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To Manage Is to Govern

Governance structures constrain and enable the actions of public managers. Principal–agent theory has played a dominant role in our understanding of governance structures. This theory suggests that politicians create relatively static governance structures in a top-down fashion and hold managers accountable for mandated results. In other words, public managers are influenced by governance structures but do not affect governance structures. However, we argue that public managers do affect governance structures, and, in order to understand how this influence takes place, we need a new way of thinking about governance structures. We propose thinking about governance structures as relationships created through the interactions of people in different and reciprocal roles that are relatively dynamic. Public managers are an important source of the multiple, reciprocal, and dynamic interactions that produce governance (relationship) structures. As such, managers are accountable not only for policy outcomes, but also for the appropriateness of the relationships they create and support.

Introduction

Public management scholars, practitioners, and politicians debate the question, what public management policies should be put in place to improve government performance, or simply get better results? Should managers be made to manage, or allowed to manage (Kettl 1997, 2000; Barzelay 2001)? Should politicians be responsible for defining policy results (Aucoin 1995), or should entrepreneurial managers participate in the process (Moore 1995)? Are better results achieved when control is executed ex ante, or ex post (Thompson 1991)? And what establishes a stronger base for managerial performance: strictly defined contracts and direct lines of political control (Boston et al. 1996), or the "ethical entrepreneurship" and leadership capabilities of a public manager (deLeon 1996; Borins 2000; Behn 1991)?

At the core of these disagreements over public management policy is an age-old question: What role do we want public managers to play in a democracy? In other words, how can we reconcile bureaucracy in a democracy (Friedrich 1940; Finer 1941)? One side of the ongoing debate argues the solution lies in tightly defined contracts and accountability for policy results for which public managers, as agents to politicians and the public they serve, are responsible. In this reconciliation, public managers are sealed off from policy making and are made to focus on achieving articulated goals (Aucoin 1995; Boston et al. 1996). The argument has parallels to early efforts to establish a dichotomy between politics and administration. Politics and policy making were argued to be the strict venue of politicians and their constituents; the business of applying administrative expertise to achieve clearly defined public goals was to be the domain of the public administrator or manager.

This effort to preserve democratic processes from the meddling of unelected experts, however, is firmly rejected by advocates on the other side of the debate. Here, public

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managers are viewed as essential facilitators of democratic processes that appear broken and unable to articulate and produce essential public policy (Reich 1988; Behn 1998). Entrepreneurial public managers, it is argued, can play a key role in finding community solutions and creating public value that is not possible without some entrepreneurial effort (Moore 1995; Borins 2000).

The effort to reconcile bureaucracy and democracy is crucial to the development of public management theory. These ongoing debates, however, suggest a clearer division between ways of practicing public management than we see in our observations of public management. In practice, public management combines control by elected officials (and others) with entrepreneurial and discretionary action. How can public management scholars think about the relationship between this combination of control and discretion, and the role of the public manager in the day-to-day achievement of democracy?

Many scholars grapple with bureaucracy and public management in a democracy (O'Toole 1997; Peters and Pierre 1998; Milward and Proven 2000; Kettl 2000; Romzek and Ingraham 2000). As many participants in the debate acknowledge, public managers are not just responsible for what is done, but also for how it is done (Denhardt and Denhardt 2000; Reich 1988). Indeed, public managers often have more ability to affect the latter than the former. In so doing, public managers help to enact democracy through their daily influence on the processes through which decisions are made and implemented (de Leon and de Leon 2001; Ingram and Smith 1993). Put differently, the public manager helps to govern.

This perspective suggests some changes to our research agendas in public management. First, the breadth of what might be considered a relevant *result* expands. Clearly, public policy results, such as student test scores or the rate of traffic fatalities, are crucial measures of how well public management is working. Such policy results, however, are not necessarily a good measure of how well democracy is working. Processes that produce results may not enhance democracy. We do not have to search far for examples of undemocratic processes producing some policy results that many may desire. Thus, we propose including the *processes* that public managers manage as important *results* and assessing the processes as well as the numerical outcomes. Managers are involved not only in producing results that consist of numerical policy goals, but also in facilitating the creation, development, and change of various governing structures that enable and constrain actions.

By focusing on a wide range of results, we also can begin to develop a better understanding of the multiple structures that affect what public managers do and how they do it. One way to think about these structures is in formal and informal terms. Organizational charts, mandates, written rules, procedures, and contracts give form and structure to the work of public managers, as do norms, expectations, and conditions for legitimacy. Another way to think about these structures, however, is as *relationships*. Each structure, at its core, is a relationship involving a public manager and other participants in the governing process. A contract specifies the conditions under which an individual or organization will relate to or associate with another individual or organization. A public forum creates a set of expectations within which a broad base of people will relate to the officials in government who are implementing public policy. Managers operate in a myriad of such relationship structures to develop processes for making decisions, implementing policy, and identifying public priorities in the first place; these relationships give form, pose constraints, or present opportunities for the way public policy is pursued. The relationship between managers and politicians, for example, is very important in determining what public managers do and how they do it. But this is not the only set of relationship structures that constrains and enables management efforts. Relationships with employees, other managers, other organizations, other jurisdictions, and countries, and the public also can be influential.

