



# Integrating Normative Arguments from Public Administration Traditions with Government Functions from Transition Literature

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## DESCRIPTION

According to transitions literature, the government and public service should address significant societal issues that require for a fundamental socio-technical system transformation. To group the transition tasks that the transitions literature ascribes to the government, we examined a corpus of 100 articles. These responsibilities are contrasted with the normative arguments for government action offered by the Public Administration (PA) traditions. Our analysis demonstrates while some traditions provide a normative foundation for particular duties, many of the transitional responsibilities given to the government do not fit well with any of the PA traditions. Therefore, the normative foundation offered by the PA traditions to justify sociotechnical transformations is insufficient.

The past ten years have seen a rise in interest in achieving objectives relating to societal issues that are persistent and wicked, including climate change. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the EU's definition of "grand societal issues," and the new mission-oriented innovation policy approach that has been embraced by governments at all levels are illustrations of this trend. Recommendations and duties that encourage the government and civil service to address the pervasive societal issues that demand societal changes have emerged from the Transition Literature (TL). Although this position has received even less scholarly study, the civil service within the government is crucial in carrying out these transition duties. Politicians and civil workers are sometimes seen as two opposite groups within the government [1]. However, contends that because both are essential to the shared aim of excellent government, the civil service is complementary to politicians. Interacting with academics and other stakeholders, starting initiatives, creating maps and suggesting routes, preparing political discussions, operationalizing goals, translating these goals into policies, and putting these policies into action are all tasks carried out by civil employees. Civil officials are given a variety of transition jobs because governments are expected to

lead and expedite transitions towards sustainability. However, in order to carry out these new activities legally, they must be placed inside normative frameworks that the public servants and the governance structures in which they are entrenched can accept [2]. In order to depict changing public ideals and justification narratives, normative frameworks have been created throughout the Public Administration (PA) literature.

## Arranging the different foundations

**Transition literature:** Around the year 2000, innovation studies and complexity theory gave rise to the transition literature, which had as its analytical goal supporting both the creation of systems of innovation and the destabilization of pre-existing, dysfunctional structures. The Multi-Level Perspective, Technological Innovation Systems, Strategic Niche Management, and Transition Management are the most prevalent perspectives in TL. In order to understand how innovation and transitions occur, conceptual and analytical frameworks like the Multi-Level Perspective and the Technological Innovation Systems approach are generally used. The methods to transition management and strategic niche management, on the other hand, are overtly prescriptive and intended to direct interventions to facilitate and initiate transitions [3]. The Technological Innovation Systems (TIS) methods examine the formation of technological innovation and frequently use the structural-functional approach to pinpoint systemic issues that obstruct the growth and spread of focal inventions.

## Public administration traditions

Traditions in Public Administration (PA) that support distinct responsibilities for the civil service from a standpoint of legality are the constitution, the discretion, and the collaboration traditions. Public administration traditions are generally accepted normative frameworks that express shifting public ideals and narratives of legitimation on the function of the government.

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**Discretionary tradition:** The discretionary tradition originated in the 1980s in response to bureaucratic systems that were overly complex, expensive, slow, ineffective, and immobile. The obligation to effectively attain desired outcome is the main focus of the discretionary tradition. This tradition has a strong neoliberal ontology and is mainly based on New Public Management (NPM) theories. Within government institutions, these reform components transferred legitimacy from input and procedures to outcome accountability and results [4]. NPM supports deregulation, public-private competition, and the introduction of performance incentives as a treatment for bureaucratic monopolies, which are thought to be expensive and of low quality.

**Collaborative tradition:** The collaborative tradition began at the end of the 1990s, when a fresh set of issues prompted a shift in focus toward the State. The issues with terrorism, the atmosphere, digitalization, and migrants and refugees were more about fairness and security than they were about efficiency [5]. The collaborative tradition focuses on limiting the size, authority, and discretion of government while relying on personality, interconnection, and resource exchange between actors to manage numerous societal centers of power. The government can no longer be held solely responsible for

society's issues due to how difficult it is to manage rapid societal changes with constrained resources. Giving individuals and interest groups direct control over the policy-making process is how the collaborative tradition ensures legitimacy, which should result in more effective policy implementation.

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