211–212; Fagan & Scarre 2008, 292). The initial conceptualizations of civic management established the foundation for a theory of justice which proposed that decision-making should be done on the basis of deliberative political dialogue.

An analysis of classical Greek conceptualizations of public administration are particularly relevant in terms of the contribution they make to logical positivism and provide philosophical and practical insight into “what structure of power allows all levels of society to articulate their experience, communicate their knowledge of society to others, and share in shaping the structure of social experience itself” (Rossides 1998, 5 & 9). As Plato implied and Aristotle made explicit, public administrators instituted participatory political dialogue in their effort to reconcile differences between the special interests of oligarchs, the power assertions of those who attempted to establish monarchical rule, and the interests of the general public in order to establish social equity. Classical Greece is thus a model of where individual, natural rights were promoted by means of communicative action and rhetoric. In fact, the word for democracy (*demokratia* in Greek) is composed of two syllables: *demo*, which means “people”, and *kratia*, which comes from the term *krotos* meaning “power.” Thus, *demokratia* in classical Greek can be translated as “empowering the people.”

Aristotle is particularly relevant to the development of conceptualizations of the relationship between communicative action, rhetoric, management of the *polis*, social relations, and leadership by establishing the precursor of Social Action Theory with his social-psychological theory of social action. Social action was his explanation of the connection between good governance and rational discourse. Aristotle prescribed principles for increasing the communication effectiveness of public officials so that they would be better able to manage conflicts over what seem to be *incommensurable* values in pluralistic societies (Molina & Spicer 2004, 293–301). His perspective on the role of communication in civic administration introduced the prospect of co-creating value as a means of producing satisfactory outcomes for all stakeholders.

Aristotle also prescribed a theoretical framework for addressing an important aspect of the fundamental challenge of public administrators on how “to come to grips with the interrelationships between structure, agency, and environment” (McLaughlin 2001, 13). Aristotle proposed that action theory is a viable framework of researching value rationality (instrumental and intrinsic), rational choice, the integrative nature of systems, and the role of dialectics in making wise decisions (Aristotle 2004, 40–45 & 107–113; Eikeland 2008, 24). Aristotle’s notion of social action continued to influence perspectives on how natural rights – the precursor of human rights – can be achieved. Natural rights are achieved on the basis of deliberation within a society of equals in order to determine how



to experience “the good life,” how to achieve the common good, social-economic flourishing, and how to have a good relationship with the environment.

As the classical Greek era evolved into the Greco-Roman period of history, it was evident that public administrators were burdened with a challenge that has persisted throughout the history of the practice. Public administration could be characterized as an institution where officials are torn between using their knowledge and ability to support the interests of powerful or to increase benefits for the overall society (Turner 2009, 52–54; Lebow 2008, 204–221). Another way of putting this is that the practice of public administration has been burdened with the need to reconcile the difference between the tendency for social-economic relations to be based on Political Realism, or the relative advantage and utility maximization, and the ideal of basing relations on Political Liberalism or Idealism (e.g. rational discourse). Unless this dichotomy is reconciled, it becomes apparent that public administration practitioners are operating on the basis of a discrepancy in their “logic concerning cooperation, conflict, and risk-taking” (Lebow 2008, 6).

The best way to describe the disparity between Roman public administration based on Idealism as opposed to Realism is the effort to establish Rome as a republic – which operated on the basis of deliberative decision-making that took place in the Roman Senate – and the tendency for powerful leaders to establish imperial rule. Conflicts within Rome’s ruling elite plus between the *patricians* (ruling class families) and *plebeians* (working class) meant that authorities were impelled to devise communication strategies for promoting solidarity. Historians point out that one such strategy that proved extremely effective was the introduction of “social media”. Rome initiated a system where-by essential information could be communicated through social media – The Acta Diurna). The Acta Diurna was initiated by authoritarian power forces to reconcile the power clashes taking place in the ancient Roman society (Standage 2013, 29–48).

The communicative approach to civic management employed by the Roman authorities can be described as the implementation of communication mediums (e.g. reason or rhetoric, social media, and the Forum or the Comitium – a place similar to the Greek agora for public assemblies and public deliberation). Its objective was to create a sense of loyalty to Roman cultural values, traditions, to the principle of *pietas* (loyalty to family and country), to create social cohesion, and to create a sense of social identity. Communication media were used by the “elite to shape public discourse through communicative acts [as a means of] working in dialogue with the perceptions and beliefs of the citizen mass. This involved, I propose, not a top-down display of charismatic authority in the traditional Weberian mold but an affirmation of the consensual fantasy of membership in an ideal civic body” (Connolly 2007, 43 & 48; Mann 2005, 130 & 230). Rome continued the practice of all the great empires before it – and the practices that are revealed in an analysis of the history of communication media – by using communication to generate a certain type of knowledge and power effective for managing the public. Thus, Rome is an example of how “the authority of knowledge merged with the authority of [the ruling elite] makes information itself an instrument of power and governance” (Caldwell 2005, 138).