Focusing on the role these relationship structures play in governance also emphasizes the reciprocal and dynamic ways in which public managers affect and effect those structures. Public managers can influence, change, or even create relationships. Some relationships will be manifest in very formal ways, with established patterns of interaction, while others may rest on informal communication, exist only briefly, and change readily. Regardless, public managers can influence the development of these relationships, and hence influence the patterns of governance. Consider the relationship between a manager and elected officials: Certain dimensions of the relationship set distinct expectations for how they will relate—managers will testify before the legislature or council at regular intervals, annual budget requests will be submitted, and routine reporting will be conducted. But managers have opportunities to develop or downplay dimensions of the relationship. Open, frequent, and informal communication with elected officials, or rapid response to requests for assistance or information, for example, can affect the levels of trust, and hence degrees of freedom that a manager might have for pursuing policy in new or alternative ways. A broad focus on relationships as structures prompts us to look beyond traditional models of governance, which portray a linear relationship from politicians to managers that is relatively rigid in its impact on managerial actions.

Finally, by focusing on public managers as participants in governance, we connect to a broad discussion of how public managers serve the public interest (Kettl 1995). Here, we focus on managers' responsibility to pay attention to the appropriateness of the nature and quality of the relationships through which policy is enacted. Our portrayal of this role suggests that it affects policy results, but not in a way that is readily represented by a model of either tight political control or entrepreneurial leadership (Feldman and Khademian 2000). Indeed, focusing on the public manager as a manager of relationships suggests less potential for direct influence over results than one might demand of an agent in a principal–agent relationship *or* that one might expect of an entrepreneurial leader. From this perspective, the manager serves the public by making visible the relationships that structure policy implementation and continuously considering the appropriateness of those relationships for a particular policy area and the potential for improvement by altering or creating new relationships. Thus, the control over traditional policy results is indirect.

Despite the mammoth agenda these points suggest, our efforts in this article are quite modest. We hope to begin and, in some cases, continue a dialogue about the relationship between governing structures and public managers and how public managers function in a democracy. First, we argue that governing structures are relationships that structure interaction in the making and implementation of public policy. Second, we argue that public managers influence these relationships and are responsible for their appropriateness. Showing that governing structures are relationships alters the perception that governing structures are fixed, static, and linear, and it focuses our attention instead on the interactions that create or alter relationships. We draw upon a hypothetical example and several real-world cases to illustrate our approach to governance and the role of public managers in managing the relationships that govern policy implementation.

Governance and Public Management

Public management scholarship reflects a growing and vigorous interest in "governance" and the relationship of governing structures to the practice of public management (Peters 1996; Peters and Pierre 1998; Kettl 2000; Behn 2001; Lynn, Heinrich and Hill 2000, 2001; Lynn and Heinrich 2000a; Milward and Provan 2000). For much of this research, the central issue is how laws, contracts, court orders, or specific policy guidelines constrain or enable the actions of public managers and the policy results they produce. Consider the definition of governance offered by Lynn and Heinrich: "Governance comprises structures and processes guiding administrative activity that create constraints and controls (both ex ante and ex post) and that confer or allow autonomy on the part of administrative actors …" (2000, 239).

This research is built on public-choice theory, which examines public agencies and organizational processes as demonstrations of rational, political preferences connected to constituent expectations (Knott and Miller 1987). These preferences are combined through political competition and compromise to produce the structures and policies that define the way work should be done in a public organization (T. Moe 1989, 1990). Actions taken by managers can then be checked, vetoed, or reinforced by elected officials with powerful oversight tools (Weingast and Moran 1983; McCubbins and Schwartz 1984). Political scientists, in this line of thought, have been interested in demonstrating the degrees of fit between initial political preferences and eventual policy outcomes. The specific impact of these governance dimensions on public managers and the ways that public managers actually affect or do not affect results is not typically explored. Public management scholars, on the other hand, take a keen interest in the way policy preferences are transformed into policy. Building from the public-choice model, they examine the links between policy preferences and outcomes by examining the ways that governing structures affect the behavior and performance of public managers and partnering organizations in the public policy effort (Milward and Provan 1998, 2000; Lynn and Heinrich 2000b).

This approach, which draws on principal–agent theory, suggests that elected officials create governance structures in a linear, hierarchical, top-down fashion to constrain and enable the actions of public managers (see table 1). Elected officials, for example, can mandate the structure of organizations and programs, the qualifications for employees implementing those programs, procedures and regulations for program implementation, cooperation between programs, funding, and desired policy results to ensure accountability. The theory suggests that the structures established by these mandates are relatively static and change only through the initiative of elected officials in response to the demands and concerns of a variety of constituents. In this approach, the hierarchical context of public management is governance. This context consists primarily of the political world that constructs incentives for managerial behavior, imposes constraints, and checks managerial action. From this perspective, the possibility that public management efforts influence governing structures is an aberration. The dominant question in this approach to governance is, how well do political principals control public managers as agents? Democracy is achieved through governance structures that ensure public managers' actions reflect the mandates of elected officials.

