Putting the “Public” Back into Collaborative Public Management

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Collaboration and networking have become core concerns in public management. However, despite a growing empirical tradition, movement toward theorizing has not kept pace. There are many reasons for this, not the least of which are the expansion of multiple tools of governing (Salamon 2002) and myriad organized and non-organized entities that are now involved with government agencies (Agranoff, forthcoming). It is difficult to know where to start: there is structure, centrality, dependence, power, trust, reciprocity, process, and many more dimensions of the accepted knowledge in collaboration and networking. Clearly one central feature in this arena of study is the “public” aspect of these managerial actions.

Two of the authors of this paper define collaborative public management (CPM) as a “concept that describes the process of facilitating and operating in multiorganizational arrangements for solving problems that cannot be achieved, or achieved easily, by single organizations” (Agranoff and McGuire 2003). Managing collaborative arrangements involves more than just the requisite “getting together” across multiple organizations; institutions are created and specific administrative actions are taken to solve problems through collaborative mechanisms. As public management has increasingly externalized and involved non-governmental organizations (NGO) through grants, contracts, partnerships, regulatory activity, and the like, collaboration among governments and between governments and NGOs has presented a new set of public challenges. These challenges, we maintain, involve more than the study of interacting entities. As public concerns are under issue they involve the continuing role of government within a system of interacting organizations. Thus the “public” dimension needs to be theoretically addressed.
A theory of CPM or networking in the United States’ public sector must begin with the ever-present concern for boundaries. Solving the riddles of CPM begins with understanding some basics about the American administrative system. Kettl’s (2006) profound article on “Managing Boundaries in American Administration” underscores the importance of ever-changing boundaries related to mission, resources, capacity, responsibility, and accountability, that, when subjected to today’s inter-organizational service networks, vastly complicate administration. The U.S. system of federalism and political culture manifest such boundaries, and, as such, define what organizations are responsible for doing and what powers and functions lay elsewhere. Kettl argues that “the basic dilemma of American public administration for the 21st century… [is] devising new strategies to bring public administration in sync with the multiorganizational, multisector operating realities of today’s government. It requires a ‘collaborative, network-based approach’” (17). However, these realities conflict with the imperatives of American politics (symbolism, reorganization, restructuring of systems). The “boundaries that served us so well in the past can no longer solve either our administrative or political needs” (17, emphasis added). As a result, the traditional boundaries must not only be understood, but also extended to accommodate the new realities of a more interactive public administration.

This paper seeks to unravel boundary issues and propose a theory of the public in CPM/networking. It is based on the authors’ recent project for the American Society for Public Administration, developing an assessment of Public Administration Review and related sources for the journal’s online Foundations Series (McGuire, Agranoff, and Silvia 2010). We look at the “public” aspect of the project, confirming old and capturing new theoretical approaches. It is organized around five basic premises.
First, the public sector is based on *shared jurisdiction*, making each unit of government unique as an entity that both carries out its own community-determined will and the challenge of expectations that are embedded in policy from other governments. Governmental bodies do not operate hierarchically between their boundaries, only within jurisdictions. Loyalty is not to the state/national capitol but held together by law, bringing on interdependence.

Second, government officials play unique roles in CPM in that they are both participants in the interactive process but also represent statutory and regulatory concerns in the process. The public official is one among equals in problem-solving deliberations while also advancing the legitimate concerns enacted by their governments’ representative bodies and administrative agencies. This issue leads to a critical boundary related *dualism* that cannot be avoided.

Third, the U.S. tradition is that, with few exceptions, operations of public services are carried out at the end of the long “food chain” of federal-state-local-NGOs. This is a pattern that has existed since at least the early 19th century and has accelerated with new tools of government and externalization of public programs. It not only expands boundaries but raises new concerns of *capacity* at end stages of policy.

Fourth, problem-solving among the parties at these end stages necessarily must be *interactive* and often non-sequential. The disparate parties must seek solutions that are feasible and agreed upon after a series of consultations and decision processes. This requires notable measures of exchange, knowledge-seeking, difference resolution, and working agreements.

Fifth, given the public nature of CPM, jurisdictional independence, divided operational control, and process orientation, a unique form of public knowledge must be generated. Such knowledge must blend technical issues (how to do it) within legal prescriptions (can we do it),
within financial parameters (is it affordable) and political feasibility (will the ultimate decision-makers accept it). This form of public knowledge is derived as a result of CPM outcome success.

In these ways, it will be demonstrated that any theory of CPM/networking must incorporate a public dimension that addresses new boundaries yet maintains a public role.

Shared Jurisdiction

Collaborative interactions began in the U.S. between governments because of the independence of jurisdictions. This is a first principle of CPM in the U.S. First, Stephen Skowronek’s (1982, 21) study of the emergence of American style bureaucracy indicates that “sovereignty was to be shared between the new central government and the old regional units of government, which retained their revolutionary designation as ‘states,’” ensuring their integrity and legal codes. For most of the nineteenth century, he concludes, the national government was passive and left substantive governing to states and through them loyalties, leading to a “distinctive sense of statelessness in the political culture” (23). Skowronek’s use of the term “statelessness” refers to comparisons with Western European countries.

Local units in some areas preceded states and in newly settled areas an independent government followed population movements. As Linklater’s (2007, 6) study of borders and identity indicates, “To establish a frontier was to create an area of separate jurisdiction. Within it, a specific framework of laws, of government, and eventually of values would be formed... To a degree unknown in previous nations, the United States was the product of the formal divisions that the boundary-makers marked in the wilderness.”
This has led to the tradition of the independence of jurisdictions in spite of constitutional provisions and state “control” of local governments. As Anderson’s (1960, 3) observations of intergovernmental relations conclude:

Underlying the concept of intergovernmental relations is the fact that the nation as a whole, each one of the States, and every county, town, city, village, school district, and other special district or local unit is a territorial and corporate or quasi-corporate entity that has a legal existence, rights, functions, powers, and duties within its territory, distinct from those of every other such unit. This is true even though the smaller units are generally embraced geographically within the larger ones. Being all separate legal entities, they are all capable of legal and other relations with each other.