Roman administrative practices, as an experiment in how to reconcile the interests of the conservative elite and those of the peasants, continued throughout most of the period of Medieval Europe. Thus, the ancient Roman framework for administration and how information and knowledge, ideology, and communication can be used to manage society continued to be practiced well into the classical period of public administration.

### 3. Developments in Public Administration Theory and in Communication Media

*“Nothing is so important to administration as successful communication” (Lorch 1978, 174)*

The rise of the scientific strategy for managing institutions was based on a top down approach to bureaucracy and organizational communication, Behaviorism, and the significance of powerful authoritarian figures in managing institutions and social relations. But, with the emergence of the knowledge age and the network society, social psychology eventually shifted to a Humanistic approach to institutional management. With the technological age there was a shift to a Constructivist perspective on co-creating social reality.

This section of the article explains how perspectives on power, authority, and communication – as portrayed in the classical approach to civic management – were impacted by developments in information communication technology to trigger new approaches to public administration. This section begins with explaining the importance of communication media in Max Weber’s Social Action Theory, including his understanding of how public administrators can address the dichotomy between the interests of the power elite and those of the masses.

This is followed by contemporary perspectives which envision that communication networks can be a means for reconciling the structure-agent problem. As the classical approach to public administration evolved, communication media and communication networks were increasingly regarded as contributing to the effort of public officials to establish complementary structure-agent relationships and in shaping polity in a way that enhances the quality of democracy. This section explains the emergence of the New Public Management proposition that communication media play a role in increasing the efficacy of public administration. This section of the article concludes with an explanation of the development of Post Modern Public Administration and the proposition of co-creating an increase in public value – the likelihood that the resources of society could be integrated to increase benefits for more segments of society.

Max Weber developed the classical approach to public administration with his social action framework for analyzing social phenomena. Weber claimed that “sociology is a science concerning itself with the interpretive understanding of social action and thereby with a causal explanation of its course and consequences. Action is ‘social’ insofar as its subjective meaning takes account of the behavior of others and is thereby oriented in its course” (Weber 1978, 4). Weber’s claims resonate with Aristotle’s notion of action theory in that they both stress that social activity can be in pursuit of instrumental values (or purely material value pursuits) or intended to realize intrinsic values (those that include the higher order interest of a culture) (Alan 2011, 104). Although Weber is clearly writing to address the deep crises that were evident in the social conditions that emerged with modernity his views reflect a historical perspective on the practice of public administration, on civic management, political economy, and social formation – those rooted in the conceptualizations of civic management from classical Greece up to the Enlightenment.

The sources of social power and control were central to Weber’s analysis of social action. Because of his studies of the history of public administration, Weber realized that information can be used as a form of power to influence public opinion, direct public perception, and shape policy thus influence social order. Weber understood that “under these

circumstances, politics turns into a vocation, and the idea of democracy – including the notion of the free press – serves to maintain and reinforce charismatic leadership” (Hardt 2001, 135). Similar to Karl Marx, he believed that those who have power over the sources of production are in a position to exercise political power. “In general, we understand by ‘power’ the chance of a man or a number of men to realize their own will in a social action even against the resistance of others; who are participating in the action” (Weber 1978, 926). However, Weber was also concerned about power in the sense of political economy in that he worried that wealthy elite could influence social order because they possess the means of producing information and knowledge.

Weber realized that the control over the production of information is a form of political power, thus he believed that studies of the impact of communication media are important to investigating social action. He understood communication media to be an important aspect of social action because it focuses the perception of society on certain symbols that are given a meaning by a person or group of persons for whom they are important (Fuchs 2011, 202). Thus, because the elite have access to control over the production of information and channels of communication, they are able to influence what has meaning for the public (i.e. similar to the way communication was used in Rome). In fact, Weber acknowledged that communication could be used by a charismatic leader to create a plebiscitary democracy – like the way an authoritarian, charismatic ruler used communication in Rome (Weber 1958, 224–230; Weber 1978, 212–216).