The question of political control and the design of governing structures is complicated, however, by rapid changes in public management practices over the past two decades (Ingraham and Romzek 1994; Peters 1996; Kettl

2000; Garvey 1993; Behn 2001). A variety of reports and research discuss the ways in which public management practices are changing (Barzelay 1992; O'Toole 1997; Bryson and Anderson 2000; U.S. Department of Labor 1996). Public managers have adopted a more entrepreneurial approach to their responsibilities, looking for ways to create public value and leverage public resources that may not be realized under a more "administrative" approach to management (Moore 1995; Behn 1991). As a result, public organizations as diverse as the IRS, the Customs Department, and the U.S. Mint have adopted customer-driven approaches to managing their responsibilities and, in some cases, have sought ways to harness the market to improve their bottom lines (Kearny 1996; NAPA 1993; Yoder 1998).

These efforts address one set of problems and create another (Borins 2000). On the one hand, changes in management practices can work to improve performance by targeting and reaching articulated results, keeping costs low, and providing alternatives to deal with complex problems. On the other hand, the changes are being exercised outside traditional governing structures, and hence pose an accountability problem—a challenge for democracy. Flatter organizations, empowered employees, and entrepreneurial efforts that seek new ways to solve complex problems, for example, violate the regulation of bureaucratic action through tightly defined processes, guarantees of neutrality, and strict hierarchy (R. Moe 1994, 2001). Flexibility and accountability, both desirable qualities, appear to drive one another out (Feldman and Khademian 2001). Public management scholars ask how basic concerns for efficient and effective performance can be maintained alongside concerns for equity, responsiveness, and accountability (Milward 1996, 310).

The principal–agent framework suggests the answer lies in devising better governing structures that are more capable of control. We suggest the dichotomy of principal and agent is itself an obstacle to devising better governing structures. This framework makes it difficult to see the multiple and reciprocal nature of the relationships that govern public policy (Bryson 2002; Carpenter 2001; Selden, Brewer, and Brudney 1999). Indeed, even when governments formally adopt very similar structures to govern policy areas, the ways in which those structures are actually enacted by managers can vary dramatically, as can the results (Considine 2001). In other words, while we may need better types of governing structures, what we need first is to think differently about what constitutes a governing structure, the role public managers might play in creating, changing, or sustaining those structures, and the importance of those structures as a "result" for which public managers can be held accountable. In the next section, we propose an alternative to the principal–agent formulation of governing structures. We begin with the premise that governing structures are relationships, and public managers can influence the structure and nature of these relationships.

Thinking Differently about Governance

In contrast to the principal–agent theory of governance, we propose thinking about governance structures as dynamic relationships that are influenced by the decisions and actions of public managers (see table 1). Governance, we argue, is about the way interactions are structured. Public managers have and can develop relationships with elected officials, their employees, the public, people who work in other agencies, and people who work in the private and nonprofit sectors. They also might have working relationships with managers and officials in other governments, both domestic and abroad. All of these relationships have features that are determined by constitution, statute, custom, and practice. Managers can be mandated to work with other agencies, to contract with providers, or to report to elected officials. Tradition and practice will provide form to the wide variety of public management relationships, as well. But there is much that is not determined. Managers might build relationships with organizations and people outside of mandates. They may approach a relationship with high formality, communicating through memos that pass through particular channels, or with casual communication by phone or in person. And they may emphasize different dimensions of a relationship—financial connections, information sharing, reporting for purposes of accountability, implementation linkages, the confirmation of legitimacy, or the recognition of the right of an individual or organization to participate in the policy process.

The way public managers structure these relationships determines what actions are constrained and enabled and who can participate. As such, relationship structures can be as important a *result* as policy outcomes for which public managers are held accountable. From this perspective, the public manager's responsibility rests not only with policy outcomes, but also with making visible and continuously evaluating the appropriateness of the nature and quality of the relationship structures they create and recreate through their actions. While this focus can be used in a variety of ways, we suggest that it enables an important discussion of how particular relationships promote or fail to promote democracy.

To suggest what this different conceptualization of governance might look like and where it might focus our attention, we next offer a hypothetical situation used in a public management class. The exercise focuses attention on the importance of relationship structures—not only for

Table 1 Models of Public Management Role in Enacting Democracy

Dimensions of governance structures	Theory of governance structures: principal–agent	Theory of governance structures: relationship structures
Sources of influence on governance structures	Single—politicians create governance structures.	Multiple—governance structures created through interactions of people in many different roles.
Direction of influence on governance structures and public management actions	Linear, hierarchical, top-down—politicians constrain actions of public managers through governance structures.	Reciprocal—public managers influence the structure of relationships that constitute governance structures and constrain and enable their actions.
Potential for change in governance structures	Relatively static—change comes through direct action of principals.	Relatively dynamic—opportunities for different actions are created in each interaction.
What governance structures create accountability for	Results—How well public managers achieve results mandated by politicians.	Results and democratic process—Do policy results have public values? Do decision making and implementation efforts build democratic capacity?
How is democracy achieved?	Through politicians as responsive to electorate and in control of public manager actions.	By making visible and continuously evaluating the appropriateness of the nature and quality of the relationships through which policy is enacted.

the outcomes that are produced, but for the ways in which interaction is structured. It also focuses attention on the ways in which public managers can influence the structure and meaning of interactions by the choices they make or do not make.

