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public administration*

Theory to Practice

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Article

Public Administration Review

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January | February 2010
Volume 70 | Number 1

Continuity and Change in Public Administration Across the 50 States: Linking Practice, Theory, and Research through the American State Administrators Project, 1964-2008

Introduction: Administrative Reality in State Governments

"You know, it would be damn helpful and awfully nice to know what this world of state administration is all about." Those brief comments from a new state controller in a midwestern state were expressed to one of the authors in 1962. Shortly thereafter, a young former state agency staff member with a lively interest in state government entered the doctoral program at the University of Iowa. The convergence of these two disparate events was the seed that germinated the American State Administrators Project (ASAP). What was the world of state administration all about? How could that world be described, understood, and explained? Starting in 1964 and continuing through 2008, those queries have been pursued through ten successive mail questionnaire surveys of heads of state administrative agencies across the 50 states.¹ What began with one doctoral

student has continued to actively engage myriad MPA and PhD students and support, supplement, and sustain the research agendas of dozens of intellectual descendants—students, former students, colleagues, and collaborators (and their students!).

Practitioner interest, intellectual curiosity, and academic incentives combined to spur research endeavors intended to answer nuances, variations, and specific aspects of these seemingly elementary questions. What began with coincidental events joined with serendipity and unique opportunities to produce a five-decade research program that has spawned multiple outcomes. Foremost among them was the intent to connect public management experiences and practices with systematic empirical research and administrative theory. Those relationships are depicted in the triangular pattern of reciprocal arrows shown in figure 1.

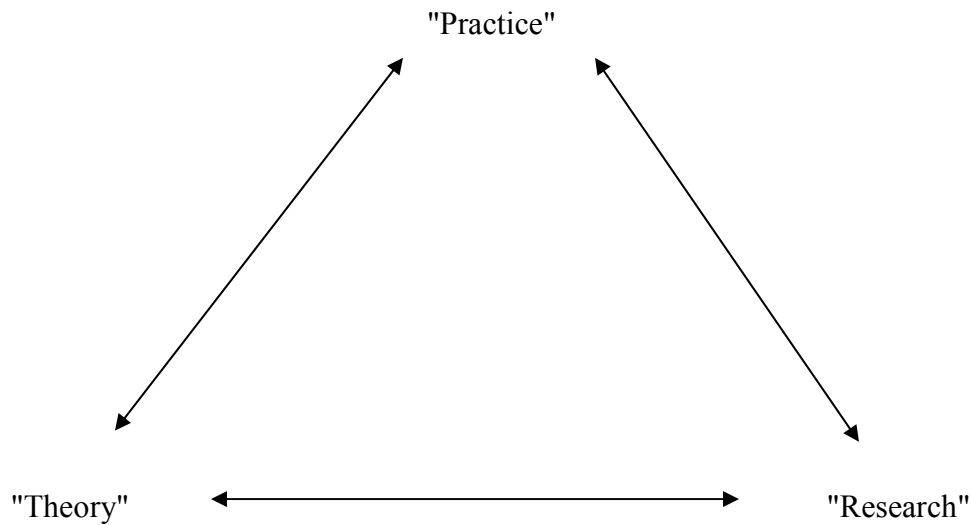


Figure 1 Theory to Research to Practice

The location of practice at the apex of the triangle is deliberate. The intended focus of this essay is on the historically hidden and virtually unknown arena of administration in state governments. To the extent that state administration in the 1960s (and earlier) had some visibility, it shared that awareness with the clouded imagery by which Robert Allen described the states:

The American states are the tawdriest, most incompetent, most stultifying unit in the nation's political structure. The lack of vitality in state government is more glaring than ever before; it is more glaring because the need for broad-vision, courageous, and honest public administration on the state level is greater than ever before. (1949, vii)

This long-ago indictment of state governments and public administration provides a stimulus, albeit somewhat dated, to inquire about their evolution and status in the early 2000s. Additionally, there are more current and compelling reasons for charting the past paths and present patterns of public administration across the states. State governments are the largest single employer(s) in most

states; many, if not most, of the public services received by citizens are directly or indirectly determined under state law and administration. A contemporary, well-regarded observer of the "state of the states" (Van Horn) recently noted:

The rising importance of state governments was produced by a quiet revolution in American politics that was not an entirely smooth one. The origins of more muscular state governments came about through changes in representation, government organization, and managerial competence that had been spawned decades ago. (2006, 2)

The aim of this essay is to capture, for informational and instructional purposes, the goals and lessons of the ASAP, ranging from its origin, evolution, and maturation to its continuing contribution to understanding the practices of administration in the 50 states. The essay also seeks to sum up the implications of ASAP for the practice of research. It is both more than and less than an intellectual odyssey. It is more because its five decades span far more than the single

decade Odysseus spent roaming the ancient land and seascapes.

It is less because its intellectual "wanderings" are confined to a sustained and core focus on two central components of state administration. The first is the number, nature, size, scope, and political dynamics associated with state administrative *agencies*. The second major component involves the characteristics and careers, the actions and attitudes, and the preferences and perspec-

tives of state *administrators*. These executives head(ed) the growing numbers of organizations that have populated state administrative institutions from the 1950s to the present. That growth is captured by the five-decade trend in the creation of state agencies displayed in table 1. From 51 common administrative agencies in the American states in 1959, state bureaucratic entities increased to a total of 111 different functional types of agencies present in a majority of the states at the beginning of this new millennium.

Table 1 Scope and Growth of State Administrative Agencies by Decade (1959-1999)

A. First-Generation Agencies (1950s)		
1. Adjutant General	18. Geology	36. Public Utility Regulation
2. Aeronautics	19. Health	37. Purchasing
3. Aging	20. Higher Education	38. Revenue
4. Agriculture	21. Highway Patrol	39. Secretary of State
5. Alcoholic Beverage Control	22. Highways	40. Securities (Regulation)
6. Attorney General	23. Insurance	41. Soil Conservation
7. Banking	24. Labor	42. Solid Waste (Sanitation)
8. Budgeting	25. Labor Arbitration & Mediation	43. Tourism (Advertising)
9. Child Welfare	26. Library	44. Treasurer
10. Corrections	27. Mining	45. Unemployment (Compensation) Insurance
11. Education (State School Officer)	28. Mental Health (& Retardation)	46. Veterans Affairs
12. Emergency Management (Civil Defense)	29. Motor Vehicles	47. Vocational Education
13. Employment Services	30. Oil & Gas	48. Water Quality
14. Fire Marshal	31. Parks & Recreation	49. Water Resources
15. Fish and Game	32. Parole	50. Welfare
16. Food (Inspection/Purity)	33. Personnel	51. Workers' Compensation
17. Forestry	34. Planning	
	35. Post Audit	
B. Second-Generation Agencies (1960s)		
1. Administration	7. Criminal Justice Planning	11. Juvenile Rehabilitation (Delinquency)
2. Air Quality	8. Economic (Industrial) Development	12. Law Enforcement (State Police)
3. Commerce	9. Federal-State Relations	13. Natural Resources
4. Community Affairs	10. Highway Safety	
5. Comptroller		
6. Court Administration		
C. Third-Generation Agencies (1970s)		
1. Alcohol & Drug Abuse	11. Fair Employment (Equal Opportunity)	20. Public Lands
2. Archives	12. Finance	21. Railroad
3. Arts Council	13. Historic Preservation	22. Savings & Loan
4. Child Labor	14. Housing Finance	23. Social Services
5. Civil Rights	15. Human Resources/ Services	24. State-Local Relations
6. Consumer Affairs (Consumer Protection)	16. Manpower	25. Telecommunication
7. Energy Resources	17. Mass Transit	26. Transportation
8. Environment (Protection)	18. Medicaid	27. Veterinarian
9. Ethics	19. Occupational Health & Safety	28. Vocational Rehabilitation
10. Exceptional Children (Special Education)		29. Women's Commissions
		30. Information

Table 1 Scope and Growth of State Administrative Agencies by Decade (1959-1999) (continued)

D. Fourth-Generation Agencies (1980s)		
1. Boating Law Administration	7. Horse Racing	12. Training and Development
2. Emergency Medical Services	8. International Trade	13. Underground Storage Tanks
3. Employee Relations	9. Licensing (Occupational/ Professional)	14. Vital Statistics
4. Employee Services	10. Small and Minority Business	15. Weights and Measures
5. Ground Water Management	11. State Fair	
6. Hazardous Waste		
E. Fifth-Generation Agencies (1990s)		
1. Building Codes	4. Development Disabled	7. Gaming (Regulation)
2. Child Support Enforcement	5. Facilities Management	8. Lobby Law Administration
3. Crime Victims Compensation	6. Fleet Management	
F. Emergent Agencies (1990s: Agencies present in 25 or more states, but less than 38)		
1. Coastal Zone Management (30)	5. Public Broadcasting (34)	9. Wellness/Employee Assistance (25)
2. Lottery (37)	6. Public Defender (37)	
3. Latino Affairs (27)	7. Public Works (25)	
4. Native American Affairs (35)	8. Recycling (27)	

Source: Based on listing in *Book of the States*, Supplement 2, State Administrative Officials Classified by Functions, Council of State Governments, Lexington, KY: 1959, 1969, 1979, 1989, and 1999. Agency names are listed if the agency existed in 38 or more states for the respective decades. Agency names/titles vary slightly from decade to decade.

The decade-by-decade identification of existing and new state agencies (agencies are added to the table as they become present in at least three-fourths of the 50 states) shown in table 1 points to two summary observations. The first is the varied but constant evolution in the creation of new administrative agencies in state governments. State administration grew dramatically across the decades in terms of organizational entities. It also grew steeply with respect to employment. The total number of employees in state government was under *one* million in 1951; it currently exceeds *five* million.

Second, the evolutionary regularity of state organizational and employment growth has produced a half-century revolution in state administration (Bowling and Wright 1998). It is the blend of evolution and revolution that provides a subtheme for the relationships among practice, theory, and research reflected in this essay's concentration on the institutional, organizational, and behavioral aspects of state administration. Significant continuity has contributed to the contemporary administrative strength and stability in

state governments. At the same time, evolutionary changes have produced progressive administrative results that border on the revolutionary.