Weber recognized that public administrators are very likely to be faced with a conflict of interests in their attempt to carry out their duties ethically unless they can reconcile the difference between two forces that have an impact on administrative legitimacy. The first force is based “purely [on] material interests and calculations of advantages” (Weber 1978, 212–213). He believed that this approach to ordering tends to manifest in terms of dominance, authoritarian power, and gaining the relative advantage which is usually employed by a small special interest group. He described the second force impacting social action as *wertrational*. Based on normativity, or on humanity’s higher order values, the forces are based on actions that are ethical, that create the type of aesthetic value that enriches and ennobles the human experience, and based on tradition, religion, or cultural values (Weber 1978, 25).

His theory on public administration was mixed with principles that reflect those that have been applied since the foundational conceptualization of the practice blended with his vision of how to effectively manage mass social systems. At the same time, his writings reflect a critical analysis of the use of authority and the recognition of a need for reform (Weber 1958, 51–55). Thus, his view of how to reconcile the dichotomy between the interests of the power elite (i.e. their ability to dominate society) and those of the overall public is a *plebiscitary* democracy, or a blending public selection of bureaucratic leadership with a charismatic authority who has the power and vision to promote reform in order to enforce rule of law. That although his ideals impelled him believe that bureaucracy could be a socially revolutionary force, his sense of realism made him believe “it cannot achieve its specific function of efficiency in the service of pre-given goals except at the risk of rigid control and the ‘stereotyping of action.’ This is no doubt why the type of authority which he [compared] with bureaucracy and its functionalization of authority is that of charismatic authority” (Wellen 1996, 14). Weber’s views, although critical of authoritarian control and power and the inadequate quality of democracy, were a complementary



match with the mechanistic view of organizations and bureaucracy held at that time (e.g. Frederick Taylor). Thus, he was convinced that “the decisive reason for the advance of bureaucratic organization has always been its purely technical superiority over any other form of organization. The fully developed bureaucratic organization compares with other organizations exactly as the machine with the non-mechanical modes of production” (Weber 1958, 2014).

Although the prospect of co-creating an increase in public value is a relatively new and conceptual claim, it builds on the notion of collective intentionality that was established by Weber (Weber 1978 7, 9, 14, & 26–28). Weber’s analysis of status groups and classes brought him to the conclusion that social interactions have a meaning or intentionality that knit certain groups together into a network. However, he did not conceive of the prospect that communication strategies could integrate the interests of those networks to create an increase in social capital and to enhance the quality of democracy. Envisioning that contemporary society could act collectively to create an increase in public value is a prospect that was to come with *information age* perspectives on the relationship between knowledge, deliberation, and creating social reality (Putnam 1993, 167; Raadschelders & Vifos-Gadot 2015, 127–128). Thus, “increasingly, a crucial institutional arrangement for the successful operation of government in action [would become] some version of the network (especially networked organizational units), rather than the hierarchy in isolation. Networks are structures of interdependence involving multiple organizations” (O’Toole 1997a, 445; Frederickson et al. 2012, 110).

Dwight Waldo wrote a critique of classical public administration based on his recognition that the field was challenged by a paradigm change that he considered to be revolutionary. Although he was clearly familiar with the history of public administration and well-versed in classical public administration, his views were forward-looking. Waldo is credited with envisioning a theoretical framework by which public administration could integrate public and private models of administration. His theory initiated an interface between the notion that public institutions are capable of creating value, creating value in market and in social economic terms, and co-creating better value outcomes for the overall society. Ultimately this contributed to establishing a complementary interface between public value, economic value, and social value.

Waldo recognized this would entail broadening the scope of public administration by encouraging the field to become more interdisciplinary. He believed that effectively managing the challenges that public administrators are confronted with requires “a working relationship with every major province of human learning” (Waldo, 1955, 70). In this respect he believed that knowledge generation would lend to creating social value in the same way in which it results in increasing the value creation capabilities of private sector organizations. Waldo’s views on the Philosophy of Science were the basis of his approach to developing a theoretical framework and methodology for public administration. He proposed for value-related concerns to be included in developing a framework for the practice of and research regarding contemporary public administration (Waldo 1948, 65, 68, & 71–73). Waldo did not address the significance of communication directly but he did make indirect reference to its importance for improving the quality of democracy.