Thus, any potential coordination or collaboration includes the boundary spanning activities of distinctive units that possesses territory, identity, and ascribed powers.

Second, with regard to United States subnational governments, administrative officials inherited from England that allegiance is owed to the law, not to the hierarchy represented by the crown and later some distant executive of another organization. This is a first principle of administration identified by Frank Goodnow (1900). In addition, the principle of popular election of local and state officials in the U.S. established the principle of popular control, not control to persons who work in higher level governments. “The result was to make impossible any state administrative supervision over the main body of officers entrusted with the execution of the law...control which could be exercised in the interest in producing coordination between the functions of expressing and executing the will of the state had to be found in the power of the legislature to regulate in detail the duties of officers entrusted with the execution of the law” (101). Enforcement was largely by the courts as statutes were interpreted and to exert obedience to the laws. The result was, of course, some form of coordination within the federal system that had to be engendered.
Third, the tradition of shared jurisdiction is based on the ambivalence of the federal government to get involved directly in state and local issues until after the Civil War and of state governments accumulating control over local governments during the 19th century. These issues have been dealt with elsewhere (e.g. Walker 2000; Berman 2003) and thus only the barest outlines need be presented that bear directly on shared jurisdiction. With regard to federal involvement, the major collaborative vehicle until the reconstruction period respected state and local roles through periodic grants of lands to the states and from the states to local areas for various purposes: education, social welfare, internal improvements, rivers and harbors, and so on. States then set up revolving funds based on the sale of lands, with few stipulations and minimal oversight (Elazar 1962). It was only during and after the Civil War, marked by the Morrill Land Grant College Act of 1862, that continuing funds were forthcoming and that the rudiments of grant supervision began. The Civil War and Reconstruction ushered in what historian Foner (1988, 23) identifies as an “unprecedented expansion of federal power and their effort to impose organization upon a decentralized economy and fragmented polity… Most functions of government were handled at the state and local level; one could live out one’s life without ever encountering an official representative of the national authority.” Of course, the change did not affect sharing among jurisdictions, since the new national efforts respected and included the jurisdictions of state and local governments.

The state-local story begins with local governments being chartered and later incorporated (municipalities) or created (e.g. counties) by state governments. Gradual state control over local governments, including many cases of legally prescribing many operational, organizational, and finance details. State control peaked in the late 19th century with Dillon’s Rule, in which the courts basically affirmed that local governments had no reserved powers, only
those implied and essential to a state’s expressly delegated powers. This in turn led to a movement for states to grant home rule, *or imperium in imperio* based on a broad grant of fiscal, organizational and ordinance-making powers (Zimmerman 1995). States vary in the degree to which they grant home rule, and state-local disputes have normally been settled in the courts on behalf of the states, leaving “few practical barriers to state intervention into what might be considered local affairs” (Berman 2003, 76). Moreover, states normally delegate its regulatory and operational functions to local governments, particularly counties but in many areas to cities as well. As a result, local governments find themselves carrying out state statutes while simultaneously clinging to their jurisdictional boundaries and pushing back state control.

Place and its jurisdictional elements have thus been and remain critical in the U.S. What made the American experience was “the lines drawn in previously uncharted ground – around claims, properties, states, and the republic itself…government made it possible for the individual to gain due reward for his or her enterprise” (Linklater 2007, 257). In respect to government, Elazar (1994, 262) concludes, “Common to all of these governments (the federal to local array) is a territorial base. That is, their jurisdiction extends over a particular piece of territory with definite boundaries…having never organized its population under any other system.” The overall territorial, jurisdictional system itself, indicates Elazar, is comprised of the various institutions, organizations, groups, individuals, and values that comprise the network of the political system, which in turn allows its civil society to function in pursuit of its civil and political goals, while also an integral part of broader state and national systems. It also means that federal and state programs to some degree will fit into jurisdictional traditions, practices, and values (Ibid, 281).

Theoretical proposition number one can thus be stated as follows: *In American bureaucracy, hierarchy does not exist between jurisdictions. The units of administration operate*
in relation to one another by constitutional and legal means and by the actions of administrative officials as they work with one another on program execution. Shared jurisdiction brings on high administrative interdependence.

Administrative Dualism

The public administrative official has been involved in the process of representing jurisdictions from the earliest period. Carpenter (2005) relates that early Americans did inherit from the English administrative system a regulatory system of diffused authority in which less power was exerted by politicians, based on their grants of authority that followed downward in the structure of agencies. “Included in these powers was the power to superintend basic administrative functions (collection of revenue, delivery of the mails) and included within these supervisory powers was the authority to issue circulars, rulings, and instructions for the governance in the department. From the earliest days of the Republic then, ‘rulemaking’ activity by executive agencies – the issuance of rules, instructions, circulars and regulations that gave life to everyday government – was an acknowledged and accepted mode of administration” (48). As federal programs became more involved with the states, for example the land grants, more administrative provisions were added for the sale of lands, fund management, surveying, filing sale notices, record-keeping, location of the land that bound the actions of state officials from the governor and state administrators on down, put into effect by the federal departments and the General Land Office (Elazar 1962). This, of course, brought on the need for forms of administrative interaction across levels.
Administrative CPM/networking then emerged out of interacting hierarchies that were jurisdiction based. Early administration involved weak and plural executives and administrative commissions. Gradually these gave way to the chief executive at the head of a hierarchical organization. At the local level the strong mayor and city manager plans emerged, recognizing the idea of the chief executive as the head of an administrative body. Governors and their cabinets gained recognition from about 1910 on, and the President’s administrative powers were enhanced under the Budget and Accounting Act of 1921. Meanwhile at state and local levels the myriad of commissions and boards experienced consolidation into administrative departments that were under the hierarchical supervision of chief executives and department heads. This early twentieth century period was also a period of growing commitment to professionalism, expertise, and efficiency. It included a growing concern for the practice of “professional management”—then a new practice—within the hierarchy. “Belief in administrative reform and professionalism in government promoted centralization of authority, the creation of a nonpartisan bureaucracy, the concentration of power in the hands of the executive, and the development of legislative expertise” (Teaford 2002, 6). To use the public administration language of an earlier era, hierarchy established greater unity of command, coordination, internal responsibility, and administrative leadership (White 1939, 51).