Theory to Research: Administrative Theory and State Government(s)

The early 1960s harbored only fragmentary administrative "theory" in either the general or specific form with respect to state government(s). Indeed, with the exception of V. O. Key (1949), state governments as political and/or administrative entities had not yet been "discovered" for systematic descriptive or comparative analysis (Elazar 1966; Jacob and Vines 1965). Emergent interest in the otherwise soporific subject of state government and administration was illustrated by Coleman Ransone's (1966) review of three books under the title, "Scholarly Revolt in Dullsville: New Approaches to the Study of State Government."

Prominent among prospective approaches to administration in state governments at the time were four major streams of thought. These might be better referenced as proto-

or quasi-theories. They were: (1) the politics-policy-administration continuum (Appleby 1949); (2) conflicting doctrines/values posed by executive leadership, representativeness, and neutral competence (Kaufman 1956); (3) incrementalism as applied to agency budget processes (Wildavsky 1964); and (4) intergovernmental relations (IGR) accentuated through the creation of new federal aid programs (Anderson 1960).

This fourth component reflected the growing presence of state-national relationships, which were sometimes treated under the concept of federalism but more often under the emerging framework of intergovernmental relations (Anderson 1960; Weidner 1960). Momentum for incorporating IGR into research on state government stemmed from: (a) the creation of the two-year Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (1953-1955, P.L. 82-105); (b) the development (in 1959) of the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (P.L. 86-390); and (c) a substantial rise in the number, variety, and monetary outlays of federal aid programs to state agencies (Wright 1968). Theory blended with practice when IGR impacts on state government were assessed: Which agencies received federal aid? How dependent on federal aid were state agencies? Did federal aid promote agency autonomy from legislative and gubernatorial oversight?

By the 1960s, a contemporary research emphasis traceable to the behavioral revolution in political science (Dahl 1961) undergirded these four frameworks and substantive issues. This approach to research, particularly in public administration, transcended case studies (Stein 1952) and micro-analyses of organizational dynamics (Blau 1955; Cartwright and Zander 1960; Kaufman 1960). It borrowed (though with a much different focus) from voting studies the use of large-sample sizes and structured question-

naire protocols. By the 1960s, issues surrounding the "science" of administration were far from dormant (Banfield 1957; Dahl 1947; Simon, 1947, 1958). For reasons evident later, the strategy of surveying (via mail questionnaires) the heads of state agencies in the 1960s emerged from the convergence of academic research and practical experiences in state government(s).

The proto-theories that stimulated the framing of the original ASAP research efforts can be sketched briefly. Collectively, they have remained components for description, explanation, inference, and normative interpretation about the character and complexion of administration among the 50 states across five decades. In retrospect, the approaches adopted for ASAP research fit comfortably under the three meanings of theory employed by Frederickson and Smith (2003) in their *Public Administration Theory Primer*: (1) taxonomy, or the ordering and classification of information; (2) explanatory relationships (causal and otherwise); and (3) normative arguments.

Politics-Policy-Administration Continuum

From Wilson (1887) through Gulick and Urwick (1937), Waldo (1948), and Appleby (1949), to Simon (1958), Banfield (1957), and others, the separation (versus blending) of politics, policy, and administration has generated intense academic heat as well as a wide range of intellectual insights and constructive distinctions (Svara 1985, 1998). The issue remains alive and well as witnessed by a recent exchange: revisiting Waldo's approach to the perennial problem of conceiving the politics-administration dichotomy and/or continuum (Overeem 2008; Svara 2008). Frequent references to the continuum character of politics-policy-administration interrelationships are well documented (Colbert 1983). For example, Mainzer noted, "administrators deal with different orders of policy making that consti-

tute not separate realms but a continuum from routine administration to pure politics" (1973, 71). Appleby implied a continuum when he observed "that administrators make policy by applying general policy at successively less abstract levels" (1949, 8). To confront empirically and measure operationally a continuum connecting politics, policy, and administration, the ASAP surveys have relied on the state agency leader's self-assessment of his or her roles in these respective arenas. A three-part question requested that respondents indicate the proportion of total time allocated to or spent on: (a) routine administration, (b) policy development, and (c) building public support. As expected, there was considerable variation along this continuum among types of agency heads and across states.

Nevertheless, one of the most striking and significant findings across ten ASAP surveys over five decades has been the consistency and continuity in average responses to the three components along the continuum (see table 2). The average (mean) time allocations show substantial time allotted to each of the primary roles: administration, policy, and politics (public support). Management/administrative duties constitute only about one-half of the executives' time. Policy development and building political support are both pursued with the other half of their time. Both agency type and selected administrator attributes reveal important influences on the individual executive's distributions of time allocated across these roles or activities. The larger point should not be lost, however. Public administrators heading

Table 2 Allocation of Time Along the Politics-Policy-Administration Continuum

	Internal Mgmt	Policy Development	Public Support	Total	(N=)
1964	53	28	19	100%	882
1968	50	29	21	100%	941
1974	49	29	21	100%	1533
1978	56	23	21	100%	1327
1984	51	25	24	100%	1082
1988	52	25	23	100%	1424
1994	49	26	25	100%	1257
1998	49	25	26	100%	1160
2004	50	25	25	100%	867
2008	49	27	24	100%	709

Data for this table and all subsequent tables are drawn from the American State Administrators Project, 1964-2008

state agencies are extensively involved in multiple and complementary roles across the politics-policy-administration continuum.

Conflicting Doctrines in Public Administration

A seminal article by Kaufman (1956) merged American history, political institutions, and bureaucratic oversight or guidance. Kaufman elaborated the tension

among three "doctrines." At the core of Kaufman's analysis was the fundamental question: Who is in charge of giving direction(s) and guidance to administrative agencies? An alternative formulation was (and is): Who is an administrator's superior or "principal"? Kaufman argued that answers to this fundamental question shifted over time among institutional structures and actors according to the dynamics among three

conflicting doctrines. He labeled these as representativeness, executive leadership, and neutral competence.

Representativeness was a legacy of the Jacksonian era in which public administrators were selected and guided by either direct popular election or by subordination to legislative control. The spoils system and patronage at the behest of legislators (local, state, and national) provided specific guidance to administrators and to the bureaucracy more generally. Administrators' allegiances were mixed, depending on the public who elected them or the legislator(s) (or executive) by whom they were appointed. Executive leadership emerged from the late nineteenth-century Progressive Reform era; chief executives, from mayors and governors to the president, gained the legitimacy, authority, and power to give direction and oversight to administrators and the bureaucracy.

Also emerging from the reform movement, partly in league with executive leadership to overcome representativeness, was the doctrine of neutral competence. Simply put, this conceptualization embraced the idea of administrator self-guidance, including professionalism, a sense of fairness and due process, and efficiency born of increased protection from the pressures of representativeness and executive/political leadership. A classic expression of this view was Friedrich's (1940), who argued that an administrator should be guided by her or his own internalized professional norms.

This summary does not do justice to the scope and sophistication of Kaufman's (1956) thesis formulation. It was highly relevant, however, to framing questions for initial and later ASAP surveys. State agency heads were asked directly: Who has the greater degree of oversight and control over

your agency—the governor or the legislature? Analogous questions were posed with respect to budget oversight, asking who exercises more detailed review over agency budget and who is more likely to make cuts. These queries were aimed at assessing the representativeness and executive leadership doctrines at the state level.

Measuring neutral competence tendencies was more challenging, and Kaufman, both personally and creatively, assisted in framing the approach. The autonomy, independence, and self-guidance of professional bureaucracies (and bureaucrats) were often achieved through the creation of boards and commissions that provided buffering or protection from the direct and detailed intervention by either executive or legislative actors. Federal aid also entered the scene as a potential contributor to neutral competence through agency autonomy and specialization.

Operational measurement of neutral competence involved presenting an option to state agency heads: When offered a (hypothetical) choice under a reorganized state government, to which institutional actor would the executive prefer her or his agency to be subordinate? The governor? The legislature? Or an independent commission? Across the ASAP surveys, a substantial proportion preferred an independent commission (this finding will be discussed more fully below with table 7). This preference is indicative of the neutral competence preferences present among top career professionals who populate(d) the upper reaches of state administration. These agency heads tended to have specialized graduate degrees in areas such as education, engineering, health, medicine, and welfare. One of the first journal articles based on (1964) ASAP data explored the interactions among Kaufman's three conflicting doctrines (Wright 1967); a later article

extended the analysis across four decades (Bowling, Ferguson, and Wright 2005).

A complementary approach for framing the theoretical underpinnings that guided the ASAP surveys from the 1970s forward might be described as the "outside" of Downs's (1967) *Inside Bureaucracy*. Although much of this volume focused on internal organizational features, Downs devoted a chapter to the "Power Setting" of a bureau (agency). From 1974 to the present, various ASAP questions have measured the relative power/influence of other actors situated around and within state agencies (Brudney and Hebert 1987; Hebert, Brudney, and Wright 1983). Measurement of influence patterns relied on both paired-comparison and freestanding choices for major actors (Dometrius, Burke, and Wright 2008). A statement from *In the Web of Politics* captures the ASAP approach to state agencies: "Bureaucracy is very much about power; it is thus eminently political" (Aberbach and Rockman 2000, 3). In later surveys, state agency heads were asked to assess the absolute and relative influence(s) of not only the governor and legislators but also clientele groups, professional associations, citizens-at-large, agency staff, and state courts.

Incrementalism

There is no single source or point in time that can be identified as the origin of incrementalism. Perhaps the most prominent and in many ways popular springboard for the development of incrementalism as an administrative and policy framework was Lindblom's (1959) "The Science of Muddling Through." Within a short time, Wildavsky (1964) applied the concept to the federal budget process. It required only modest effort to adapt incrementalism to state agency budget processes in the ASAP surveys. Each agency head was asked two closely linked queries: (1) Do you think the

level of *overall* state programs, services, and expenditures should be expanded or increased?; and (2) Do you think the specific programs, expenditures, and services of *your agency* should be expanded and increased? Both questions utilized "yes" and "no" response categories, which were followed by probes regarding the preferred degree of budgetary expansion or reduction in terms of percentage change in current resources (reflecting the incremental characterization of budgeting).