Scholars increasingly began to acknowledge that an understanding and an analysis of communication had been an overlooked aspect of the relationships between government and its citizenry (Follett 1940; Lorch 1978; & Garnett 1992). Experts of public adminis-

tration began to agree that communication could no longer be treated like “the ‘bastard child’ organization and management theory wanted to hide in the attic or perhaps the ‘obedient servant’ who is indispensable but goes unnoticed because what he does is considered routine and expected” (Garnett 1997, 21). Thus, as administration theorists began to contemplate the demands of managing in the knowledge age they realized that there is a “need to adapt its tools to the inter-organizational networks that increasingly drive administrative action and the need to rely more on interpersonal and inter-organizational processes as complements to – and sometimes as substitutes for – authority” (Kattl 2002, 168).

It gradually became apparent, as the study of the history of public administration reveals, that there is a linkage between knowledge, power, communication, and the capability of public administrators to create public value. Public value creation can be defined as “outcomes best [for] serving the long-run survival and well-being of a social collective construed as a ‘public’” (Bozeman 2007, 12). Thus, by the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the notion of administration had taken a revolutionary turn from its scientific, hierarchal, and control origins. The new concept, under the banner of Post Modern Public Administration, proposed the notion that bureaucracy is a public-private value creation enterprise. In this respect, just as what became increasingly true in the private sector, public administration gradually became focused on generating knowledge necessary for increasing an agent’s capability for value creation. Value creation was seen as a means in which public and private administrative efforts could be applied for “satisfying the value interests of individuals and organizations plus enhance [social] economic performance – [which is achieved by] integrating the social and economic resources of a society in order to co-create an increase in the quality of and the enjoyment of life” (Miller 2015, 21 & 22; & Kjellberg & Helgesson, 2007, p. 137, 141, & 155).

Consequently, subjective value rationality was transformed into the prospect that social values are determined by means of Constructivist dialogic processes that co-create social reality. For example, Gerry Stoker (2006) revives the ancient concept of collective intentionality to counterbalance the emphasis in classical public administration on subjective value rationality. Stoker argues that “judgement of what is public value is collectively built through deliberation involving elected and appointed government officials and key stakeholders” (Stoker 2006, 42). Co-creating an increase in public value is the outcome of collaborative engagements based the principle of mutuality in order to maximize the benefit for all participating stakeholders. According to Stoker, the inquiry into the role of public value creation in public administration resulted from an endeavor “to clarify the nature of the management style most suited to the emergence of networked governance” (2006, 41). Thus, “contemporary specialists [in public administration] began to accept the Social Constructivist claim that structure-agent relationships are enhanced when viewed from the perspective that organizations, institutions, and the economy are all embedded within a social system that in liberal democracies is co-constituted on the basis of interaction between the structure and individual agents (Giddens, 1984, 26; Parsons, 1991, 3–4).

#### 4. Conclusion: The Public Administration and Communication Media Interface

*Without communication there can be no organization because there is no means for the group to influence others in order to achieve the desired outcome* (Simon 1957, 154).

As has been addressed in this article and elsewhere in public administration literature, “practitioners and scholars alike have generally failed to recognize the centrality of communication in their profession and to give communication attention” (Stillman 2012, 255). Consequently, developing an explanation of the significance of communication media in the theory and practice of public administration has been given inadequate attention. This article stresses that a theoretical analysis of the interface between public administration and communication media has greater value for positively influencing administrative practices than has been portrayed in the literature. There is an enormous increase in literature exclaiming how communication media influences the relationship between public officials and the general public, which calls for an adequate theoretical response. This article also highlights the fact that advances in society have always been coupled with advances in communication. In fact, the history of political communication indicates that developing a viable explanation for the interface between public administration and communication media could establish the basis for a powerful administrative communication model that enhances the structure-agent relationship and improves the quality of democracy.

This section of the article summarizes claims made in recent literature regarding how effective use of communication strategies can increase the capability of officials to create more beneficial and satisfactory outcomes for the members of society. Contemporary literature on public administration emphasizes the role that revolutionary advances in communication play in helping public administrators effectively manage what has historically been their most pressing concerns: environmental challenges (Riggs 1980, 107–110), the social-economic consequences of environmental problems (e.g. the effective management and distribution of natural resources) (Durant 2004, 29–32), the increased diversity of many societies (Rice 2007, 622–624; Rice 2015), the threat from adversaries (Rosenbloom 2002, 58–60), and the persistent historical issue of whether or not equality of power is possible or even desirable (Dahl 1974, 3). Effectively managing public administration’s biggest problems requires a viable theory. Without being equipped with theoretical tools that train public administrators to cope with the demands imposed by an increasingly networked body of public forces public administrators will not be adequately prepared to face the challenges they are confronted with (O’Toole 1997b, 45; Lee 2009, 515–516; & Holden 1996, 35).