Hierarchy within a government coupled with jurisdiction brings on the need for coordination. At one point, until about the 1960s, the official representing each government was expected to serve the legal and political parameters of a program and work with representatives of other governments to make boundary-crossing programs work. This “coordinative” function was once known as cooperative federalism. This form of early interjurisdictional collaborative public management practice goes back to the U.S. federal system’s earliest days. In Daniel
Elazar’s *The American Partnership* (1962), he found evidence of federal-state cooperation at the management stage in several programs, ranging from informal contacts to formal program agreements. He asserts that, “A substantial share of American government has been the search for such methods to provide for the necessary collaboration among the various units in the system” (305).

This was confirmed by earlier studies of coordinating federal-state, federal-local, and state-local programs, which have provided a venerable stream of findings on intergovernmental, collaborative program management. One stream that emanates from the federal setup is that of the kind of cooperative federalism Elazar (1962) identified as existing in the 19th century. Similarly, Jane Perry Clark (1938) recognized the federal opportunities for “political and economic” experimentation. Her study included the many modes of intergovernmental administration—informal cooperation, intergovernmental agreements and contracts, exchange of personnel, interdependent legal action, grants-in-aid, and tax policy. Clark described such cooperation as distinctly experimental and routine, often “without any chart, compass, or guiding star, for cooperation has been unplanned and uncorrelated with other activities of the government, even in the same field” (7). Clark’s view of collaborative federalism was highly optimistic regarding officials’ problem-resolution ability.

Closer examination of collaboration arose because of the federal-state grants programs of the Depression era. Although they were supportive of cooperative federalism in principle, studies were not always sanguine about their success. V. O. Key, Jr., (1937) identified a “gap between policy determination and the task of administration” because the expenditure of money and performance of function have been under the supervision of state agencies “operating in a sphere of and tradition of freedom from central control” (228). Another well-known study by John Gaus
and Leon Walcott (1940) of the programs of the U.S. Department of Agriculture examined the role of cooperating governments. The Department of Agriculture recognized the need to have strong functioning units outside of Washington that could participate in federal programs but questioned the operating capability of many (particularly small) governments to be cooperative partners. Regulations and administrative supervision as a whole tend to be greatly modified in practice by the ideas and prejudices of local officials. The result of state supervision of local governments is largely determined by a meeting of the minds of state and local officials (Weidner 1944, 233).

Not all collaborative management across levels of government in the first part of the twentieth century was recognized as being problematic. For example, William Anderson (1955) found relatively harmonious relations in the day-to-day administration of federal programs among administrative officials, many of whom were from similar professional backgrounds. “They usually worked together in trying to get changes in standards, rules, budgets and personnel requirements to advance the service” (201). He reported an absence of “crackdown” orders from federal to state agencies; indeed, state and local officials welcomed the presence, advice, and help of federal field officials. Durisch points to many “new federal-local relationships” (1941, 326) due to the Tennessee Valley Authority’s “program integrated on the basis of place or territory.” These authorities included dozens of signed memoranda of understanding, legal contracts, special municipal ordinances, multiple conferences regarding the impact of the influx of construction workers on local services, liaisons with local law enforcement agencies, state-local consultations regarding highway relocations and access roads, land acquisition issues, water supply-sewage disposal-other public facility readjustments, property tax loss adjustments, and several administrative improvements in local governments. These changes emanated from a
recognition of the need for sound local governments and the “cooperative nature” of the
undertaking, as well as the “grassroots approach to which the Authority is committed” (334).

Such a non-centralized approach was fundamental to the Tennessee Valley Authority
managerial experience of David Lilienthal (1939). The essence of coordination in the field
involved: 1) the greatest number of decisions by operatives made in the field; 2) the active
participation of the effected citizens, working with state and local agencies; and, 3) coordination
of the work of state and local governments, aiming toward common objectives. As Waldo (1948,
149) observes, Lilienthal saw this decentralized collaborative strategy as essential for the
preservation of democracy in a large bureaucratic state in order to overcome the drawbacks of
centralization. A cooperative approach was also observed at the state level. Vieg (1941) analyzed
federal, state, local, and private organization cooperation in Iowa’s agricultural programs in four
areas: research, education, planning, and programming. He suggests that different interests work
“physically side by side” forging out “a rational division of labor and clear understanding of
authority and responsibility all the way around; there must be close agreement on all
questions…” (142).

Cooperative federalism no doubt exists today (Agranoff 2001) but as federal-state,
federal-state-local, and state-local programs accelerated after the 1960s, two important changes
affected the dualism issue. First was the acceleration of rules and procedures that filtered through
the system, details of administration that became audited in a programmatic way that never
existed before. After statutory authorization today, federal programs received by subnational
governments are followed by administrator-created regulations and guidelines, monitored “state
plans” or contracts for funds, program requirements related to spending priorities and types of
services, cross-cutting requirements (e.g., nondiscrimination in hiring) and agreements for
program and fiscal audits. Meanwhile, state governments add their own stamp through optional programming and added program requirements, administrative requirements (e.g., accounting, auditing, purchasing, travel) as they operate with non-state government service operatives. Beyond grants the number of intergovernmental instruments has multiplied. Agranoff’s (2007, 262) inventory revealed 26 additional intergovernmental instruments. Moreover, Agranoff and McGuire’s (2003) study of city economic development cooperation lists 21 distinct working actions engaged by administrators of managerial adjustment across boundaries, designed to either enhance information flow or expand interactive discretion of operations, to serve various types of joint projects, and to maintain networks of officials. These are not isolated but regular behaviors, and in most cases notably frequent actions or administrative routines (108, 113). Expanded programming from the 1960s has ramped up the need for greater administrative interaction over an increasing amount of program detail.

