

**Call for Papers: Toward Prefigurative Public Administration**  
Special Issue Editors: Drs. Jeannine Love and Margaret Stout

Contemporary public administration continues to struggle with how to address the deeply interdependent issues that comprise the “wicked problems” (Rittel & Webber, 1973, p. 155) of sustainability—including social, political, economic, and environmental crises. Responses to this challenge have been shaped by ontological assumptions that drive strategies for knowledge production and understandings of “best” practices. As a result, ideas about effective governance have shifted over time; from government modeled on military style hierarchy in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, to business-oriented models and privatization in the late twentieth century, to collaborative network governance at the turn of the twenty-first century.

Within this latest turn, proponents of governance networks argue that coordinating responses to complex policy challenges across jurisdictional and sectoral borders can yield “collaborative advantage” over traditional governance approaches (Huxham, 2000). However, assessments of actual governance networks yield poor results. It has been argued that despite the rhetorical commitment to collaboration, these governance networks perpetuate the practices of hierarchy and competition (Stout & Love, 2019) and that new social movements more effectively function as collaborative networks (Love & Stout, 2018). This symposium therefore asks what public administration can learn from such sources.

Like collaborative governance, new social movements emphasize horizontalism rather than hierarchy and collaboration rather than competition. However, often being grounded in assumptions of deep interconnection, these movements share three general characteristics that qualitatively differentiate collaboration from competitive cooperation or hierarchical coordination (Mandell, Keast & Chamberlain, 2016): (1) an objection to domination in all forms; (2) an ethos of prefigurative politics in direct action; and (3) an open-ended orientation to an evolving present (Gordon, 2007, p. 30). Therefore, while their counter-hegemonic stances drive resistance to or transformation of neoliberal governance, their actions enact modes of association that are deeply and radically democratic and collaborative.

This journal symposium seeks to examine contemporary social movements to consider what public administration can learn from them as “practical possibilities for action” (Dixon, 2014, p. 2), and whether moving toward a prefigurative public administration can hold promise for a more fruitful future for us all. Specific questions to explore might include:

- What ontological assumptions undergird contemporary social movements? How do these foundations shape their approaches to governance?
- Do contemporary social movements engage policy issues similar to those pursued by governance networks? If not, how and why do they differ?
- What ethical principles guide action within social movements, and how do they shape the ways movements engage in organizing or the policy changes they support?
- How do contemporary social movements achieve network configurations from local to global scales? What challenges do they face in their implementation and how are they responding?

- How do contemporary social movements build knowledge and find agreement on shared purposes?
- How are new social movements using technology to coordinate action across broad networks while maintaining more traditional face-to-face organizing tactics?
- In what ways might the prefigurative politics of social movements inform prefigurative public administration? Might this be a new form of “guerilla administration”?

This special issue of *Administrative Theory & Praxis* is coordinated by Drs. Jeannine M. Love ([jmlove@roosevelt.edu](mailto:jmlove@roosevelt.edu)) and Margaret Stout ([Margaret.Stout@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:Margaret.Stout@mail.wvu.edu)). Proposals for papers should be submitted to the guest editors via email by Nov. 1, 2018. Decisions for invitations to submit full papers will be given by Nov. 15, 2018. Authors are encouraged to present their work and convene for discussions at the 2019 Public Administration Theory Network conference in Denver on May 30 – June 2. Special issue editors will coordinate a panel submission. Completed manuscripts are to be submitted through the ATP online system ([www.editorialmanager.com/atp](http://www.editorialmanager.com/atp)) by September 1, 2019 with revisions due February 1, 2020. Completed manuscripts must follow journal guidelines for preparation and submission. An invitation to contribute does not guarantee publication.

## References

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