A Hypothetical Exercise

A recent course in public management began with the following scenario: The professor asked the students to imagine a class of 25 graduate students in public affairs meeting every Tuesday night for three hours to think critically about what it is to manage a public program and how it might best be accomplished. The professor casts herself in the role of public manager, with the students as the public (Feldman and Khademian 1999). The first night of class, 15 students take off their shoes to be more comfortable. The remaining 10 students complain of the smell, and the class comes to a halt over the controversy. How can the professor deal with this situation? If the objective is to resolve the issue in a way that best meets the public interest of the class, how should the problem be resolved? The students then begin to offer solutions: Take a vote; let the professor resolve the issue; negotiate a solution with representatives from both sides and a facilitator; call an expert in public health; create a committee of students to return the next week with a suggestion.

Each solution rests on a different premise: majority rules, authority, negotiation, expertise, and consultation. And each solution potentially produces a different outcome. If the students vote, the "shoes off" students win. If the professor decides, shoes would definitely be required. If a solution is negotiated, perhaps shoes will be optional during the first half of class each night and mandatory during the second half. A public health expert might support shoeless class nights when the weather is cool, but not when the temperature is above 65 degrees. And a committee might decide on a process to begin to resolve the issue the following week. Understanding the connection between process and results is an important lesson. But the exercise illustrates two additional lessons with relevance for this article.

First, the exercise can help students to see the relationship structures embedded in each alternative process and the ways in which those relationship structures constrain and enable opportunities for future action. In other words, it helps them understand that the relationship structures themselves are valuable. If the professor decides on a solution, a hierarchical relationship is reinforced. Emphasis on hierarchy and the authority of the professor, in turn, has implications for the ongoing conduct of the class. Throughout the semester, students might be less likely to raise questions and more likely to take thorough notes of what the professor presents in class. And they might be more content with an "answer" from the professor than identifying their own solutions to issues and cases. Similarly, resolving the shoe issue with a negotiated process or with a vote sets an alternative relationship between the professor and the students, one in which the students recognize the ability and capacity to influence course material and outcomes through particular means. Recognition of the students' influence in determining the outcome could set a structure for addressing issues such as the timing or method of an exam, conflicts in group projects, or discussions related to course material in the future.

A solution that emphasizes other relationships might have implications for further action. The professor might call upon someone within the university administration to help resolve the issue. The act of simply calling upon people outside the student–teacher relationship reminds everyone involved of the connection between the class and the larger department and university. The autonomy of the classroom and the ideas expressed might be diminished by the heightened relationship reference, if not put on guard. Moreover, calling on a university official opens a host of possibilities. The official may decide that any course in which the students spend their time talking about whether to wear shoes is a waste of time and money and should be canceled. Or the official may decide the exercise is so profound that it should be used in the orientation for the public policy school. If a public health official is called in, that person and the office he or she represents may become a part of the structure of relationships. This person may decide that a serious investigation of health practices on campus is required, that the course is so valuable public health officials should be attending, or that the department of public health should hire the professor to provide a workshop for the department. The point is not that any of these particular actions is likely to occur, but that through every action, structures of relationships are being created, and these structures provide opportunities for both constraining and enabling future actions.

Second, the shoe example illustrates the manager's role in facilitating, changing, or maintaining these relationship structures. By asking the students for suggestions to address the "stinky feet" problem, the professor uses his or her authority to diversify the relationship structures of the class, rather than solving the problem on the spot and reinforcing a traditional relationship structure. How public managers address each issue associated with managing a public program will influence not only the potential outcomes, but also the relationship structures that matter for addressing future issues.

Beyond the classroom, elected officials can be quite specific about the way a policy will be implemented. They can be specific about the structure of relationships, such as who is accountable to whom, how accountability is to be accomplished, who is to work with whom in what type of process, and so forth. However, there is often a great deal of discretion left to managers to create a means for bringing a policy to fruition (Khademian 1992, 1996; Carpenter 2001; Selden, Brewer, and Brudney 1999). Even the most rigorously specified process will not predetermine a manager's style, including the approach and understanding that develops between employees and the manager, the openness of communication within and outside the organization, and the degrees of inclusion in the implementation process. How employees, members of the public, organized groups, and other managers and organizations participate in bringing policy to fruition is an important dimension of governance in a democracy, and public managers play a role in facilitating, changing, or maintaining those opportunities.

In the following section, we examine relationships as governing structures through the examples of a few public managers. As in the hypothetical case, the examples illustrate the ways in which the structure of interaction matters for policy outcomes, as well as the public manager's role in managing these relationships. The examples probe more deeply into the nature of relationships as governing structures. We argue that the relationship structures through which public policies are made and implemented are multiple and reciprocal. By multiple, we mean that many different interactions influence the structures of governance. By reciprocal, we mean that public managers are not only subject to governance structures, but also play important roles in creating, executing, and changing these dimensions of governance, which are important results in the democratic process. Reciprocal also implies the continuous potential for change in governance structures.

Governance as Multiple and Reciprocal Relationships

In the following section, we use examples from very different policy domains to illustrate what we mean when we say the relationships that constrain and enable present and future action are multiple and reciprocal. We show how managers can take responsibility for managing these relationships and how their efforts can influence public policy outcomes. Our examples include the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, the East St. Louis Action Research Project, and Family Group Decision Making, a set of programs for placing at-risk children. We present examples from three very different contexts in order to illustrate the generalizability of the perspective we propose.

