

Administration, Democracy and Performance - a symposium

11am-5pm 11 September 2008. Board Room, Arthur Lewis Building, University of Manchester

Rationale

The compatibility of bureaucracy and democracy has been a persistent theme of academic reflection since the beginning of social science, if not before, spawning the topics of implementation, principal-agent models, political-bureaucratic relationships, just to name a few. The measurement of bureaucratic performance in recent years provides a new spice to the bureaucratic-democracy question, affecting how the bureaucracy works internally, and giving new information to regulators and citizens alike. It is, of course, not a forgone conclusion that performance is the new 'efficient secret' of the constitution, providing timely information to principals, whether they are politicians and citizens, so they may monitor their choices. There may be perverse effects, such as when the information is flawed, and if the incentives are not symmetric. But public policy-making now operates in different ways, which impacts on the causal mechanisms that link democratic politics to administrative practice.

The aim of this colloquium is to draw together recent work exploring the impact of performance on the operation of public bureaucracy and its democratic linkages. The aim will be to advance understandings of the problems, synthesise literatures, and think of new directions this line of research can go.

Participants

So far the following people have agreed to participate: George Boyne (Cardiff), Francesca Gains (Manchester), Stephen Greasley (Manchester), Steve Harrison (Manchester) Oliver James (Exeter), Peter John (Manchester), Ken Meier (Texas A and M), Colin Talbot (Manchester), Nick Turnbull (Manchester) and Nicolai Petrovsky (Cardiff).

Papers:

Boyne, James, John, Petrovsky Should the Bureaucrats Stay or Go? The Impact of Top Management Team Turnover on Public Service Performance?

Petrovsky, Merit Civil Services As Credible Commitment Devices: A Theory and an Application to the Case of Mexico's New Federal Merit System

John (paper with Bertelli), Government Checking Government
How Performance Measures Expand Distributive Politics

James – The Impact of Information about Performance

Meier When Politics Fails: Can Management Bring Democracy to Administration?

Greasley/John - Does Stronger Political Leadership have a Performance Payoff?
Performance and Citizen Satisfaction in the Institutional Redesign of Sub-central Governments in England, 2000-2006