A second compounding factor is clearly the externalization of programs to NGOs that play a much greater role in administration, particularly in services delivery roles. The new wave became highly visible beginning in the 1980s when NGOs became recognized agents and partners of governments. Through some grants, but predominantly by contracts, government linked with nonprofit service agencies and for-profit vendors of services. In the case of nonprofits, they had been around for decades, but the boundaries of the state expanded considerably to include them in various forms of externalized direct services delivery, a sort of government “for hire” (Smith and Lipsky 1993, 5). For-profits have always been part of government procurement, and certain basic services like building security and road building were regularly contracted out, but now such direct government services as public health care, services for the disabled, vocational rehabilitation, mental health, substance abuse, family
violence, along with finance and accounting services and other management functions are contracted out. Moreover, in the last two decades of the 20th century, contracting out also began to involve new non-service support sectors: client case management, information management, transportation support, public marketing, and legal representation, previously done in the public agency. As a result, both the direct service and support sectors led to new sets of alliances between governments at all levels and a host of public and private bodies: service delivery nonprofits and private businesses, law firms, finance management firms, banks, and insurance companies. As a result, “the public administration problem has spread well beyond the borders of the government agency” (Salamon 2002, 2).

The 21st century has been dubbed as a world where everything is connected in networks (Castells 1996). As myriad actors in the work of the public expanded and the definition of public expanded, the quest to work together in networks of officials arrived. Public agencies and NGOs network for purposes of exchanging information, enhancing one another’s capabilities, smoothing services interactions, and solving policy/program problems (Agranoff 2007). In some ways this type of intergovernmental networking began as a parallel activity to contracting, where funders and their agents began to build contractor-government networks (Brown and Potoski 2004; Van Slyke 2006). Moreover, networks of local government, business associations, and economic development agents have worked among themselves at the community level for some four or five decades and these entities have had extensive links with higher level governments in order to secure support to promote local economies (Agranoff and McGuire 2003; Eisinger 1988; McGuire 2002). While by no means replacing bureaucratic organizations (McGuire and Agranoff 2010), networks now are considered as important entities in public management. They are defined by O’Toole (1997, 45) “as structures of interdependence involving multiple
organizations or parts thereof, where one unit is not merely the formal subordinate of the others in some larger hierarchical management.” What is the most interesting about the emergent set of intergovernmental networks – and what makes them different – is the way officials from the federal government, state governments, local governments, public and private universities, and NGOs representing the nonprofit sectors are challenged to sit down with one another at the same table to discuss, explore, negotiate and solve issues (Radin et al. 1996).

This clearly adds a new role for officials representing governments while it does not necessarily abrogate earlier roles in representing the government agency. Therein lies the dualism. Put simply, the public administrator is now expected to maintain program integrity while a participant in the network of officials exploring problems. Hirst (2000) reminds us that only government can pull together the various strands because it continues to distribute powers and responsibilities, remains the focus of political identity, and is the main institution of democratic legitimacy; as such, other entities view its decisions and commitments as reliable. As Walzer (1998, 138) maintains, “the state itself is unlike all the other associations. It both frames civil society and occupies space within it. It fixes the boundary conditions and the basic rules of all associational activity (including political activity).” As a result, empirical research has indicated that the NGO actors have a more indirect role in the policy/program design aspects of networked activity (Agranoff 2007; O’Toole 1996; Wondolleck and Jaffee 2000). That networks can influence public agency action is real but more limited than joint involvement might suggest. While accommodations are made, decisions are influenced, strategies are altered, resources are directed, some groups expect greater or even undue influence, the network’s actions are indirect and often long-term and normally only marginally penetrate the operating core of lead public agencies (Agranoff 2007).
The dualism of agency administrator as network participant and/or collaboration partner plus government representative is played out in two ways. One is to “maintain public position,” so to speak, not to “abdicate their legal responsibilities and authorities and bestow them on an unelected, unrepresentative group” (Wondolleck and Jaffee 2000, 230).

At the same time, government agencies and institutions have a unique role and responsibility in these processes. While they should be capitalizing on opportunities to collaborate, they must recognize that they—and only they—are the final decision makers. Some argue that the role of agency participants in collaborative processes is solely as a facilitator of other participants’ interactions. However, based on our review of successful collaborative processes, it is clear that where a group succeeded and was held in high regard by the broader community, the agency did not step back into a purely facilitative role. Rather, it provided essential leadership that guided the group while simultaneously representing its own interests within the process. It ensured that the sideboards provided by existing law and regulation were in place and understood, and that those individuals present recognized that implementation of decisions could occur only through established administrative processes, including procedures for public review and comment. It took on the responsibility of ensuring the accountability of the process while still promoting collaborative interaction among multiple participants (244).

Clearly, this is an important public role that cannot be abrogated.
The other role involves leadership in as much as it lies within promotion of interaction among the multiple participants. Administrative activity like grant and contract selection, supervision, and review, brings the public official directly into the collaborative/network process. They now are expected to work with executants who participate in operationalization, particularly making program adjustments as problems arise. This puts the administrator directly in the network of program operatives. Given their perspective, public agency administrators are at the center of the information loop and potential activity. This can ensure that systems and structures are in place that ensure collaboration through learning, shared knowledge, and problem solving, in a sense “generating capabilities” (Saint-Onge and Armstrong 2004, 191). Top-level agency administrators can be “champions,” sustaining organizational commitment, and middle-level administrators/program heads can be “alliance managers” who enable people to work together efficiently and role model trust and collaboration (Holbeche 2005, 179). The potential is there for leaders to exercise the other aspect of the dual role, representing the public sector in the generation of joint solutions, promoting knowledge flow within their organization and between organizations, examining mutual capabilities, and synchronizing key organizations.