Governing Relationships as Multiple

Our first point is that the relationships that are important to the effectiveness of public managers are multiple. As we discussed above, an important body of research in public management emphasizes the relevance of one type of relationship—that between a principal trying to control policy outcomes and an agent responsible for producing those outcomes (Kettl 1993; Milward and Provan 1998; Garvey 1993). In other words, emphasis is given to the relationships between politicians trying to control public managers as agents, and relationships between public managers trying to control the results produced by outside contractors and organizations as agents. Principal–agent theory is extremely useful for helping us to understand relationships in which control over results is the central issue, but where the methods of control are complex and the results being controlled for are not clear. The analysis offers one way to understand bureaucratic structure and processes (T. Moe 1989), the complications of competitive bidding and procurement for complex goods and services (Kettl 1993), and, more basically, the behavior of politicians toward public managers (Fiorina 1977).

Not all relationships involving public managers and legislators, however, revolve around principals trying to control agents for results. Legislators, for example, although capable of significantly influencing the nature of the relationship, do not always choose to do so. This is largely because a more cooperative relationship with public managers is often needed to achieve and maintain desired policy results. In addition to complex relationships with legislators, multiple types of relationships involve the public manager that also matter for the way a policy area is governed, and hence the way results take shape (Waterman and Meier 1998).

The SEC.[2] Consider the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Efforts have been made to explain the SEC's behavior, or its policy results, as the product of a dominant principal–agent relationship between congressional oversight committees and the agency (Weingast 1984). But the relevant relationship(s) between the SEC and Congress are multiple, and often they look very different from the relationship between principals and agents. On rare occasions, members of Congress have been very clear about the result they wanted or did not want the SEC to produce and have tried to legislate processes for the agency to follow as a means to assure those outcomes.[3] There also have been rare times when members of Congress wrote letters and exerted pressure to prevent the agency from creating rules or regulations.[4] These actions fit the principal–agent model. For the most part, however, these are departures, and the relationships have focused less on trying to control the SEC, and more on working in partnership to support the mandated work of the agency to regulate the securities markets and to be an advocate for public investors.

This relationship with members of Congress is built, in part, on the complexities of policing and regulating the securities market, but the structure of the relationship also rests on other relationships governing the agency's regulatory and enforcement efforts. For the most part, the diverse companies and organizations that buy, sell, and underwrite securities in public markets support a rigorous regulatory effort by the SEC to ensure that all participants play by the same rules. Another key relationship is that between the SEC commissioners and staff and former staff. Many members of the private securities bar cut their teeth, so to speak, as SEC staff members, and the practice of securities law in the private sector is built on the statutes the SEC is authorized to enforce. The bar is a well-organized and well-financed voice of political support for SEC funding and regulatory power during budget and authorization hearings. These relationships, in turn, bolster the SEC's stature with Congress.

This web of relationships is essential to the governance of securities regulation. Indeed, as we will discuss further below, when the relationship structure is altered—as has been the case when members of Congress have tried to prevent or limit SEC regulatory activities—the results affect policy outcomes, and efforts are made by Congress, the industry, and the agency to restore the relationship balance (Khademian 1992).

ESLARP.[5] The East St. Louis Action Research Project, or ESLARP, also illustrates the importance of multiple relationships that govern efforts—in this case, to revitalize neighborhoods in East St. Louis, Illinois. ESLARP grew out of a challenge placed before the president of the University of Illinois by a state legislator who chaired the committee for educational funding. Chairwoman Yvetter Young wanted the university to apply its vast expertise to the challenges facing inner cities such as her home town of East St. Louis. The response was an initial commitment by the university to fund faculty research in 1987. Since that time, the program has grown into a thriving partnership among university faculty, students, and residents of East St. Louis to revitalize neighborhoods in the city.

At the core of the program is the relationship among participating faculty, students, and residents. The relationship rests very delicately on open communication among faculty, residents, and students; continuous evaluation and criticism of the processes and methods used to identify, define, and address neighborhood problems; and real progress toward improving life in East St. Louis neighborhoods. This delicate relationship structures the way university faculty apply their expertise, the way students learn to practice urban planning and landscape architecture, the way money is applied for programs and staff, and the types of relationships ESLARP participants have with those outside the program. As we will discuss in the following section, the relationship structure of interaction among faculty, residents, and students fits oddly with the relationship structures constraining the interaction between ESLARP faculty and the university hierarchy. Similarly, the core relationship structure of ESLARP cuts against the grain of traditional relationship structures between residents and city and county government in East St. Louis. All of these relationships matter for the governance of ESLARP. While the core relationship facilitates a relatively unique approach to urban planning and renewal, other key relationships create tensions and constraints that limit what can be accomplished through a research and planning effort that fully includes and relies on the residents' participation.

It is a stretch to examine the relationship between university faculty and residents through any form of principal–agent lens. Accountability for results is a shared responsibility between faculty and residents; program goals change through participation, new circumstances, and the accumulation of experience within the ESLARP effort; and efforts are made by all participants to equalize knowledge, skills, and opportunities for participation in the revitalization of East St. Louis. There are dimensions of a principal–agent relationship between university administrators and university faculty, in that participating faculty must secure funding from the university, and junior faculty participating in the project must secure tenure through the university. In both instances, the university can exercise some control for results—what ESLARP produces, and the quality and quantity of faculty research and teaching that emanates from the program. But, as we shall see in the next section, much of what ESLARP has accomplished has been in spite of the influence the university can exercise over funding and faculty tenure, because of the ability of the lead faculty member to manage the core relationship of the program among faculty, students, and residents. Despite the tensions involving relationships with the university and even city government, the core relationship plays a dominant role in governing the work of ESLARP.