Developing a framework for explaining the significance that communication media has in the study and practice of public administration involves transforming concepts and principles from the literature describing the interface between communication media and public administration into statements that have value for gaining predictable outcomes regarding a particular phenomenon (Risjord, 2014, 38–40). A framework for explaining the interface between communication media and administrative communication involves explicating the concepts and principles that are indicative of factors for increasing the effectiveness of the practice of public administration. A review of the fundamental con-

cepts and principles that shaped the development of public administration reveals that its processes take place within networks. However, according to proponents of Government Network Theory those processes are increasingly taking place in interdependent and interconnected networks. In fact, the extent to which processes are currently taking place within a *mediated world* is creating a new public administration paradigm brought about by public-private interchange and the impact of communication media on structure-agent relationships (Klijn & Koppenjan 2012, 187–206; Luhmann 2002, 106). Developing a theory explaining the role of mediated networks in the practice of public administration requires a shift of focus from network arrangements and network governance to developing a framework for hybrid governance that is inclusive of the classical notion of bureaucracy, public-private administrative theories, and the new government networks theory (Klijn & Koppenjan 2012, 599). The practical and theoretical challenge will be to identify and explicate the concepts and principals that underlie both the old and the new paradigms.

In addition, explaining the place of communication media in the study and practice of contemporary public administration necessarily includes a framework for analyzing the connection between communication, knowledge, and power. “Although historical observation and theories of power both point to the decisive importance of the state, this [article claims that] power is constructed through processes of communication enacted in multimedia networks of mass communication” (Castells 2009, 416). In this respect “Media have become the social space where power is decided. So in sum: the media are not the holders of power, but they constitute by and large the space where power is decided” (Castells 2007, 238). Consequently, there is a revolutionary paradigm change from the classical perspective of a bureaucracy that structures top-down power relations to the contemporary view that relationships are built by interactions between two variables which are affecting each other in the process of co-constituting social reality (Giddens 1984, 25–26).

Thus, legitimate power is the ability to articulate knowledge generated by interactions between multiple discourse networks, which is also the source and means of legitimate authority. It represents a significant transformation in the nature of bureaucratic authority. As the communication landscape becomes more integrated, networked, and participatory, it becomes increasingly apparent that networks are centers where authorities and stakeholders engage in communication processes to re-define “the monopoly of knowledge and power” (Casmir 1994, 233).

In this respect, explaining the impact of communication media on public administration involves “examining the institutionalization of power relations both within networks and within the broader social-economic context” (Marsh & Smith 2000, 6). This calls for a comprehensive framework for explaining how communication networks contribute to effectively managing the relationship between the interests of the state, the interests of the owners and producers of the established media, and those involved in using communication media to promote cross-border social movements (which many states fear is a threat to their authoritative power or security). Increasingly, public officials recognize that communication media are triggering a networked, globalized phenomena that they fear will “undermine the governance structures needed to cope with them. Administrators [realize that] in years to come what they will be asked to do will reflect interests, desires, and norms that have been set elsewhere: The World Trade Organization, G-7 (or 8), International Monetary Fund, an environmental or energy summit, or even in a corporate boardroom” (Huddleston 2000, 670–671). The consequence could be a post-state hegemony on

determining administrative boundaries due to the increase of interdependent, networked, integrated systems of public-private institutional networks with “expectations that have authoritative political consequences” (Huddleston 2000, 676).

Developing a framework for explicating the concepts and principles related to the interface between political communication and communication media is an attempt to make sense out of the significance that the media has as political, economic, social, and value creating phenomena (Moore 1995, 20–21 & 27–28). Such a theoretical model contributes to integrating the established theories on public administration. An example is social action theory and Weber’s notion of how communication determines what has meaning in social systems with contemporary notions of the interface between communication media and public administration.

Public administrators are once again finding themselves in the midst of revolutionary changes brought about by communication media which are impacting social-formation, structure-agent relations, policy-making, and the means by which officials and the public attempts to experience “freedom from domination” (Luhmann 1995, 6). Contemporary public administration theories provide a comprehensive overview of fundamental concepts and principles that apply to the knowledge age practice of public administration. However, the literature is inadequate in terms of developing those concepts and principles into a 21<sup>st</sup> century theoretical framework that explicates the interface between public administration and communication media. This article fills that gap by providing future researchers the basis of a framework that enhances the public administrator’s ability to utilize communication networks to increase beneficial outcomes in interactions and exchanges, to improve structure-agent relations, to increase social cohesion, and to improve the relationship with the environment.

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