Three related analysis paths have been employed based on responses to the expansion queries. One was to fit preferences for expansion (or non-expansion) into the typology of bureaucratic actors identified by Downs (1967); for example, from "conservers" (preference for no expansion for own agency and for overall state) to "aggrandizers" (preference for expansion of 15 percent or more for agency and for state). A second avenue of inquiry was to assess the Niskanen (1971) "maximizing bureaucrat" thesis (Bowling and Wright 1998; Sigelman 1986). This perspective ultimately produced a "minimizing-maximizing" continuum of fiscal aspirations among state executives (Bowling, Cho, and Wright 2004). Most recently, a third focus was placed on the one-fifth to one-quarter of state agency heads who report as minimizers (or conservers) in each ASAP survey year. Understanding why some agency executives prefer no or very slight expansion in their own agencies and/or the state and the resulting actions they undertake will lead to a fuller understanding of state budgeting, as well as agency agendas and activities (Arapis and Bowling 2009).

The aspirations of state executives for agency expansion (or non-expansion) also formed the basis for an additional theory-to-practice feature. The expression of agency acquisitiveness was treated as a decision premise (Simon 1958) that the executive

brought to the initial stages of the agency budget process. Following Simon's logic, those premises constituted a factor explaining decisions about actual expansion strategies (budget requests). It came as little surprise that decision premises (aspirations) were significant in explaining actual agency budget requests. Equally significant, however, were the roles and priorities of important political principals in the budget process—for example, the governor, legislature, and interest groups (Bowling, Cho, and Wright 2004; Ryu et al. 2007).

This recapitulation of theory frameworks guiding ASAP research strategies covers the essential "start-up" components. These elements have remained regular features throughout the ten ASAP surveys, though some questions have varied slightly. What ASAP also offered as an ongoing research enterprise was the opportunity to evolve and innovate with regard to both theory perspectives and actual practices in state administration.

The scope and content of additions and variations in the subject matter covered by subsequent ASAP surveys cannot be reported in any depth or detail. As different issues or practices emerged in state administration during particular years, ASAP sought to integrate and interpret these occurrences by including questions about them. A few of the more prominent and consequential practice and theory issues can be briefly listed by decade (and survey year in selected instances).

1970s

- General Revenue Sharing (GRS) and in-depth queries on federal aid impacts
- State reputations for (a) best programs and (b) peer-state comparisons
- Intergovernmental contacts
- Opinions on state-national issues

1980s

- Fiscal austerity and cutback management (1984 and 2004)
- Impacts of block grant programs
- Principal actors' influences on (a) total agency budget, (b) budgets for specific programs, (c) major policy changes, and (d) issuance of agency rules and regulations (also in 1990s and 2000s)
- Assessments of principal actors' actual and preferred influence on major policy decisions (1984, 1994, and 2004)

1990s and 2000s

- Extent of change in agency programs
- Principal actors' roles in initiating programmatic changes
- Administrative reform, including reinventing government (1994 and 1998)
- Contracting out for the delivery of services (1998 and 2004)
- Federal mandates and regulations (1994, 1998, and 2004)
- Agency collaboration with other organizations (2008)

The ASAP surveys have allowed empirical examination over time of the proto-theories to which they were originally oriented, as well as the other topics enumerated above. A compendium of publications emanating from the ASAP surveys that treat these issues (and others) is available at The Center for Governmental Services at Auburn University (<http://www.auburn.edu/CGSASAP>). The center also houses and posts longitudinal findings across the ten ASAP surveys, as well as a collated compilation of the questions used in the surveys and methodological descriptions and appendixes.

ASAP Research and Administrative Practice(s)

ASAP research constituted a set of multidimensional balancing acts requiring successive tradeoffs. One balance was struck be-

tween continuity and change in the subject matter content of the surveys. Another trade-off was between a focus on executives (individuals) contrasted with securing data on agencies as organizational entities (although reported by executives). Other balances included the depth of probes (e.g., on contracting or agency expansion) versus more general descriptive queries. A cooperative balancing act was also created among the growing number of collaborators and colleagues, each with related though varied interests, seeking to pursue particularized research. An analogous balancing act confronts the present attempt to summarize findings and lessons learned across five decades and ten surveys about the scope, character, content, problems, and practices of state executives and the agencies they direct. In short, any attempt to approximate the full corpus of ASAP research lies beyond the reach of a single essay. Instead, we offer below selective examples of results that paint a broad brush picture of the landscape of state administration, particularly in regard to the proto-theories described above.

State Executives

One of the most basic purposes served by the ASAP surveys is monitoring and documenting change (as well as continuity) in the administrative cadre at the apex of state agencies. We present these findings under three broad categories: (1) their attributes and attainments; (2) their actions and activities; and (3) their perspectives and preferences on a range of relationships with other state actors.²

Attributes and attainments. Age, gender, and ethnicity are three attributes that have changed in varying degrees across the five decades of ASAP surveys. Table 3 shows some of the demographic attributes. First,

median (and mean) age figures followed a U-shaped pattern. Executive ages averaged in the low 50s in the 1960s and dropped to the low 40s by the 1980s before climbing to the mid 50s in 2004. The rise in recent age averages among state executives is representative of a broader trend in local and national governments. Apparent in table 3 is the rise of the baby boomers to executive positions during the 1970s and 1980s. In 2004 and 2008, the numbers of agency heads in the age ranges of 50 to 59 and 60-plus increased dramatically, with almost a third of state agency heads currently in their 60s. Major segments of the public executive corps are poised to retire from their current posts, leading to a drain of leadership expertise and institutional knowledge but also opportunities for the advancement of those waiting to assume executive positions.

The rise of women to positions of leadership has been one of the more dramatic changes documented by the ASAP surveys (see table 3). Women were a mere 2 percent of state executives in 1964, but they approached 30 percent in 2008 (Bowling et al. 2006; Kelleher et al. 2006). Research based on the ASAP surveys shows that a major route to the top circumvents the glass ceiling: women achieved leadership posts chiefly through gubernatorial appointment(s) to head the many new agencies created in each decade across the 50 states (Bullard and Wright 1993). However, they are also cracking the glass ceiling by moving vertically into leadership positions in agencies in which they have served, as well as moving into functional areas from which they have historically been absent (Bowling et al. 2006).

In contrast to the increase in women heading state agencies over the past five decades, considerably less movement has occurred in

Table 3 American State Administrators' Attributes, 1964-2008

	1964	1968	1974	1978	1984	1988	1994	1998	2004	2008
N=(approx)*	850	725	750	525	450	550	412	1175	903	713
Age (Percentages)										
Under 40	13	14	17	22	25	22	7	8	6	5
40-49	28	29	31	33	33	48	46	41	23	14
50-59	35	38	33	31	28	28	36	40	53	50
60 and over	24	19	19	14	14	12	11	10	18	31
Mean Age (Years)	52	50	50	48	47	41	49	50	55	56
Median Age (Years)	53	51	50	49	47	43	49	51	53	56
Gender										
Male	98	95	96	92	89	83	78	78	74	71
Female	2	5	4	8	11	17	22	22	26	29
Ethnicity										
White	98	97	96	93	90	91	90	89	88	90
Black	1	1	2	3	5	4	5	5	6	5.5
Asian	1	2	2	2	0	2	2	2	1	1.5
American Indian	<1	<1	<1	1	<1	<1	1	1	1	0.6
Hispanic	<1	<1	<1	1	3	2	2	2	2	1.7
Education										
High School or Less	14	7	4	6	5	5	4	4	1	1
Some College	20	18	13	11	6	7	6	4	4	4
College Graduates	26	15	18	16	15	18	16	20	17	20
Grad Study or Degree	40	60	65	70	77	73	77	75	78	75
Hours Worked	-	-	52	53	51	53	53	52	52	52
Weekly (Average)										

*In 1964 through 1994, the Ns included only administrators in agency types that were surveyed in the 1960s (35 agencies). In later years, we included all respondents, as there were no significant aggregate differences in the various samples.

ethnic/racial diversity at the top administrative levels. In 1964, barely 2 percent of all state executives were non-white. Although diversity has increased significantly, in 2004, this proportion stood at only 12 percent and dropped to 10 percent in 2008.

There has been no major increase in minority agency heads since the 1970s. Should

predictions of a retirement exodus among the dominant white majority of state executives materialize, the opportunity for minority candidates to move to the top should substantially increase.

Educational attainment also shows marked change across the five decades (see table 3).

In 1964, about 40 percent of agency heads had done graduate work or held a graduate degree. There was an enormous 20 percentage point surge in administrators with post-baccalaureate education in 1968, and the proportion has steadily increased to nearly three-quarters of state agency heads reporting graduate study in 2008. Another attainment feature is the type of graduate degree held. The most recent ASAP surveys reveal that the largest proportions had completed graduate degrees in business (17 percent), public administration (12 percent), or law (11 percent). About two of every five executives possessing these generalist degree backgrounds focused on administration and management rather than particular technical expertise.

Actions and activities. Two features of executive behavior have remained remarkably constant across the five decades of ASAP. One is the average hourly work week. Substantial overtime is a constant part of the role of a state executive. Over the past 50 years, the average hourly work week has never averaged below 51 nor surpassed 53 hours (table 3).

The second consistent action/activity aspect of executives' work was mentioned earlier and illustrated in table 2: How does the executive allocate time across the continuum of administration, policy, and politics? The consistency of the time allocation averages across survey years is remarkable. Executive time is divided mostly among the functions of administration (50 percent), policy (25 percent), and building political support (25 percent). As table 2 demonstrates, the departures from these means varied only 2 to 3 percentage points from survey to survey. Politics, policy, and administration are all intricately managed aspects of an executive's work life.

In addition to the increased professionalism through education mentioned above, there are also significant findings on work and career patterns resulting from the activities and actions of state administrators as they rose to the executive level of state government. Table 4 displays some of these characteristics and career experiences. Further, it demonstrates the evolution of executives' career paths across the last five decades.

Until 1988, the median years of state employment was around ten years for state executives. Over the next two decades, executives' years of state employment rose slowly to a current (2008) median of 18 years of service. A similar lengthening pattern is observed in the number of years agency heads had served in their current agencies; from a median of six to eight years of agency service, the 2008 respondents reported serving in their agencies for about 13 years. The median years in executive posts has changed little across all five decades, ranging from a median of three years to the six years reported by executives in 2008. Although overall service in state government and within particular agencies has lengthened, turnover at the executive levels remains a regular occurrence. When leadership changes, over 40 percent of agency heads move into the top post from a position within the agency they currently lead, a proportion that has increased steadily across the years to lend stability to state administration.