Family Group Decision Making.[6] Finally, consider a program for placing at-risk children that was developed in New Zealand and has been used in several locations in Canada and the United States. The program, called Family Group Decision Making, replaces a relationship structure that defined the state as a dominant principal with multiple relationship structures between the state, family, and the child's community of origin. The state has responsibility for protecting minor children who are at risk for neglect and abuse by their parents. Traditionally, the state identified the best interests of the child and required foster care placement or adoption as solutions imposed on the children and families involved. Placement was mandated by state legislatures and executed through state bureaucracies, with judicial proceedings overseeing and legitimizing certain steps of the process, while family, neighbors, and community organizations were left out of the process.

While the state behaves as a dominant principal in this relationship, attempting to make and carry out decisions in this realm through a principal–agent relationship is unwieldy at best. The agents in this case are not clearly defined, and those excluded from the decision-making process have information and other resources that prevent the state from achieving the ultimate goal of caring for a children in ways that promote their becoming productive members of society.

Family Group Decision Making recognizes the multiple, varied, and sometimes shifting relationships that are involved in providing a safe and supportive home for a child. Through this process, the roles that family, neighbors, community organizations, and others play is legitimized and integrated with the role of case workers and other representatives of the state. These multiple relationships governing the placement process not only reduce the state's control as a principal over the immediate outcome—placement—but also spread responsibility for setting goals, or desired outcomes, within this broader network of participants. They alter who has the ability to define the standards used to determine appropriate parenting. Although the state ultimately maintains the right to remove a child, the state loses the advantages provided by the group decision-making process when it exercises that right. These multiple relationship structures help to govern not only the circumstances surrounding a particular child, but the broader public policy approach to addressing the needs of at-risk children and their families.

Governing Relationships as Reciprocal

More than two decades of political science research has promoted an understanding of congressional and bureaucratic relationships as primarily a one-way street (Fiorina 1977; Calvert, Moran, and Weingast 1987; McCubbins and Schwartz 1984). It is argued that politicians, as principals, always have the last word through various constitutional powers such as oversight, appointment, budgeting, or writing explicit legislative language. A few scholars have probed the utility of the framework for characterizing public relationships in the first place (DiIulio 1994). There is, for example, evidence that managers not only receive but also exert influence over politicians (Carpenter 2001; Selden, Brewer, and Brudney 1999). The relationships between managers and politicians, managers and employees, managers and the public, and a host of other individuals and organizations are perhaps too complex and varied to rely on the principal–agent framework for the purposes of understanding and improving upon public management (Waterman and Meier 1998). We suggest that public managers play a role in the way these relationships are enacted and the structures that evolve. Influence over relationship structures, in other words, is reciprocal, and hence relationship structures can and do change.

The SEC. The commissioners of the SEC and the agency's congressional oversight committees in the House and Senate illustrate how relationships evolve in a reciprocal manner. On the one hand, there are clear levers of control that Congress exercises over the SEC: Congress controls its budget, can change its mandate, and approves its commissioners. While these are powerful tools that members of Congress can (and on occasion do) invoke to influence the SEC, it is the rare occasion when congressional committees spend their time trying to figure out how best to control the SEC. Rather, they rely heavily on the SEC's expertise to craft legislation relating to the securities market, and on the integrity of the SEC to maintain a high level of confidence for investors.

One simple act, regularly conducted by the five commissioners of the SEC throughout the 1960s, represents the importance of daily managerial actions for creating, reinforcing, or changing relationship structures that matter for the ways in which policies come to fruition. When summoned to Capitol Hill, the five commissioners climbed into an old station wagon parked in the SEC garage and drove themselves to the halls of Congress. That simple act sent a message to members of Congress that the commissioners would not rely on the perquisites of being commissioners, such as chauffeured cars, to conduct their work. They were serious and dedicated to a public interest that required minimal attention to amenities to protect.

This action, and others, helped to establish a relationship structure with Congress in which SEC regulatory efforts typically were viewed as above reproach—an essential dimension for the agency to maintain legitimacy in the eyes of the industry it governs. The action sent a message to the industry as well, that the SEC could not be bought or influenced. Members of the securities industry would have to communicate and deal with the SEC by the book, not through back channels, and no company with publicly traded stock was above the law. And the ride in the station wagon sent a message to the public that commissioners were cautious in spending taxpayer dollars and serious about the mission to which those dollars were applied—protecting the individual investor.

The SEC exists in a network of reciprocal relationships that structures and is structured by the interactions of the participants. Each participant influences, but none singly determines these interactions. Over several decades, the participants have achieved a sort of structural equilibrium. The structure, however, must be enacted and reenacted on a regular basis through the actions taken by the participants. When any participant decides to change the patterns of interaction, change in the structure is inevitable.