Theoretical proposition number two based on the idea of dualism can be stated as follows: The agency administrator has a dual role in CPM, as hierarchically and legally oriented agency trustee and orchestrator of public purpose and also as collaborating partner within network interactions. In contemporary governance, with extensive externalization of programs, neither role can be avoided.
Although externalization is usually identified as a recent phenomenon, it is actually as old as the nation. For example, Elazar (1962, 60-61) relates that from the early days, public works were cooperative programs, often financed and built by joint-stock companies whose shares were owned and were actively governed by the federal and state governments, cities and towns affected, private individuals, and sometimes banks. Construction was based on federal specifications and construction was state supervised but done by private companies under government supervision and inspection. Operating regulations included periodic reporting and restrictions on “active political interference,” a precursor to the latter-day Hatch Act. The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal was built this way, starting in 1828. As government programming has expanded over the years beyond these relatively simple chains of implementation to include externally operated direct public services, the problem is compounded.

To demonstrate the contemporary complication, Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver of services for the intellectually developmentally disabled will be highlighted. It involves federal funding, regulations and standards that are blended with state standards, administrative rules, and services planning, private (nonprofit or for-profit) operation of small residential services under contract, who in turn contract with a host of suppliers of medical, dental, vocational training, behavioral and many other services. At the end of the chain, clients receive services, the basis of an upward flow of program and fiscal information. The program is now based on literally hundreds of detailed provisions and expectations in the federal Centers for Medicaid and Medicare (CMS) State Operations Manual, regulation-oriented guidelines of “compliance principles” and “facility practice statements” (Hayes, Joyce, and Couchoud 2003, 206). The chain of involvement now holds parties down the line respectively to describe process in six areas: level of care, plan of care, provider capabilities, health and welfare,
financial accountability, and administrative authority (Gettings 2003, 227-232). These are then assessed based on specific indicators of performance, measurement of parameters, and pre-identified responsible parties. Also, states are encouraged to conduct these activities in a more transparent way, involving multiple stakeholders and posting data on websites (Bradley 2009). Clearly the process not only calls for increased collaboration and networking but increased capabilities among the federal CMS regional offices, state Medicaid offices, state intellectual disabilities offices, and myriad contractors—first and second level—who actually deliver the services.

This is not particularly an unusual administrative scenario. It clearly places a premium on the capacity of actors within the system to operate within such involved complexity and often less than perfectly defined expectations. In a way it is a unique form of public capacity, not only because of the chain of involvement but because these programs have legal, political, and fiscal dimensions along with the managerial or operational (Agranoff 2011). Here we focus mostly on the latter or managerial capacity. One of the most venerable and widely accepted approaches to capacity is that of Honadle (1981), an ability to: anticipate and influence change; make informed and intelligent policy decisions; attract, absorb, and manage resources; and evaluate current activities in order to guide future action. While primarily understood to be focused on improvement within a single governmental unit or agency, managing intergovernmental programs is on the same screen, so to speak. As is well-known, capacity enhancement is the aim of many community-building and leadership programs that involve community assessment, strategic planning, data analysis, and institution building (McGuire et al. 1994). What has happened to capacity and capacity-building in the era of externalization, as the Medicaid example makes clear, is that its public agency dimension is extended down the line, so to speak,
to include those who are down the line or at the later or end stages of policy, that is to include program management.

An important aspect of the public nature of CPM is then the development of capacity at every station up and down the line of those who are in the chain, including NGO managers who are at the critical points of delivery between program and client. Space prevents only an identification of the various components of this type of capacity. First, is a legal or rule-standard-task related capacity to understand the way the critical “public exchanges” occur across boundaries. It is the first step in limiting, outlining and organizing what must be done. Second, is technical capacity or how a good or service is to be delivered. Despite all the regulatory parameters, it is still important to know how to build a bridge, test water quality, or establish a program of habilitation. Third, is administrative or managerial capacity, that is how to organize and operate a program that operates within one’s organization but has lots of boundary-spanning expectations. To some great degree, the public manager is still within some hierarchy and must put together the various external inputs into internal operations and outputs in a way that managers always have done. Fourth is collaborative capacity, in this situation meaning the ability to work with other organizations that are legally, politically, financially, and operationally connected to one’s agency. In today’s networked world this involves more than coordination but a host of interactive and creative knowledge-related problem-solving activities (Agranoff 2007; Bardach 1998; Huxham and Vangen 2005; McGuire and Silvia 2009). Transactions would appear to be over all four of these capacity dimensions and is needed all along the line of program.

Moreover, these capacities involve both managers and staff in what Reich (1991, 229-232) refers to as symbolic analytic work, where people interact more and can learn from one
another. He identifies four critical skills for today’s type of problem solving: 1) the capacity for abstraction; 2) systems thinking, or seeing reality as a system of causes and consequences; 3) a willingness to engage in experimentation, and; 4) possessing a facility to collaborate. One of the greatest managerial challenges today is to recruit, retain, and develop managers and professional staff who can maintain their specialties, be true to their agency or their jurisdiction’s intergovernmental program, and engage in symbolic analytic work. To Davenport, it is crucial in this interdependent world because this most recent symbolic analytic phase of managerial work has “…an interactive, collaborative approach to work in which patterns (of observation and supervision) are more difficult to discern. They may deny that this work has any structure at all – ‘every day is different’” (Davenport 2005, 65). In another place, some details have been worked out in this aspect of human resources capacity; it involves the way that managers and staff convert knowledge that is transacted across jurisdictions and modified through deliberation that the agency needs to capture from those “invisible assets” that reside largely in the minds of humans, requiring less strict supervision and with “worker” and manager working side-by-side (Agranoff 2008; 2010). It involves forms of capacity at all levels, but a particular challenge is to incorporate those at the program execution level in the public capacity-building undertaking.