Three other background activities merit mention about the career actions and paths of state executives. These experiences are relatively consistent across the decades in which they were queried in the ASAP surveys. First, since 1994, the ASAP has asked administrators if they had held a position in the private sector. Table 4 displays these responses, ranging from 57 percent to 66

Table 4 Activities and Actions of Administrators Along Their Career Paths, 1964 to 2008

SURVEY YEAR	1964	1968	1974	1978	1984	1988	1994	1998	2004	2008
N=	850	725	750	525	450	550	412	1175	903	712
CAREER EXPERIENCE										
First held any governmental position										
Median age (years)	28	27	27	25	23	26	30	25	-	-
First held state governmental position										
Median age (years)	33	33	31	30	29	29	32	30	33	38
Median years in state employment										
	11	10	13	10	10	13	15	15	17	18
Median years in present agency										
	-	6	8	6	6	10	11	9	9	13
Median years in present position										
	-	4	3	3	3	5	5	4	3	6
Immediate prior position										
Subordinate, same agency	28	27	36	43	40	33	36	41	43	44
Another agency, same state	22	19	18	17	23	21	18	18	18	16
Local government	11	10	9	7	5	8	7	6	5	7
Federal government	6	4	3	3	4	2	2	3	3	2
Another state	2	4	4	6	4	6	5	6	6	5
Other	31	36	32	23	24	30	32	22	24	26
Held position in another state agency										
	46	46	42	46	51	52	64	47	44	45
Held position in government in another state										
	8	11	14	16	15	14	15	16	14	13
Private sector										
	-	-	-	-	-	-	66	64	57	61
ADMINISTRATIVE CHARACTERISTICS										
Hours worked weekly (average)										
	-	-	52	53	51	53	53	52	52	52
Percent of time spent on routine administration										
	53	50	49	56	51	51	50	49	50	49
Daily or weekly contacts with:										
Governor	-	-	29	30	24	24	26	15	13	10
Legislators	-	-	61	55	44	54	52	38	33	29
Agency receipt of federal aid										
	33	48	57	69	60	58	61	74	79	76

percent acknowledging private sector experience. However, relatively few (under 15 percent in the 2000s) came to their present post directly from the private sector. Second and consistently, at least 40 percent or more of state agency heads reported employment in two or more state agencies during their careers. A third group of 10 percent to 15 percent of executives each survey year had held positions in another state. In brief, the broad corps of state executives demonstrates relatively high organizational mobility and state government administrative experience.

Power perspectives and preferences. From its earliest stages, ASAP has aspired to identify, describe, and analyze configurations of the power setting in which the agency executive was situated (Downs 1967). Space does not permit an exposition of the several approaches used either sequentially or simultaneously to map the setting(s).³ Reported herein is one example of a measurement approach employed in the 1984, 1994, and 2004 surveys.

Table 5 (table 1 in print version) displays two sets of scores rating the relative influence of multiple actors on major agency policy decisions across the three most recent decades, where executives responded none/no influence (coded "1"), slight influence ("2"), moderate influence ("3"), and high influence ("4"). Three categories of actors constitute the main power setting: (1) organizational—i.e., agency related; (2) institutional, the two main political principals (i.e., governor and legislature); and (3) external, or part of the "publics" surrounding the agency. The "perceived influence" scores for the seven different actors are the mean ratings reported by the agency executive indicating the level of influence each actor *actually exerts* on major agency decisions. The "preferred influence" scores are the means assessing how much influence the

executive thinks the various actors *should exert* over major agency choices.

The actual influence scores deserve more than incidental comment. Noteworthy is the high(est) rating the state executive accords his or her own influence. Across all three decades, the self-rated mean influence scores (3.4 or 3.5) significantly exceed those given to both the governor and the legislature. Downs (1967) identified two polar opposites of bureau chiefs, the "shrinking violet" and the "superman" syndromes. It seems clear from these response patterns that state agency heads are distant from the former even though they may not approximate the latter.

There are, of course, at least two different normative ways of interpreting the high levels of self-rated influence scores on the part of these state executives. A positive view interprets the highest scores as reflecting the authority, accountability, and responsibility that accompany the position of agency head. These high scores are a way of demonstrating the leadership expected and exerted by the top executive of an agency when major policy choices are confronted. The less favorable or negative view of the agency head scores sees them as representing predispositions toward aggrandizement, bureaucratic imperialism, or the "superman" outlook identified and disparaged by Downs (1967).

The agency heads' own responses may represent that if "the lifeblood of administration is power" (Long 1954), agency executives have firmly placed themselves right in the center of policy change and the politics that surrounds it. In this sense, the top-rated influence rankings of state executives should be placed in the overall power setting context. They are, after all, *relative* ratings. It is important to note that the mean scores for

Table 5 State Administrators' Perceptions of the Influence of Various Actors on Majority Policy Decisions of Their Agencies Over Three Decades

Policy Actors	Actual Influence Means			Preferred Influence Means			Mean Differences: Deficit (-), Surplus (+)		
	1984	1994	2004	1984	1994	2004	1984	1994	2004
<i>Organizational</i>									
Agency Head	3.5	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.6	-0.10	-0.10	-0.08
Agency Employees	2.6	2.8	2.8	2.8	3.1	3.0	-0.21	-0.26	-0.17
<i>Institutional</i>									
Legislators	3.0	3.1	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.6	0.14	0.23	0.11
Governor	2.9	3.1	2.9	3.1	3.2	3.0	-0.20	-0.09	-0.10
<i>Public/External</i>									
Clientele Groups	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.6	2.5	-0.22	-0.21	-0.14
Courts (State)	2.0	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.6	1.6	0.26	0.07	0.11
Professional Associations	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	-0.25	-0.16	-0.08
Citizens-at-Large	1.7	1.9	1.8	2.4	2.4	2.2	-0.65	-0.61	-0.49
News Media	-	1.8	1.6	-	1.4	1.4	-	0.41	0.28
n =	1,002	1,003	891	1,002	1,003	891	1,002	1,003	891

both the governor and legislators are secondary yet not too distant behind the agency executive. The mean scores of these two principals consistently rate around 3.0 in actual influence. At those levels, they rank moderately, if not substantially, ahead in perceived influence over agency staff and clientele (interest) groups. On the outer orbit of the power setting are state courts, professional associations, and citizens-at-large. In terms of actual influence, the mean influence scores for these groups are approximately half the level of the agency head and about two-thirds the size of the mean ratings of the governor and legislators.

A general point merits mention and emphasis regarding the total array of actual influence scores. There is remarkable stability in the absolute and comparative scores of the seven policy actors across the three decades for which data are available. Only minor and insignificant differences occur in the three mean scores for each actor despite the in-

numerable intervening factors that could have produced major shifts at the three data points. The major thrust of this consistency in agency power settings is to emphasize the continuity and stability that prevails *in the aggregate* across hundreds, if not thousands, of state agencies.

Actual versus preferred influence. Table 5 also displays mean scores for state executives' preferences for greater (or lesser) influence on the part of the seven actors. The most pertinent points of consequence derive from comparing the actual mean influence scores with the desired or preferred mean scores. Previously, these scores have been analyzed in terms of influence deficits or surpluses (Miller 1987; Miller and Wright 2002). Comparison across the columns of Table 5 supports the following observations:

- Agency executives do not desire substantially elevated levels of influence for themselves.

- Agency executives would prefer, however, that their staffs have slightly increased influence status.
- Governors, according to the executives, have modest influence deficits, since their preferred scores are slightly above actual influence scores.
- Legislators possess modest influence surpluses, since the executives assign lower preferred than actual influence scores.
- All three external actors suffer notable influence deficits based on actual versus preferred scores. Most pronounced are the large differences in means for citizens-at-large.

Two general conclusions emerge from these contrasts. First, state executives are essentially comfortable with the influence exerted by core actors in the power setting of their respective agencies. Overall, agency heads may slightly prefer an increase in gubernatorial influence and a decrease in the myriad of influential legislators. Second, they are less than satisfied with the levels of influence exercised by three actors at the outer orbit of the power setting; namely, clientele groups, professional associations, and especially citizens-at-large. Increased influence of these groups would improve support for the agency, allowing administrators more power to pursue the policy change they prefer. Rallying these groups is considered crucial. This is demonstrated by the preferred influence scores noted above, as well as by the approximately one-quarter of their time that agency heads spend on developing public support.

State Agencies

Each of the roughly 3,500 administrative agencies across the 50 states is embedded in its particular political niche. This assertion recognizes the distinctiveness of each agency's origin, purpose, functions, and clients,

and is overlaid by differences imposed by variations across the states. The result is an immense but not necessarily immeasurable variety of agency features and operations. An underlying rationale of ASAP has been to capture major and consistent commonalities of these agency galaxies spread across the milky way of state administration.

Three broad categories frame several of the consistent or common findings about state agencies over the past five decades. They also frame discussions of differences and similarities among agencies. Shorthand designations for these patterns are: (1) institutional oversight, including neutral competence; (2) incrementalism, including budget processes; and (3) breadth of IGR, including GRS and federal aid. As described above, the scope and longevity of the ASAP necessitates that we be highly selective in the scope, range, and depth of reported findings about state agencies.

Institutional oversight. Separation of powers in every state places state agencies at the fulcrum of a teeter-totter in an up-and-down competition between the governor and legislature. In the 1960s ASAP surveys, roughly one-third of agency executives reported that the governor exercised greater control and oversight over their agency, while about a fourth claimed that the governor and legislature exercised oversight and control "each the same." The remaining 44 percent, a clear plurality, indicated the primacy of legislative oversight. Table 6 traces the decade-to-decade shifts. From 1964 to 1998, the percentage of administrators reporting greater gubernatorial control rose incrementally until, in the surveys conducted over the last decade, 45 percent to 50 percent of state agency heads recognized the "chief executive" as having greater oversight. Contrarily, the proportion of agency executives perceiving greater legislative control decreased steadily, dropping to less than a third in the

Table 6 Who Exercises Greater Control and Oversight of Agency Affairs (Percentages)?

Year	Governor	Legislature	Each the Same		N
1964	32	44	24	100%	904
1968	38	37	25	100%	969
1978	42	36	22	100%	1374
1988	45	32	23	100%	1428
1998	49	27	24	100%	1159
2004	45	30	25	100%	869
2008	45	32	23	100%	685

most recent surveys. Finally, consistently across the five decades, a remaining one-quarter acknowledged governor-legislature equality in oversight and control.