A clear example is the SEC's failed effort throughout the 1990s to promulgate regulations that would prevent accounting firms from providing consulting services to the same companies they audited. For the SEC, the issue was simple: Audits of publicly traded companies must be independent to provide investors with reliable information. For the Big Five accounting firms,[7] the issue was also simple: Revenues nearly doubled in the 1990s, when the firms provided consulting services (Mayer 2002, 66). Rather than work with the agency to develop workable regulations, however, the accounting firms went directly to members of Congress, who took the unusual step of pressuring the agency to delay or drop the proposed regulations.[8] The results are well known. Arthur Andersen, the outside auditor for the Houston-based Enron Corporation, also provided consulting services to the energy giant. This conflict of interest was identified as an important ingredient in Enron's sudden collapse in 2001, which cost investors an estimated $93 billion.

In this case, the SEC's ability to exert influence was thwarted, and the reciprocal nature of the relationship structure was altered. Because of the accounting firms' efforts to bypass the SEC, the agency was unable to bring about the regulations that might have prevented the Enron crisis. To restore confidence in the stock market, members of Congress once again turned their attention to their relationship with the SEC and to bolstering the SEC's ability to do its job (Mayer 2002).

ESLARP. The relationships involved in ESLARP and the actions they enable and constrain have changed a great deal since its creation in 1987. Take, for instance, the relationship between the University of Illinois administration and the faculty. Traditionally, the university held the faculty accountable through relationship structures that defined the role of faculty first and foremost as independent researchers demonstrating their expertise through published work. The university related to faculty through a tenure system geared toward publications. Because of publication pressures, some faculty participants dropped out of the program as their tenure decisions drew near, and others were discouraged from participating. Kenneth Reardon worked to change this relationship structure, which governed so much of what ESLARP was trying to accomplish. He wrote letters on behalf of participating faculty for tenure recommendations, explaining the research and the social value of participatory research, he worked to hire professors on a project-specific basis, and he worked to promote an understanding with the university of what ESLARP was trying to accomplish and why. Funding streams were pooled to give greater central control and discretion to spending by lead faculty who were committed to participatory research; the university gave at least verbal support to what ESLARP was trying to accomplish and featured ESLARP regularly in its publications; and funding from the university for ESLARP increased dramatically, as did its support for staff. Still, the way participants in the tenure process take participatory research into account produces a structure that cuts against the expansive research efforts of Reardon and other like-minded faculty.

The relationship between faculty and residents has also changed dramatically under Reardon's guidance. In 1990, upon assuming leadership of the program, Reardon drove the two and a half hours from the Champaign-Urbana campus to East St. Louis to begin building a relationship. He interviewed more than 50 neighborhood and community leaders to find out what kind of programs would work and under what conditions residents would work with university faculty. The effort proceeded incrementally, building trust with the residents in one neighborhood and demonstrating university commitment to shared responsibility for the program. Throughout Reardon's 10 years as lead faculty, the effort to build a core relationship was under continuous scrutiny by both residents and university participants. The strength or weakness of this partnership was an essential result of the ESLARP effort. Without a working relationship to govern the program, there would not have been results—the clearing of trash-filled lots, the building of playgrounds and a farmer's market, the renewal of homes, and the development of long-term plans aimed at improving the overall quality of life in the neighborhoods of the city.

Family Group Decision Making. Family Group Decision Making is premised on the idea that the best interests of the child are not always defined unilaterally. For many years, state legislators, justices, case workers, and their supervisors have wielded a great deal of power on behalf of the state. Case workers, for example, have defined appropriate and inappropriate parenting practices and reported such practices to legislators. Case workers also have been the primary source of remedies, with state legislators and judges relying heavily on their discretion to determine what will work in specific situations. The new program expands this discretion far beyond the state apparatus. Neither the state nor the family has total control. Under Family Group Decision Making, the state and family work together toward a common goal of the well-being of the child(ren), without a predetermination of what outcome constitutes that well-being.

The reciprocal relationship structures that take hold in the Family Group Decision Making process are an important result in and of themselves. These structures provide avenues of participation for families and members of the community who once were excluded. More importantly, they focus the entire policy area on the possibility that appropriate actions can be tailored to fit the changing situations of each individual child, not a predetermined notion of what a "good" decision is. Relationships that enable participants to share information increase the ability to adapt to the kinds of changing circumstances that families and children present (Feldman and Rafaeli 2002). For example, one outcome of the Family Group Decision Making efforts has been that children whose families participate are less likely to be placed in foster care (Crampton 2001). In many ways, this is a desirable policy outcome. The avoidance of foster care placement often means fewer disruptions for the child and more continuous connection with someone within their family of origin. Yet, deciding that this is the goal of Family Group Decision Making obviates the point of the process. In some cases, the decision that results from the process is that the best outcome for the child and the family *is* foster care placement. The Family Group Decision Making process, from this perspective, enables different decisions to be made for different children in different circumstances. Legitimating the information that various participants provide in the process makes it possible to avoid identifying a decision as good or bad independent of the child and the circumstances surrounding that child.

Managing Relationships and Enacting Democracy

"Despite a long tradition of discussion of the moral and ethical standards of civilized democratic conduct, the criteria for judging political actions are often ambiguous, conflicting and changing rather than clear, consistent and stable…. Willful political engineers seem to be left with two possible approaches to improvement, neither fully satisfactory. The first is to see the political system as an instrument for the purpose of some vision of transcendent personal or collective goals in terms of which outcomes can be evaluated…. The second approach is to emphasize strengthening the development of democratic processes without any commitment to particular substantive outcomes" (March and Olsen 1995, 249–50).