Theoretical proposition number three is thus based on the need for multiple capacities extensively given the public externalization process: *Public capacity includes the work of all government agencies along the implementation chain plus those NGOs that have joined the chain as they face the legally-based, technical, operational, and collaborative challenges of making complex programs work interactively through collaboration and networking.*

Interactive Decision Making
Collaborative public management is an endeavor in which “administrators exchange information, seek knowledge, and work out problems, programs and policies across the boundaries of their agencies and their organizations” (Agranoff and Yildiz 2007, 319) by bringing together representatives from the public, private, and/or not-for-profit sectors. When doing so, collaborative public managers must engage in a decision-making process that is, in many ways, different from the process pursued in single entity organizations (Silvia and McGuire 2010). Although decision making in the collaborative context and in a hierarchical organization share common elements, such as consensus, accommodation, and shared learning processes (Agranoff and Yildiz 2007), there are some distinct aspects of collaboration that set the decision making process apart. First, since participation in collaborative ventures is generally voluntary, administrators cannot rely upon the command-and-control mechanisms available to managers in a traditional, hierarchical organization. Members of the collaborative are “partners with other representatives, not superiors—subordinates” and as such are “co-conveners, co-strategists, co-action formulators, co-programmers, and so on” (Agranoff and Yildiz 2007, 320).

Second, the inter-reliance amongst the collaborators caused by the realization that individual organizations lack the resources to tackle the “wicked problems” on their own requires that they work in concert with others and not in isolation. In fact, working together to solve a problem may be the only mechanism by which the problem can be solved. Thus, collaborative public managers must work with their collaborative partners to make joint decisions regarding establishing a common vision, setting goals, determining which objectives to pursue, and defining network success. This decision making process must, out of necessity, be
inclusive, consultative, and, as Bardach commented, engender a “collaborative ethos [which] values equality, adaptability, discretion, and results” (1998, 232).

If, as argued above, participation in the collaborative is voluntary but involvement in the collaborative is not if the problem is to be solved, then the various parties with a stake in finding a solution must reach a consensus regarding what the problem is, how it should be solved, and when the problem is resolved. However, “despite the benign connotations of ‘collaboration,’ political dilemmas arise when multiple stakeholders share power to design or implement policies” because the “actors have competing interests, different and incomplete information, mutual mistrust, and the inclination and savvy to do what is necessary to advance their own aims” (Page 2010, 246). This diversity of opinions and positions presents a challenge for collaborative decision making. Although the collaborative partners may share a common interest in solving a mutually identified problem, each entity may see both the problem and the set of possible solutions very differently. In a collaboration:

…each member of the group uses their knowledge and interpretation of what they take to be the goals of their organization to guide their position on the degree of acceptability, to their organization, of emerging purposes for the collaboration… Since collaborations are set up by individuals acting, at least notionally, on behalf of organizations, the goals of their organizations are – on the face of it – likely to be particularly relevant to the negotiation of collaborative purpose. Group members may, or may not, presume to have complete knowledge of these goals. The organization goals may, or may not, connect to the original or officially stated purpose of the collaboration. Thus, while these may sometimes be brought
openly into the discussion arena, they are quite often a part of a ‘hidden agenda’
(Eden and Huxham 2001).

This may be the result of their organization’s goals and expectations for the outcomes/outputs, their stake in the problem or solution(s), the resources at their disposal or the lack thereof, their past experiences with the problem or potential solutions, the perspectives of their own stakeholders and constituents, and even their past interactions with the other members of the collaborative. Thus, while the collaborative may have been initiated due to the recognition that the solution to the problem or situation being addressed is unachievable for a single organization, the view of the diversity of perspectives held by those in the collaborative may range from appreciative to argumentative amongst the membership of the collaborative. Yet, consensus and goal alignment are viewed as requisite for collaborative action since "a process that is inclusive, well informed, and comes close to achieving consensus is more likely to produce an implementable proposal than one lacking these qualities" (Innes and Booher 1999, 420). Thus, while goal alignment is often touted as necessary for collaborative action and joint decision making (McGuire and Silvia 2009), achieving such consensus often proves difficult because of the various perspectives, opinions, needs, and desires of the collaborative partners.

Judith Innes (2004) calls for a process of collaborative interaction that includes own source ground rules, avoidance of positional bargaining, respectful dialogue, self-organizing, fully shared information, consensus based on when all interests have been explored, explicit and transparent links to implementation, and public and stakeholder review of any draft agreement (20). Similarly, John Forrester (2009) calls for the process to approach the real differences among parties:
Fostering dialogue can promote understanding and mutual recognition between parties, fostering trust and respect, beginning the work of relationship building—even as skeptics may always voice suspicions of this as “just talk.” Moderating debate can sharpen arguments, identify crucial or missing information, and clarify critical differences between parties—even as such sharp argument always risks escalating antagonisms and undermining relationships between the parties.

Mediating negotiation, in contrast, crafts agreements to act—signed commitments to give in order to get, to act together to satisfy the represented stakeholders’ interests—even as further, deeper structural issues require ongoing organizing.

So, planners and community leaders must be clear, with themselves and community members alike, in any given meeting: are we here to foster a dialogue, to moderate a debate between perspectives, or are we here to act, to agree together upon a plan of action (or, of course, do we want to combine these processes in some ways to serve our ends) (152-153)?

In this sense, Forrester concludes that differences in priorities, interests, values, world views and perspectives, political positions, cultural identities and more may need to be honored and worked through rather than ignoring them or sweeping them under the table.

However, it may be this very challenge that provides the greatest advantage to the use of collaborative forms of governance. Collaboration has been conceived of as a “strategy for increasing the value that a single organization is able to create on its own” (Kim 2010, 112). If
the “single organization” in question is government and the “value” that it is trying to create is the public value, then perhaps the different perspectives voiced while collaborating can help government determine what the public value is. This value creation may in essence be the product of the inter-organization, inter-sectoral, and inter-ideological conversation aimed at problem identification and resolution.