Although executive leadership appears to have gained the upper hand over legislative representativeness, where does neutral competence stand? It currently stands almost exactly where it stood in the 1960s. When presented with the independent commission option as the primary instrument of oversight (rather than the governor or legislature), roughly 30 percent selected this option in the 1960s and 1970s. Table 7 shows that this proportion has hardly changed through the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s. The clustering of professionalism, autonomy, and independence remain as much a feature of state (and public) administration as when Kaufman (1956) first articulated it.

Neutral competence has held sway among a constant corps of state agency heads. Nevertheless, governors have attained dominance as the institutional option for oversight. According to table 7, in 1964, the governor was the preferred overseer by 44 percent compared to the legislature's 25 percent (with commission oversight fixed at 29 percent). By 1998, the governor had gained as the

oversight preference of about three-fifths of agency administrators, leaving only 11 percent choosing the legislative option. Although this proportion dipped to slightly more than half by 2008, a clear majority have consistently chosen executive leadership. Representativeness as revealed through state legislatures is and has been the least favored method of oversight.

Except for autonomy engendered by neutral competence pressures, the governor is far closer to mastery of state administration than previously claimed. This conclusion is also supported by responses to other queries in ASAP surveys. For example, about 60 percent of state executives (from the 1960s to the present) consistently indicate that the governor, rather than the legislature, is more supportive of agency goals (see bottom of table 7). Only about one-third accord the legislature primary positive support of agency goals over the last four decades and even fewer than that in the 1960s. These further findings, although favorable to governors, neither deny nor diminish the omnipresence of the legislature over the future(s) and fate(s) of every state agency. Nor do they diminish the value of neutral competence to many agency heads, even if they find the governors more supportive of their goals.

Table 7 What Type of Control Do Administrators Prefer?
Executive Leadership, Neutral Competence, and Representativeness

Who SHOULD Exercise Greater Control and Oversight Over Your Agency?

Year	Governor	Legislature	Independent Commission	Totals	(N=)
1964	45	25	30	100%	886
1968	48	22	30	100%	955
1978	51	19	30	100%	1348
1988	56	19	25	100%	1406
1998	61	11	28	100%	1134
2008	52	16	32	100%	713

Who Is More Supportive of Your Agency's Goals?

Year	Governor	Legislature	Each the Same	Total	(N=)
1964	62	22	16	100%	933
1968	61	21	17	100%	870
1978	56	34	10	100%	1324
1988	57	37	7	100%	1349
1998	62	30	9	100%	1045
2008	59	37	4	100%	713

Incrementalism and budget processes. One means by which the omnipresence of the legislature is often experienced by state agencies is through finances, especially budgeting. The extent to which budgetary incrementalism and bureaucratic expansionism were presumed to dominate state (and other) budget processes was captured metaphorically by Anton when he asserted that "the [Illinois] state budget may be compared to a huge mountain which is constantly being pushed higher and higher by underground geologic convulsions; on top of the mountain is a single man, blindfolded, seeking to reduce the height of the mountain by dislodging pebbles with a teaspoon. That man is the governor" (1966, 146). Later, Niskanen (1971) would formalize the core idea in this metaphor by elaborating the theory of the "maximizing bureaucrat." To a substantial extent, findings from ASAP sur-

veys have debunked, if not demolished, both the Anton metaphor and the Niskanen theory (Bowling, Cho, and Wright 2004; Ryu et al. 2007; Sigelman 1986).

From 1964 through 2008, between 18 percent to 31 percent of executives expressed decision premises or preferences of *no* expansion for the budget of their own agency. This substantial component is distant from upward geologic convulsions or bureaucratic maximizing. At the other end of the budget spectrum, those citing preferences for the greatest expansion (15 percent or more) ranged from a low of 22 percent in 1998 to a high of 46 percent in 1974. The 1970s budget year may be an aberration as well, as agencies felt the full impact on state budgets of GRS; namely, a significant infusion into state treasuries of billions of dollars in fully discretionary federal funds.

Complementing caps on own-agency expansion was the far higher percentages of executives who asserted a preference for no expansion in overall state spending. These percentages varied from a low of 21 percent in 1974 (the GRS year) to a high of 53 percent in 1978, only four years later! This year, of course, was marked by the tornados of state tax and spending limitation initiatives powerfully propelled by Proposition 13 in California.

The link between the executives' decision premises and subsequent stages of the agency budget process also merits brief comments. First, although 40 percent of agency executives in 1998 brought a decision premise of "no expansion" to the agency budget process, fully 60 percent of the agencies actually requested an increase! Nearly 40 percent asked for increases up to 5 percent, while the remaining 20 percent of the agencies asked for budget increases exceeding 5 percent (Bowling, Cho, and Wright 2004). Agency program, policy, and political realities overcame the executives' premises toward no expansion. It is unclear whether internal agency pressures or external windows of fiscal opportunities (or a combination of the two) were sufficient to overcome executive premises against expansion.

The preceding finding can be partially clarified by reporting the results of a complex model that explained a notable portion (25 percent) of the variance in state agency budget requests (Ryu et al. 2007). Executive aspirations (premises) were significant in explaining budget request changes ranging from slight reductions to substantial expansions. Several other forces, however, were more prominent in contributing to explaining the level(s) of agency requests. Four variables influenced the suppressing or reducing of agency budget requests: (a) governor's detailed review of budget requests, (b)

legislative macro-budgeting, (c) the Government Performance Project rating on state management capacity (Barrett and Greene 1999), and (d) receipt of federal aid. In addition to administrators' aspirations, three variables promoted increased agency requests: (a) legislative professionalism, (b) clientele influence on agency-specific programs, and (c) the wealth (gross domestic product per capita) of the respective state. Even with these findings, however, one may postulate that it is simply classic budgetary gaming that explains much of the distinction between budget preferences and actual requests—to gain their preferences (even for *no* expansion), agency heads may have to request more funding strategically to leave room for gubernatorial and legislative maneuvering throughout the process.

Reference above to detailed review of agency budget requests by the governor affords an opportunity to explore the role of the governor and legislature on two aspects of the budget process: (a) detailed review and (b) budget reduction tendencies. Table 8 displays responses for the years in which these queries appeared in the ASAP survey. The percentage distributions regarding detailed budget review indicate that the process is a thorough and balanced but competitive exercise. With only slight variation across the years, approximately one-third of the agency heads select each of the three options. The one review process that seemed to gain a slight plurality in recent years is the balanced, each-the-same review role. These findings do not permit an assertion about the extent or depth of the budget review process. The results, however, reflect the political and institutional balance involving budget review processes in state governments. Separation of powers in the states is not only present and prominent, but it also is roughly evenly balanced with respect to this feature of budgeting.

Table 8 State Agency and Budget Processes: Roles of the Governor and Legislature in Exercising Detailed Budget Reviews and Budget Reduction Tendencies, 1974-2004

More Detailed Budget Review?	Governor	Each the Same	Legislature	Total	(N=)
1974	35	32	32	99%	1,553
1978	37	31	33	101%	1,376
1988	35	35	30	100%	1,424
1998	35	39	26	100%	1,150
2004	34	38	28	100%	868
2008	35	37	28	100%	683

Greater Tendency to Reduce Budget Request?	Governor	Each the Same	Legislature	Total	(N=)
1974	33	24	43	100%	1,581
1978	-	-	-	-	-
1988	40	23	37	100%	1,407
1998	39	27	35	101%	1,133
2004	33	26	41	100%	860
2008	36	20	44	100%	677

A second and related aspect of budgeting is economizing; i.e., making fiscal choices among programs and policies. One agency-oriented and institutionally targeted means of gauging this perspective asks whether the governor or the legislature had the greater tendency to reduce agency budget requests. The lower set of figures in table 4 provides the basis for comments. Here, also, separation of powers is prominently displayed.

Across the survey years, roughly one-fourth of the agencies (dipping to 20 percent in 2008) are subject to equal budget reduction pressures from the governor and legislature. Varying from year to year, 33 percent to 40 percent acknowledge the governor as the more economy-minded actor, while the legislature is voted most economy-minded 34 percent to 44 percent of the time. As James Madison argued in Federalist No. 51, ambition is intended to counteract ambition; sep-

arate institutions possess shared powers. Public agencies (and executives) in the American states are classic cases of entities embedded in dispersed and diverse power settings. The fact that the "each the same" choice of budget reduction reached its lowest point in 2008 suggests that these dispersed and diverse powers may also become even more divisive in the face of widespread and worsening fiscal stress.

Managing fiscal stress. Two ASAP survey years, 1984 and 2004, occurred on the heels of significant, if not severe, national fiscal stress with sharp but variable impacts across the 50 states.⁴ A short battery of questions probed the impact of state fiscal stress and administrative agency responses (Bowling et al. 2008). The larger context for these queries and analyses is what Levine (1978, 1980) termed "cutback management." Table 9 shows the extent to which state agencies

reported actual reductions during the prior three fiscal years (the numbers in parentheses-

es indicate the mean percentage of fiscal cuts).

Table 9 Percentage of Agencies Reporting Cutbacks in 1984 and 2004

(mean percent cutback reported)			
Fiscal Year	1984	2004	Fiscal Year
1981-82	56 (7.8)	54 (4.9)	2001-02
1982-83	55 (5.3)	60 (5.0)	2002-03
1983-84	46 (4.8)	55 (4.8)	2003-04

These percentages highlight the proportion of agencies experiencing cutbacks and also the average extent of the reductions. The early years of both decades confirm the scope and depth of the recessionary periods on state agency budgets. In keeping with the *management* feature of cutback management, the 1984 and 2004 ASAP surveys included a battery of response options as strategies to cope with the fiscal austerity facing the agencies.

The ASAP surveys identified three broad categories for managing cutbacks. One was termed comprehensive/universal, including hiring and salary freezes, personnel layoffs, and across-the-board cuts. A second category was targeted/selective; it involved productivity improvements, elimination of particular programs, and reduced maintenance costs. The third category was external/exchange and covered contracting out (with nonprofits, private firms, or other governments) and shifting programs to local governments.