March and Olsen point out that the pursuit of democratic virtue is rife with ambiguity. We suggest that public managers grapple with this ambiguity on a day-to-day basis. Though the two approaches that March and Olsen identify may be theoretically distinct, the actions of public managers simultaneously affect both. Public managers pursue policy goals on behalf of the public they serve, and many strive continuously to improve upon those results. But they also contribute to the capacity and practice of democracy by supporting, utilizing, and creating the processes or means to implement public policies and pursue policy results.

The division between the two views of democracy identified by March and Olsen is reinforced by approaches to public management that separate policy results from the processes used to achieve those results. In the previous pages, we have suggested that focusing on the *relationships* that public managers support, utilize, and create through their actions is one way to understand the connection between policy results and processes. There is, of course, the important point that these relationships, both their number and their nature, are a result. But they are not the only result. These relationships help bring to fruition policy outcomes—the traditional understanding of results. Managers find that by paying attention to these relationships, they can bring about results that would not be possible otherwise. The SEC case illustrates the explicit management of relationships to achieve policy outcomes. The agency's top managers have long attended to the relationships with Congress, the many sectors of the industry, the securities bar, and the public to pursue its mandate of protecting investors. Without the complex web of relationships that the SEC is a part of, it is unlikely that it could police the markets as rigorously it does (Khademian 1992). As the discussion of Enron shows, when the dimensions of this web are altered, the results affect policy outcomes.

Our other two examples, ESLARP and Family Group Decision Making, illustrate how managers that built relationships to expand participation were able to find a synergy between policy outcomes and enhancing the capacity of government to be more inclusive. By drawing on and developing additional relationships through Family Group

Decision Making, for instance, case workers often found resources within the community for taking care of children without removing them from the community. While a grandparent, aunt, or uncle may feel that taking care of a child is too much for them, when they find that other members of the family or community are also willing to help, it may seem possible and even attractive to take on the responsibility. The policy result can be better care and comfort for the child, while the expanded relationship infrastructure provides present and future opportunities to tap important child support resources. Similarly, the creation of relationship structures between university faculty and residents of East St. Louis not only established a venue of participation for community members, but also provided them access to faculty expertise. Consequently, outcomes that previously were unattainable have been achieved. In addition, the venues for participation have allowed the articulation of policy goals that were not considered when participation was more limited.

While we think the synergy in these last two examples is an important result, it is clear that not all relationships lead to such results. The relationships that are formed and how these relationships affect the policy outcomes are also important. The SEC example helps to make clear that it is not necessarily the degree of inclusiveness, but the nature of the relationships created and the way these relationships are used that is important. What matters is whether the SEC creates relationships that enable it to protect *all* investors and to create a fair environment. In some contexts, such results require more inclusion than in others. Therefore, we do not propose that inclusiveness is always conducive to better policy outcomes. Instead, we suggest that in assessing relationship structures, we need to think about the appropriateness of the relationships for the goals of the program and for contributing to democratic processes.

In this article, we have conceptualized governance as multiple and reciprocal relationships that constrain and enable actions taken in a policy arena. Public managers play a key role in determining the nature (who participates and how) and quality (the impact of participants on outcomes) of the relationships. Indeed, we suggest that public managers have two responsibilities in this regard. First, they need to make visible the relationship structures that influence policy outcomes. This involves transparency about who participates and in what ways. Second, they need to evaluate continuously the relationships that influence policy outcomes. This involves considering how the nature and quality of the relationships contribute to democracy as well as to policy results. We argue that public managers can and should think about the relationships they are building, the capacity of these relationships to further democratic objectives, and their ability to accomplish policy goals. In so doing, they are doing more than simply enacting mandates provided to them by politicians. They are affecting the structures that influence the identification, implementation, and understanding of public policy. They are, in short, governing.

Notes

1. Because this article is an equal collaboration, names appear in alphabetical order.
2. Material for the SEC case is drawn from Khademian (1992).
3. In 1987, for example, the Senate Banking Committee included language in the SEC's authorization prohibiting particular forms of analysis that members of the committee believed facilitated the promotion of a free-market approach by SEC economists over policy issues such as mergers and acquisitions and insider trading.
4. One such prominent example involved efforts by members of Congress throughout the 1990s to stop the SEC from promulgating regulations that would prevent accounting firms from providing consulting services to the companies they audit (Mayer 2002). We discuss this in relation to the reciprocal nature of relationship structures.
5. Material for the ESLARP case is drawn from Reardon (1998) and Reardon and Shields (1997).
6. Material for the Family Group Decision Making case is drawn from Crampton (1998, 2001); Crampton and Jackson (2000); Pennell and Burford (1998, 2000); and Rockhill and Rodgers (1998).
7. The Big Five firms are Arthur Andersen, Pricewaterhouse-Coopers, Deloitte and Touche, Ernst and Young, and KPMG.
8. Hefty campaign contributions and intense lobbying by the accounting firms, as well as a bull market that spanned several years, are noted as incentives for some members of Congress to break with the traditional relationship to the SEC.

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