To accomplish this, however, collaborative partners must see collaboration not simply as means to an end, but as an end itself. This requires the parties to focus on collaboration as a process. Throughout this process, which attempts to reconcile the diversity of ideas and ideals held by the different partners, collaborative public managers must, out of necessity, rely upon management, political, and negotiating skills to engender agreement on the course of action. They must ensure that all of the stakeholders are invited to the table, that the norms, rules, and culture within the collaborative are structured to engender an environment that supports trust, the free exchange of information, shared leadership, honest communication, etc. (Kickert and Koppenjan 1997; McGuire 2002). Only with this foundation can the parties arrive at an understanding about their shared view of the problems being faced as well as an appreciation of the perspective of each partner’s organizational view of the issues. Finally, once the parties develop a commonly held view of the problem, the dialogue between the collaborative partners can foster the brokering of a mutually acceptable solution to that problem. In this way, the joint learning can lead to brokered consensus (Agranoff and Yildiz 2007).

Ansell and Gash (2008) claim that collaboration “has developed as an alternative to the adversarialism of interest group pluralism” (544). Unlike traditional, hierarchical decision making which tends to be influenced greatly by elites and interest groups contending against each other for the ear of the decision maker, decision making via collaborative governance can
invite these parties, as well as those who have not traditionally had a seat at the table, to embark on the process towards the reconciliation of their diverse perspectives. If, as Bovaird (2007) suggests, the planning and delivery of public services is a co-production function, collaborative governance could be one of the prime mechanisms to engage public servants with core public action.

While certainly not all collaborations end with complete agreement, it does give public agents the opportunity to collaborate with the many publics, the ability to co-determine the public good, and the chance to increase community social capital by establish relationships and understanding among the partners. In this way, not only is collaboration a journey and not just a destination (Gajda 2004, 68), but the process may be just as important as the results achieved.

Theoretical proposition number four can thus be stated as follows: *Collaborative decision-making and problem solving creates public value by engaging the publics in the process of deriving working agreements and generating a commonly held direction out of the diversity of individually held perspectives.*

Public Knowledge

Public managers in collaborative settings face a number of both constraints and opportunities, most of which exist due to the primacy of government in many such settings. Such actions are driven by the knowledge that develops as public managers work through the process and learn what works and what doesn’t work. The public knowledge that is generated by the process is thus informed by the outcomes of collaborative public management. Information, both programmatic and technical, is at the heart of network operations. Information takes “the form of
a double helix, which constitutes the ‘transactional DNA’ of…interorganizational exchange relationships” (Agranoff 2003). Knowledge is that major step beyond information; it provides the capacity to act (Sveiby 1997). It is the “fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information…In organizations, it often becomes embedded not only in documents or repositories but also in organizational routines, practices, processes, and norms” (Davenport and Prusak 2000, 5).

The importance of learning together in collaborative public management to create knowledge is captured by the work of Koppenjan and Klijn (2004) in their Managing Uncertainties in Networks. Joint action by interaction is seen in part as “searches wherein public and private parties from different organization (levels of) government and networks jointly learn about the nature of the problem, look at the possibility of doing something about it, and look at the characteristics of the strategic and institutional context within which the problem-solving develops” (10). Cooperation, then, presupposes structured learning between actors: “It requires numerous skills, tacit knowledge of the network and negotiation skills since the adopted strategies are implemented in a situation where singular hierarchical relations are lacking” (11). Thus, learning in multi-actor situations is crucial.

Informal structures that develop around shared knowledge are namely communities of practice and the epistemic communities that they often lead to. The former are self-organizing systems that share the capacity to create and use knowledge through informal learning and mutual engagement (Wenger 2000). Most communities are self-organized and bring in new knowledge bearers when needed, from wherever they can be found. Maintenance of communities of practice requires efforts to keep different types of knowledge bearers in, by challenging busy
people with solving important public problems, and by calling on their experience and know how in an interdisciplinary manner. Epistemic community can be facilitated by mobilizing a multiagency group of professionals from different disciplines because they often share common outlooks and similar solution orientations. They also tend to share causal beliefs, notions of validity, and a common policy enterprise. An epistemic community normally produces consensual knowledge. Epistemic communities also can be important knowledge sustainers, as they can have a disproportionate effect on organized learning and behavior. Bringing together these communities for enhanced deliberation is among the emergent collaborative tasks of public management.

Public knowledge in collaborative public management is based in at least four dimensions: technical, legal, financial, and political. Beverly Cigler (2001, 78-81) identified nine preconditions for collaboration that mirror these four dimensions: 1) approaching a serious problem, 2) conditions of fiscal dependence, 3) availability of external capacity/technical assistance, 4) internal collaborative skill-building expertise, 5) the existence of locally based policy leaders/entrepreneurs, 6) engaging in building a political constituency for cooperation, 7) securing early elected official support, 8) promotion of the advantages of coordination, and 9) focusing on reachable strategies. Each of the four dimensions is addressed below.

First, all collaborative structures have a technical core, or knowledge about “how to do it” (Agranoff 2007). For example, internal and external expertise is a mainstream source of technical knowledge. Most participants will ask staff scientists or specialists, along with university-based researchers, to share their technology knowledge with the body. In environmental and natural resource networks, engineering knowledge that deals with flooding and floodplain concerns, water supply, water quality, agricultural use, and recreation and wildlife
management are all at the forefront of participating agency needs (Agranoff 2003). In local economic development, city administrators, development directors, and development corporation executives work to revise development plans, requiring expertise in engineering and planning; they negotiate financing mechanisms with local business groups, financial institutions, and state and federal governments; and they handle issues of water capacity and waste water with the state environmental agency. Additionally, methods employed in financing a building or industrial site, determining the work training components of a new business, meeting construction standards, and dealing with the water treatment requirements become a technical basis of interorganizational exchange (Agranoff and McGuire 1999).