Two general conclusions about managing fiscal stress emerged from the results of agency strategies. First, the patterns of coping strategies from 2001 to 2004 were remarkably similar to those from 1981 to 1984. Second, comprehensive or universal strategies were most frequently used by the

agencies (80 percent to 90 percent of agencies), followed by targeted responses (60 percent to 70 percent of agencies). External/exchange strategies were the least likely to be used, but even these strategies were employed by 40 percent to 60 percent of the agencies. However, based on other analyses (Bowling et al. 2008), the exchange strategies, though used, were more likely to be policy or implementation choices rather than solely strategic responses to fiscal stress.

IGR. By the 1960s, IGR as a concept had gained extensive usage both as a supplement to and often as a substitute for federalism (Anderson 1960; Wright 1988). Numerous descriptive, prescriptive, and normative issues associated with IGR derive from the growth in federal grants-in-aid programs. Initial parameters of federal aid flowing to state agencies were established in the 1964 and 1968 ASAP surveys. These parameters were expanded in the 1970s and continue to the present. Table 10 (table 2 in print version) displays the aggregate patterns and impacts of federal aid on state agencies across five decades (Cho and Wright 2007).

In the 1960s, from one-third to about one-half of all state agencies received federal aid. This figure grew rapidly, and by 1978, slightly more than three-fourths of the agencies were players in the federal aid "game."

Table 10 Federal Aid Patterns and Impact Among State Administrative Agencies, 1964-2004

	1964	1968	1974	1978	1984	1988	1994	1998	2004
Receipt of Aid*	34%	54%	63%	76%	70%	69%	73%	74%	79%
n =	941	987	1,587	1,363	1,078	1,439	1,205	1,146	924
Dependency**									
Under 25%	47%	49%	48%	44%	45%	45%	45%	45%	44%
25 - 49%	23%	23%	20%	21%	22%	22%	20%	19%	19%
50 - 74%	17%	20%	19%	19%	20%	19%	21%	20%	21%
75% or more	13%	8%	13%	15%	14%	14%	14%	16%	16%
n =	309	522	983	1,014	746	981	863	844	708
Diversity***									
1	-	-	37%	34%	36%	38%	31%	33%	28%
2	-	-	27%	28%	26%	25%	27%	25%	24%
3	-	-	17%	19%	18%	17%	21%	21%	21%
4	-	-	8%	9%	11%	11%	12%	10%	12%
5 or more	-	-	11%	10%	9%	9%	10%	12%	15%
n =	-	-	975	996	741	974	845	835	705
Complexity****									
Project	-	-	71%	72%	67%	63%	70%	70%	71%
Formula	-	-	55%	60%	58%	59%	63%	67%	68%
Block	-	-	30%	25%	34%	31%	32%	35%	38%
Nonmatching	-	-	20%	21%	16%	16%	19%	15%	19%
Loans	-	-	4%	3%	3%	4%	5%	3%	4%
n =	-	-	989	1,037	750	987	867	853	732

Questions:

*Does your agency receive any federal aid or other federal fiscal assistance?

**What proportion of your agency's budget comes from federal funds?

***From how many different federal departments and agencies does your agency receive fiscal assistance?

****Please indicate what types of financial assistance your agency receives from the federal government.

Over the past 30 years, the proportion of state agencies receiving federal aid has stabilized in the 70 percent to 80 percent range.

Three concepts are helpful in depicting the impact of federal aid on state agencies: dependency, diversity, and complexity. The distributions of state agencies with regard to these three features from 1974 through 2004 (1964 to 2004 for dependency) are shown in table 10. A startling observation emerges from the row percentages across the 30-year span: those figures are remarkably stable and consistent across four decades. The patterns point to a simple but highly significant

conclusion: federal aid has become a deeply ingrained and consistently configured fiscal part of a majority of state agencies. All efforts to turn back the federal aid "clock" have stalled and will continue to encounter major obstacles to any consequential reversal, disengagement, or "unwinding" of federal aid programs.

Among the several IGR issues that ASAP surveys have investigated, four can be highlighted for the unique analyses feasible from the ASAP data. Briefly stated, these are: (1) impacts of GRS in the 1970s, (2) administrative and program agency autonomy im-

pacted by federal aid, (3) the onset and effects of regulatory or "coercive federalism" since the 1990s, and (4) the linkages between federal aid and state agency contracting for service delivery. A few summary comments serve as sketches in place of more extensive and in-depth analyses.

GRS was officially the State and Local Fiscal Assistance Act of 1972 (P.L. 92-512). The National Science Foundation and its Research Applied to National Needs Division funded more than a dozen research projects to trace the impacts of GRS on state (and local) governments. The ASAP received partial funding from this program and produced multiple reports and one book based on GRS impacts on state agencies (Wright et al. 1975). GRS was a dramatic departure from prior forms of federal aid, which were mainly categorical or program-specific funds. GRS was fully flexible or totally fungible monies.

No bullet-point summary can condense the extensive analyses and 500-plus pages of reports on GRS based on ASAP data. The following findings stand out, however.

- GRS was a highly visible form of federal funding—over half of all agency heads (N=1553) were "highly aware" of GRS, and about half of this group initiated formal budget requests for GRS funds.
- GRS funds were, for the most part, channeled through regular state budget processes and were subject to the dominant influence of the governor in allocation and use.
- GRS funds had three major reported fiscal impacts: (1) more state aid to local governments, (2) state tax reduction(s) or prevention of tax increases, and (3) increased capital outlays.

GRS was a unique, unprecedented, and short-lived federal aid program whose ASAP-based assessment was reported to multiple national agencies and at Congressional hearings. GRS funds to the state were eliminated in 1980, and local allocations stopped in 1983. More pertinent to the discussion of categorical or federal aid to state agencies is the issue of administrative autonomy. A simplistic way of dramatizing this issue is to reference the term "picket fence federalism" (Sanford 1967; Wright 1988). This graphic metaphor highlights the strong vertical, program, and professional allegiances that bind together national-state-local counterpart functional specialists. These programmatic "pickets" attain a measure of autonomy and discretion that produce a degree of independence from oversight and control by either the governor and/or the legislature.

From the perspective of state executives, to what extent does federal aid increase the autonomy of state agencies? The ASAP data provide two indicators of autonomy-related impacts of federal aid, one direct and the other indirect. The direct measure asked agency heads if federal aid made aid-recipient agencies less subject to supervision by the governor and legislature. The second and indirect measure involved a possible imbalance or "skewness" of agency programs as a result of federal aid.

Table 11 shows proportions of agency heads responding in the affirmative to both questions about federal aid impacts from 1974 through 2008. Two slightly different conclusions may be extracted from the two columns. First, autonomy from institutional (governor and/or legislature) oversight is clearly in evidence. Over most of the last 40 years, roughly half (45 percent to 58 percent) of the executives reported that receipt

of federal aid fosters special "semi-exempt" status. Somewhat surprising is the relatively high level of autonomy and its apparent stability around midpoint percentage(s) until the most recent survey when, in 2008, only about a third reported more autonomy. One way of interpreting these results is that na-

tionally promoted autonomy is typically a constant and consequential fact of life throughout state administrative establishments. The 2008 responses may reflect the greater scrutiny agencies typically receive during economic downturns, or they may reflect other currents.

Table 11 The Impact of Federal Aid on Agency Autonomy, 1974-2008

Year	Does Aid Foster Autonomy? (percentage "yes")	Does Aid Imbalance (Skew) State Programs?
1974	48	81
1978	49	62
1984	53	50
1988	58	48
1994	54	65
1998	46	53
2004	45	43
2008	36	38

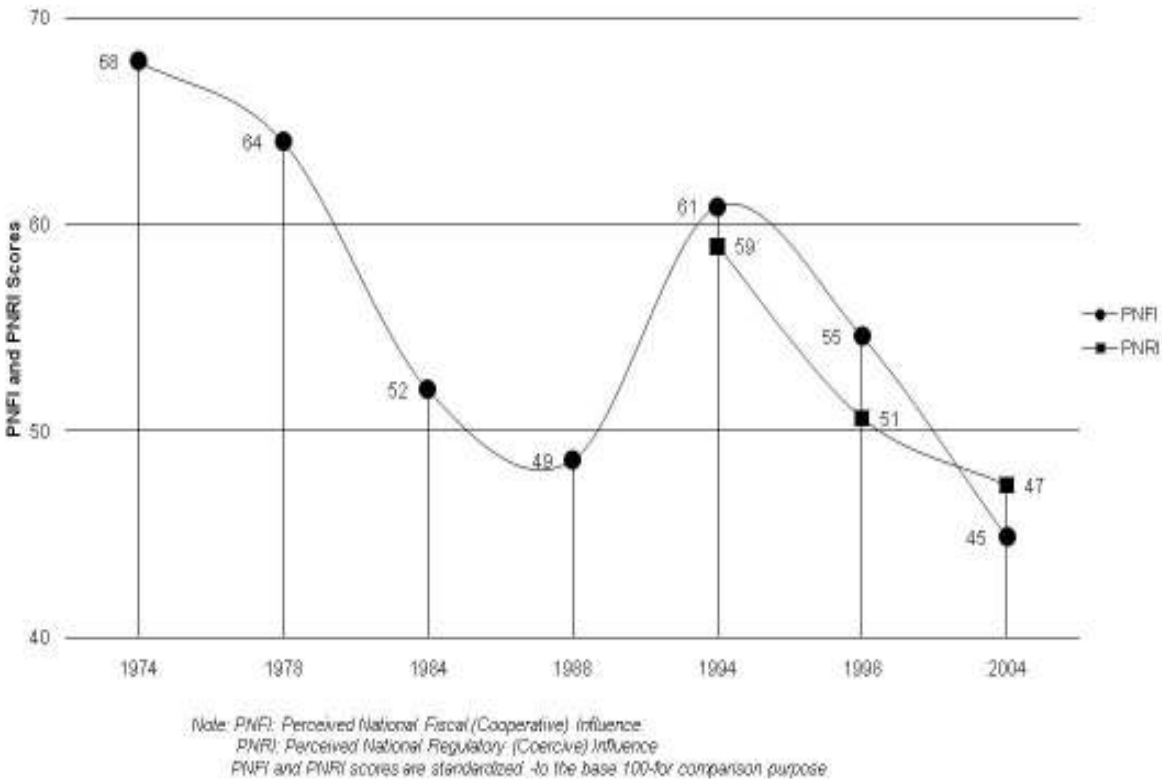
The second column of percentages in table 11 might be viewed as reflecting the perceived degree of *program* autonomy available (or unavailable) to the state agencies as a consequence of federal aid. For example, in 1974, over 80 percent of state executives agreed that federal aid skewed, warped, or altered the priorities among and across state programs. In short, the higher the figure, the lower the degree of state *policy* autonomy. The most striking feature of the array of percentages is its roller coaster pattern. It declines sharply from 1974 through 1988 and, after leaping to 65 percent in 1994, it again reveals a sharp decline to a low of 38 percent in 2008. Explanations for these shifts are treated elsewhere (Cho and Wright 2007). Federal aid programs were viewed historically as the basis for "cooperative federalism" and for the rise to prominence of IGR. By the 1980s, however, Elazar noted that the "American federal system may be

passing into a new phase, one in which federal grants, while remaining important, will no longer set the tone for intergovernmental relations.... Now the move seems to be in the direction of new relationships in governmental regulation" (1984, 252). Kincaid (1990) labeled this new phase "coercive federalism."

