

Managerial Craftsmanship: A Framework for Reconciling Creativity and Causality

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A Report from the Field

- ✓ *Getting Agencies to Work Together: The Practice and Theory of Managerial Craftsmanship* (DC: Brookings, 1998)
 - 6-7 years
 - much field interviewing
 - 9 policy areas, 19 “cases”
 - “pre-quantitative” rather than “qualitative”
 - ✓ Methodological problems were mostly philosophical
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Omitting “Purpose” Is a Mistake

- ✓ You can’t advise practitioners
 - ✓ You are doing uninteresting science
 - ✓ Interesting phenomena are off-limits
 - ✓ But: rival camps and approaches not really a problem
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The Conceptual Framework: “Craftsmanship”

- ✓ Craftsmen act creatively, purposively
 - ✓ But their actions are “channeled”
 - by functional requirements of the product
 - by natural qualities of the materials
 - by the feasibility and practicality of generic designs
 - ✓ Channeling is causal, though metaphorically unfamiliar
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Channeling: the Passive “Causes” the Active

- ✓ An upside-down formulation
 - the clay causes the potter's motions
 - the lumber causes the carpenter's actions
 - the ventilation requirements cause the architect's design choices
 - ✓ The rat controls the experimenter
 - ✓ The chicken is the egg's way of making another egg
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How Evaluate the Worth of a Conceptual Framework?

- ✓ The Elinor Ostrom test (*GTC*, p. 192) :
 - “relates whole families of models together”
 - “one derives questions that ... clarify the structure of a situation and the incentives facing individuals”
 - ✓ Guides you towards insightful answers
 - ✓ Illuminates the interface between
 - practitioner and problem
 - practitioner and opportunities
 - practitioner and array of options (“checklist”)
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Some Useful Questions and Happy Insights (slide 1 of 5)

- ✓ Interagency Collaborative Capacity (ICC)
 - A “virtual organization”
 - Made up of pieces that need to be created and “put together”
 - operating system
 - resources
 - a steering process
 - a culture of pragmatism and trust
 - What makes for an “efficient” developmental process?
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Some Useful Questions and Happy Insights (slide 2 of 5)

- ✓ In the ICC case, what creates synergistic potential? For instance:
 - Production complementarities
 - More coherent scope of decision
 - Wrap-around resources

- ✓ Does stronger potential synergy improve odds of collaboration?
Quality of ICC work?
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Some Useful Questions and Happy Insights (slide 3 of 5)

- ✓ Synergistic potential a special case of “latent opportunity”
 - Opportunity: producing value on the cheap
 - Technological analogy
 - ✓ Yes, there are free lunches, and managers love them
 - ✓ But many opportunities are unnoticed, noticed but ignored...
Why?
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Some Useful Questions and Happy Insights (slide 4 of 5)

- ✓ How shall we understand “developmental processes”?
 - Labeling? Division into “phases”?
 - An efficiency problem: design and enactment of optimal sequences of tasks or functions.
 - ✓ But what makes for efficiency in a political world?
 - Technical considerations: “platforming”
 - Momentum-building
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Some Useful Questions and Happy Insights (slide 5 of 5)

- ✓ Dig more deeply into “the nature” of generic problems
 - ✓ For instance, leadership in ICC process
 - It’s very functional -- but problematic
 - The equality problem
 - The incentives and recruitment problem
 - The resources problem
 - ✓ “Facilitative” and “advocacy” solutions
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“Craftsmanship”: Epistemological Issues

- ✓ This is not about craft judgment or appreciation (Majone,

Vickers)

- ✓ “Qualities analysis,” not “qualitative analysis”
 - ✓ Predictive power can sometimes be a test of worth of a craftsmanship model
 - ✓ “Understanding” a more comprehensive test of worth
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Ontological Issues

- ✓ “Potential” is “real” even if not “actual”
 - and even if never actualized
 - and even if not visible
 - and even if there is no obvious physical locus
 - for instance, the potential for making a profit, the potential for Pareto improvement
 - ✓ In the real world, purpose (creativity) and determinism (causality) interact happily
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The Grounds for Human Action

- ✓ Comparison with economics
 - More alike than different
 - Opportunities analogous to incentives
 - “Opportunities” is rhetorically broader
 - “Opportunities” has a cognitive aspect
 - Purposes analogous to preferences
 - Purposes anchored externally as well as internally
 - Purposes more situational, more mutable
- ✓ More humanistic as well as realistic