Emergency management is one program area where the need for technical expertise is par for the course. For example, there are several technical experts needed for coordinating medical responses: physicians, health care organizations, planners from multiple local government jurisdictions, NGOs such as the Red Cross, and the like. Rubin and Barbee’s (1985) look at disaster recovery and hazard mitigation cases found two critical technical concerns: 1) government’s ability to act strategically and technically, coupled with organizational flexibility and adaptiveness; and 2) knowing what tasks to undertake. A task force was staffed with emergency management experts during the outbreak of Exotic Newcastle Disease that affected poultry in California and other Western states in 2002–2003 (Moynihan 2005). Because the last major outbreak of the disease had been in the early 1970s, there was a good deal of uncertainty about tasks, and what management principles and operational activities were applicable. Members of the task force relied on knowledge from other types of emergencies with which they were familiar and sought to develop informed decisions about how to tackle the outbreak (4).
Second, there is also a legal dimension of collaborative public management that defines whether a particular collaborative action can be undertaken. Laws governing each entity affect the ability of any single organization to act. An added overlay is the set of legal norms governing the collaborative activity, whether it is laws determining the formal collaborative structure (e.g., task force, committee, network) or the general legal framework governing any project that a collaboration might undertake. Control of collaborative operations may be achieved through the use of government regulations that constrain the actions of member units, through the distribution of funds or manpower, or through regulations that stipulate the powers and responsibilities of certain actors or specify what conditions potential actors must meet before they can qualify to be members of a collaborative structure.

For example, coordination within the intergovernmental system is dictated largely by collaborating governments. This need to coordinate throughout comes about, Sundquist and Davis (1969) explain, because in the U.S. federal system programs are based on “goals or objectives that are established by the national government, through the actions of other governments, state and local, that are legally independent and may be even hostile” (12). Thus, coordination becomes almost “any change in organization, relationships, policies, practices, projects or programs that will resolve whatever conflict or hiatus in the federal-state-local chain of relationships…” (19). It is, they conclude, a matter of mutual adjustment rather than that of central coordination, but such adjustment is “managed” by the public sector, even when private sector and nonprofit actors are included in the collaboration.

However, in terms of legal protections and structure, public laws have not yet caught up with the degree to which collaboration occurs. Bingham (2008) argues that from a public law perspective:
…the relevant statutes largely address only questions of process for participation in a single agency. They are silent on the substantive work of agencies except with regard to judicial review for ultra vires agency action. They are silent on the structure of collaborative networks or other forms of collaborative public management. They may in places require public participation, for example, notice and comment in rulemaking and public hearings, but they are largely silent as to the wide variety of models for collaborative governance in agency policymaking (250).

Thus, whereas a legal dimension can provide guidance to collaboration, there is very little public law in place to protect or structure collaborations.

Third, financial feasibility is another important dimension of developing public knowledge for collaborative public management. “Can we afford it?” is a central question in any public undertaking and collaboration is no different. Perhaps the most contentious, difficult, but necessary element of collaboration is pooling financial resources. Such sharing or pooling is implicit in Barbara Gray’s definition of collaboration in which she asserts that it is the pooling of appreciations and/or tangible resources, e.g., information, money, labor, etc., by two or more stakeholders to solve a set of problems which neither can solve individually (Gray 1985). However, there is no magic formula for determining the extent to which public sector organizations and nongovernmental organizations exchange, share, or pool resources.

Resource exchange is always an important component of a collaborative managerial activity. After the public sector organization has established its goals through collaboration it
must acquire the resources necessary to fulfill them from local actors. Agranoff and McGuire’s (2003) study of collaborative public management revealed a variety of activities that involved finances in economic development, such as arranging loans, negotiating interest-rate adjustments, attempting to forge sale-leaseback arrangements, and a host of other financial transactions. With the days of federal government abundance long past, financial resources are increasingly held by many players, with the government often holding the majority of the funds. Such resource dependency actually enhances the interdependencies across governments and organizations, since those players that need the resources must work with those players that are willing to contribute resources.

The fourth important dimension of collaborative public management is political. The politics of collaborative activities between and among organizations and their managers permeates the managerial process. Public managers not only engage in politics within their own organizations, but also must strike political (in addition to operational) bargains with other members (Agranoff and McGuire 1999). In many contexts, collaborative management consists of conflict resolution using the important political skills of bargaining, negotiation, diplomacy, and consensus building (Gray 1989; Ingram 1977). Gage’s (1984) prescient look at the role of networks in administering federal programs emphasizes the role of politics in networking, and the necessity of formulating strategies, bargaining, and negotiating in administration across governmental levels.

Seeking support from external groups and stakeholders for collaborative operations has proven to be a major component of collaboration effectiveness. Those within the collaboration must foster the buy-in of key stakeholders, particularly those whose power will be relied upon to signal support of the collaborative throughout their home agency (Carey 1968). Managing the
external network environment thus is important for the collaborative public manager. Encouraging support from and keeping a collaborative network in good standing with the higher governmental authority ranked very high in an empirical study of collaborative leadership (Silvia and McGuire 2010). Similarly, encouraging support from and keeping the network in good standing with stakeholders both inside and outside the government was viewed as being very significant. Such behavior helps establish the legitimacy of the network (Milward & Provan, 2006) and acts as a “mobilizer” to develop commitment and support for network processes from network participants and external stakeholders (McGuire 2002).

Theoretical proposition number five is based in the special public knowledge generated and used by collaborative public managers: Public managers must use jointly managed knowledge to face technical, legal, financial, and political challenges and opportunities while they operate in collaborative settings.

Conclusion

The emergence of CPM changes the interactive culture of public managing but does not remove government from public administration. Indeed, government retains a core role in governing. In the U.S. situation, jurisdictional independence in a nonhierarchical government system based on English traditions, in contrast to that of Western Europe, makes governments quite different in that there has always been a collaborative imperative. As a result, governments have to work together to some degree. In the past few decades, externalization has brought in many NGO actors into the work of governments, increasing the pressure to extend the quest for public value by joint collaborative decision making based on multi-party consensus. In turn, these agreements need to be based on the interactive development of a public knowledge that accounts
for and incorporates technical, legal, financial, and political frameworks, now arrived at by governments and their partners/agents. Governments remain at the core of these collaborative processes.
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