The multiple, varied, and complex aspects of both cooperative and coercive IGR cannot be fully or even partially pursued here (Cho and Wright 2007). It is possible, however, to obtain insight into the interplay of the trends in these two IGR features across recent decades. Figure 2 provides the tracking of cooperative (fiscal) and coercive (regulatory) IGR viewed from the standpoint of state agency heads.

Space permits offering only two general points, although other observations are read-

**Figure 2. Cooperative and Coercive Intergovernmental Relations:
Index of State Agency Heads' Perceptions
of National Fiscal (Cooperative) and Regulatory (Coercive) Influence, 1974-2004**



ily accessible (Cho and Wright 2001, 2004, 2007; Wright and Cho 2001). First, for the practitioner, student, or scholar, figure 2 reveals the ebb and flow of state-national relations and confirms that the American federal system is dynamic and flexible. Second, the trends shown in figure 2 are not consistent with the Bowman and Krause observation that the "past 30 years have not produced a diminution in the centralization of the federal system... the period has fallen far short of a true devolution of power" (2003, 316). At a minimum, the fluctuations in the perceived levels of national fiscal and regulatory influence demonstrate, from state executives' positions, the evolution of some degree of devolution in IGR. The trend continues downward, with 2008 respondents reporting the least coercion and cooperation so far, perhaps heralding the conflict that comes with

economic downturns and intergovernmental adaptation.

A final practical aspect of IGR that ASAP discloses involves contracting out or "outsourcing." Contracting out is widely employed by state agencies (Brudney, Cho, and Wright 2009; Choi et al. 2005). In 1998, 2004, and 2008, the proportions of state agencies using this "tool of government" (Salamon 2002) were distributed in a stair-step fashion with about 60 percent contracting with other governments, 70 percent with nonprofits, and over 80 percent with private firms.

The clearest and sharpest association regarding the extent of contracting was with federal aid (Brudney, Cho, and Wright 2009). Three federal aid features were positively

correlated with contracting: (a) agency receipt of federal aid, (b) agency dependency on federal aid, and (c) aid diversity—the number of different national agencies providing aid. In short and in sum, interdependency in IGR is directly and strongly related to contracting interdependency. One set of vertical complexities begets another set of horizontal complexities.

Theory Features of Research Practice

The experience gained from five decades of the ASAP has provided a basis to link theory to research on administrative practices in executive agencies in the American states. In addition to insights for administrative practice, the ASAP history holds lessons for the translation of theoretical ideas into a feasible form for research practice. We think the processes and procedures used to conduct and sustain ASAP suggest core elements of an approach for empirically examining and testing propositions in an ongoing program of study. None of these strategies for research practice were invented by ASAP, but together they have worked to sustain the research over an extended time period. This result occurred despite the fact that the ASAP did not begin with the vision or intention of replication, let alone across five decades.

These elements have supported a successful research endeavor, measured not only by its longevity (five decades and ten separate surveys) but also by important indicators of research productivity. These measures include the publication of four books with selective use of ASAP data, more than 75 refereed journal articles (four have received award recognitions), 14 book chapters, and over 130 presentations at professional conferences. Some 300 papers and publications have relied on ASAP data in original research. In addition, 15 doctoral dissertations (including an APSA award winner) and six

master's theses have used ASAP data. More than 30 authors have published analyses based on some facet of the ASAP data.⁵

Several features of ASAP have contributed to these outcomes. Collectively, they suggest a new model, or at least a strategy, for sustaining empirical inquiry in public administration. We think the model holds promise for contemporary research, which, in our view, will find funding more limited, topics and interests changing rapidly, expectations for promotion and tenure accelerated, and in-depth knowledge increasingly valued and important. For heuristic purposes, we contrast the research practice approach exemplified in the "contingent collaboration" of the ASAP model with a more conventional research center model. Table 12 summarizes this comparison.

Perhaps the most striking contrast between the ASAP model and the center model lies in the costs of a sustained research program. A replicable research project, particularly one that has continued across five decades, is likely to be expensive. By contrast, through its ten replications, ASAP surveys typically have garnered funding in the range of \$15,000 to \$30,000 in direct costs. In two instances, research funding was supplemented by grants. In 1974, supplemental funding for research on GRS came from the NSF Research Applied to National Needs and resulted in the report, "Assessing the Impact of General Revenue Sharing In Fifty States: A Survey of State Administration," which was presented before a U.S. Congressional Committee (see discussion of IGR above).

The manner in which the ASAP has attained such cost-efficiency is instructive for the present period of limited research funding. First, resources are leveraged, including university office space, computer equip-

Table 12 Contrasting Models of Sustained Research: Contingent Collaboration (ASAP) and Institutional (Center) Models

Dimension	ASAP Model	"Center" Model
Direct funding	Low: a financial "platform"	High
Indirect funding	Leveraged	Accounted
Involvement	Inter-institutional	Uni-institutional
Ownership	Cumulative ownership	Center ownership
Student creative participation	High	Low
Practitioner experience/ involvement in survey construction	High	Low
Working arrangements	Systematic episodic collaboration	Ongoing, contractual
Institutionalization	Low	High
Generation of signature project	Low	High

ment, clerical support, and storage. If these resources were strictly accounted, the cost of ASAP would grow, though still fall far below expectations and estimations for a sustained research program.

Second, and more importantly, the design and other creative activity that ultimately produced the ASAP surveys were not compensated (or accounted) monetarily as they would be in a conventional grant proposal or research center. Instead, that most critical part of the inquiry is contributed (eagerly) by a team of knowledgeable researchers (faculty and graduate students) with background and interest in the project. The funds expended in the project are dedicated primarily to assembling the sample, implementing the survey, harvesting and cleaning the data, and communicating with survey participants. This funding provides a modest financial "platform" to offset direct costs (for example, postage) on which the indirect costs are added. In the currently fashionable parlance of grantors, the funds are applied to outcomes or results that generate an enviable return to the funder.

This arrangement carries other virtues, especially with regard to the responsiveness and fluidity of the ASAP surveys. The team of researchers who prepare the surveys is composed largely of a core group with varying lengths of prior participation in ASAP and who continue to maintain an interest. In each replication, new members supplement the core team, usually students and younger scholars who have worked with existing ASAP data on site-based tasks (at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill or Auburn University), conference papers, journal articles, or doctoral dissertations and theses. Historically, governmental practitioners have also participated in the design team. In all, we estimate that more than 50 students and practitioners have been involved in the construction and revision of various ASAP surveys. From these diverse persons, roles, and tasks have come ideas for improvement. They are not the only ones who bring fresh ideas to the project, as members of the core team push for changes and innovations from the previous surveys. Those with demonstrated expertise in particular substantive areas prepare and/or re-

wise respective part(s) of the survey, with colleagues reviewing the entire draft.

Prior to the era of electronic communications, these protracted conversations occurred primarily by telephone and at professional meetings. E-mail transcends geography and has greatly simplified the process. Regardless of the format of the interactions, reconciling the space crunch inevitably created when multiple worthwhile new ideas and departures, as well as the need to maintain continuity with the past, confront an eight-page final survey instrument remains as lively and contentious a learning experience as the most stimulating graduate school seminar.

It is through this mechanism that the ASAP has been able to accommodate emerging trends and developments in state (and public) administration, even as the successive surveys maintain a consistent core of key items. ASAP surveys have identified and documented important new developments in state executive agencies that could not have been foreseen, much less understood, at the outset of the series. Examples include revenue sharing, complex intergovernmental relationships, gender representation and related issues, state and agency reform (generally) and reinvention (specifically),⁶ increased professionalism, and the rise of contracting/outsourcing. For each new line of inquiry (question items) introduced in ASAP surveys, other questions have to be sacrificed to make room for the new departures. How the research team settles on which new developments to follow and which can be deferred for further discussion and/or implementation in the next survey is at the heart and soul of the ASAP model: provocative research ideas proposed by scholars familiar with the ASAP model that can earn the support of team members who have their own (new) ideas for inclusion end up represented in the ASAP surveys. From re-

peated drafts and judgments, eventually a consensus forms around the latest ASAP survey instrument.

As a further consequence of these operational procedures, other elements of a novel research model emerge. In contrast to the more conventional center model in which a single institution is typically responsible for all facets of a research project (uni-institutional), ASAP takes advantage of a loose, multi-institutional collaboration involving scholars from varied locations and backgrounds. This arrangement fosters diversity in outlook and enthusiasm in participation. It also results in ASAP surveys administered and housed at a single institution (formerly, the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill; currently, Auburn University), with "cumulative ownership" of the project shared among ASAP team members and prospective ideas for uses of the data communicated among them.

The ASAP model differs, too, from a conventional research center in its working arrangements. A research center usually funds and supports a variety of ongoing projects (and often staff), whereas the ASAP is a product of an energetic collaboration on a single research venture that arises (and disbands) twice each decade. This highly "temporary organization" benefits from the intensity (and singularity) of focus of the team members: otherwise busy faculty and students are motivated to participate by their stake in the final product, the relatively brief but concentrated time required to do the job, and their informal and personal ties to the ASAP community and project. A viable research center will necessarily need to act more continuously, elaborately, and formally with respect to contractual relationships, member participation, and funding streams.

We have illustrated some of the putative advantages of the ASAP model for the con-

temporary research future as we conceive it. We would be remiss to ignore the shortcomings. One of the most telling as well as comprehensible issues, given the other model characteristics we have described, is the gap in institutionalization of the ASAP surveys. With the ASAP largely directed and governed by systematic, episodic collaborations at widely spaced intervals, maintaining a project presence and consolidating the information it has yielded can be a challenge. To be sure, information about the ASAP surveys is readily available on a website (<http://www.auburn.edu/CGSASAP>) and displaying findings longitudinally across the surveys (and from the latest survey) is generally not problematic. Still, the ASAP project lacks funds and an institutional presence to cumulate the data into a single source for easy retrieval and use across surveys. Locating and analyzing a particular dataset(s) and documentation can be time-consuming. At present, no one source has all the information to support such an analysis. To gain greater advantages for research and open the potential for more scholarly use of the data, the ASAP series needs to be properly archived.

Such a step would allow scholars to exploit the merged dataset to carry out state-by-state analyses. ASAP has the potential, exploited only rarely, to conduct research on a case-by-case basis in each of the 50 states. Quantitative results from the ASAP could be used to enrich qualitative inquiries into the American states, such as Martha Wagner Weinberg's (1977) *Managing the State*. Merging the data by decades (1970s, 1980s, etc.) would yield sufficient cases for individual state analyses.

A second drawback related to this episodic collaboration is the lack of a continuous presence with the survey respondents. Given that state agency heads usually maintain their position for only a few years, and that

ASAP occurs irregularly, the vast majority encounter the ASAP only once. Responding specifically to the ASAP survey with no previous interaction, and in the midst of myriad requests for information, becomes less and less likely. Although, as mentioned earlier, we do now have an informational website that displays selected results and publications, the lack of a continuous survey and report system that becomes customary to administrators has surely contributed to the declining response rates over the last few decades.

Third, with so many interests represented in the ASAP survey, only particular topics receive in-depth attention. The ASAP has provided important insight into a variety of topics, including IGR, political and contextual influences on state agencies, gender and representation, budget aspirations and spending behavior, reform and reinvention, and contracting and outsourcing. Lamentably, though, these and other research contributions have not cumulated in a coherent overall picture of state administration. The operation of the ASAP research model, as described above, has not (yet) produced a book or a "signature" comprehensive contribution to state administration. The geographic and intellectual diversity of the team members, and the episodic nature of their collaboration, have worked against generating a coherent common focus to summarize the project or to comment on the collective character of state administration. Books on state politics and policy draw on the topical coverage provided by ASAP research, but state administration tends to remain a "black box." By contrast, the point of much funded research in the center model is to generate a comprehensive or signature contribution for each major project.

Conclusion

Very few, if any, research programs in public administration have sustained, let alone

thrived, for five decades and ten replications. The ASAP is a welcome exception. Beginning in the 1960s and continuing through the 2000s, the ASAP has sought to describe, understand, and explain state administration, and to connect the world of public management experience and practice with systematic empirical research and administrative theory. This article has sought to clarify and elaborate this connection, and to explore the implications of ASAP for not only administrative practice but also the practice of research in public administration.

Given the scope and reach of ASAP, no single essay can account for the full spectrum of topics covered and findings yielded. Instead, we focus on four proto-theories prominent as prospective approaches to administration in state government at the origin of the research program in the early 1960s: (1) the politics-policy-administration continuum; (2) conflicting doctrines/values posed by executive leadership, representativeness, and neutral competence; (3) incrementalism as applied to agency budget processes; and (4) IGR accentuated through the creation of new federal aid programs. As this essay has demonstrated, ASAP has brought important insight to bear on these approaches as they have evolved over a five-decade time span. The ASAP has also been sufficiently flexible and responsive to address many other issues in state (and public) administration that could not have been imagined, let alone anticipated, 50 years earlier.

We attribute this longevity and success to a research model or strategy of "contingent collaboration" that has guided ASAP since its inception. Major features of the model include low direct funding, leveraged indirect funding, inter-institutional involvement, cumulative ownership, high student and practitioner participation, and a team-based working relationship that facilitates syste-

matic episodic collaboration. None of these elements originated with ASAP, and the partnership has not achieved the level of institutionalization or the signature project the team would prefer. Nevertheless, in an era characterized in our view by limited research funding, rapidly changing topics and interests, high expectations for professional advancement, and in-depth knowledge increasingly in demand, the model bears scrutiny for contemporary research projects. Perhaps most important to the contingent collaboration model, though, is the dynamic of colleagues and coauthors.

In the end, two factors drive the ASAP. The first is the commitment of colleagues to survey creation, the implementation process, and the data and research findings that will result. The second is the great variety and ventures of state administration awaiting scholarly inquiry and analysis. In the tenth iteration of the ASAP in 2008, those factors combined to produce a survey that continued to explore the central themes present since its inception (elaborated above), which now boast a five-decade time trend. In addition, as with each successive wave of the ASAP, the 2008 survey incorporated new colleagues and new ideas. The newcomers helped to raise the enthusiasm and energy of the enterprise and to spur on the more senior colleagues. Intriguing questions raised by the newcomers and the research record established by more senior colleagues meet in the creation of ASAP. The interest of the entire team during the critical years of survey implementation and the research undertaken collaboratively among the members between those years are instrumental in sustaining and invigorating the project.

The initiative of junior colleagues and the investment of their mentors make future research endeavors based on the ASAP almost endless with respect to possible direction

and diversity. As suggested earlier, archiving and integrating the data will make state-specific and longitudinal analysis more feasible. The tracking of changing trends in the twin foci of the ASAP, state executives (for example, demographic background and career paths) and state agencies (for example, IGR and budgetary patterns), will continue, informed and propelled by the five-decade-long story that the surveys already reveal.

New research initiatives and questions were developed for the 2008 ASAP survey. The study of the politics-policy-administration dichotomy continues with the examination of administrative collaboration, together with new questions intended to explore the influence of state agency heads on gubernatorial and legislative decision-making. Questions about administrators' input into and impact of gubernatorial executive orders were created to probe the conflicting doctrines of leadership and oversight. Investigation of budget incrementalism continues in a new direction as novel inquiry explores the impact of states' use of performance-based budgeting processes. The study of IGR is expanded to encompass more collaborative (horizontal) relationships. Additional new ASAP questions assess the public service motivation of state agency heads, one of the few studies of public service motivation based on administrators across all 50 states.

Five decades later, it seems fitting that the interests of a state administrator and a doctoral student came together in the early 1960s to generate the spark that would become the ASAP. The ten ASAP surveys have endeavored to meet the needs of both parties by providing data and analyses to guide practice and support research. Indeed, for both practitioner and researcher, "it would be damn helpful and awfully nice to know what this world of state administration is all about." That charge has guided the ASAP. The world of state administrators

and their agencies continues to change and evolve. Research based on past and future ASAP surveys will trace this evolution and search for the missing links.

Bios

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Deil S. Wright's distinguished career included membership on the faculties of Wayne State University, the University of Iowa, the University of California-Berkeley (as visiting professor), the University of New Mexico (as Carl Hatch Visiting Professor), and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (1967-2009, designated in 1983 as Alumni Distinguished Professor). In more than five decades of teaching, he received numerous awards and honors in the fields of public administration and political science.

Acknowledgments

We thank Robert F. Durant for his helpful advice and encouragement. Thanks to Justin D. Fleming and Kristin Tarajack for their editorial assistance. We acknowledge Marvin Selden, Controller of the State of Iowa, and Richard McAnaw, PhD, University of Iowa, and later faculty member at Western Michigan University, for stimulating and implementing the launch of ASAP in the 1960s. From the 1970s through the 1990s, two sources provided support to sustain the six surveys across the three decades: the Earhart Foundation of Ann Arbor, MI, and the Institute for Research in Social Science at the University of North Carolina. We are grateful to Auburn University's Department of Political Science and the Center for Governmental Services, for supporting the 2004 and 2008 surveys. An attempt to list the names of dozens of former students, staff, colleagues, and practi-

tioners who contributed to the multiple ASAP endeavors must come to naught for a variety of reasons. Among them are the space to list all relevant names and the prospect of inadvertently excluding someone. These colleagues, collaborators, compatriots, and coauthors are all owed thanks and deepest appreciation. Like-minded sentiments also extend to more than 10,000 state agency heads who have taken the time to complete the ASAP questionnaires.

Notes

1. The ASAP questionnaires in 1964 and 1968 were only four pages in length, were sent to executives heading 33 types of agencies, and contained 42 questions (about 80 variables or data items). Surveys in 1974 and 1978 were sent to 63 types of agencies, posed 90 separate questions across 11 pages, and produced over 275 variables. The 1984 and 1988 survey instruments were shortened to seven pages (to sustain response rates), posed 70 questions, and resulted in about 175 variables. These surveys were sent to the heads of 75 types of agencies. The 1994 and 1998 surveys remained the same length at seven pages and 70 questions and produced 175 variables. The number of agency heads targeted by the surveys increased to 95, reflecting the continued growth in the number of state agencies. Surveys in 2004 and 2008 were seven pages, 70 questions, and 175 variables, but the number of agencies again moved upward to 105 and 110, respectively. Response rates across the decades declined regularly. They were as follows.

1964:68%	1968:63%
1974:52%	1978:45%
1984:38%	1988:48%
1994:37%	1998:33%
2004:29%	2008:20%

After the response rates began to decline in the 1980s, in 1994 we instituted a standard follow-up phone survey of a random sample (varying from 7-10 percent) of nonrespondents. Five attribute and four attitude questions were asked of the nonrespondents. In each survey year, for most if not all of the nine survey items, the phone responses, when compared to the paper responses, did not differ statistically from the response distributions of those who responded. In short, despite response rates that have now dropped below 30 percent, we have been able to conclude consistently that ASAP respondents are representative of the total complement of agency heads varying from 1,500 (in the 1960s) to 3,500 (in the 2000s).

2. Detailed tables and findings on these aspects may be found at the Auburn website: <http://www.auburn.edu/CGSASAP>.

3. For treatment of this issue in published research, please see Brudney and Hebert (1987); Dometrius, Burke, and Wright (2008); and Hebert, Brudney, and Wright (1983).

4. The fiscal stress and cutback questions unfortunately were omitted from the 2008 survey, which was constructed in 2007 before the severity of the current economic crisis was fully known.

5. A compendium of publications and research papers based on the ASAP surveys is available at the Auburn website: <http://www.auburn.edu/CGSASAP/index.htm>

6. For a discussion of state agency reform and reinvention in published research, please see Brudney, Hebert and Wright (1999) and Brudney and Wright (2002).

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