

# Arguments for new models of governance



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## **Abstract**

For several generations the current world has been run in the “ traditional-run top-down (Weberian Style) governing bureaucratic system.” In the following pages, I will explain the complexity of the issues surrounding our current government model and why I agree or disagree with the claim that some believe we need a new model of government.

*Keywords:* weber, bureaucratic, top-down government, constitution

Traditional Government, Does it Work?

If there is one thing we can agree on as a nation, it is that we cannot agree on anything at all. In recent years both writers and practitioners in the field claim that:

“ In our current world shaped by great turbulence and uncertainty (most notably caused by dynamic and dramatic global economic, political, social, demographic, ecological shifts), no traditionally-run top-down (Weberian style) governing bureaucratic system can provide the kind of domestic security and stability for its citizens that it once had. Consequently, an increasing number of both writers and practitioners in the field of public administration claim that we need a new model of governance, (Roy, 2019, para. 2)”.

However, in recent years, not much has been done to create feasible solutions to the problems of creating a better or new model of governance (NMG) or fixing traditional government. Therefore, the theory, of creating a NMG, introduces the reader to the complex problems and current events

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surrounding our government agencies. I believe, in order to fully understand this theory of NMG, we must first understand the context of our current state of governance. Let me explain:

### Blue or Red

In a workshop done by William (Bill) Bellows, an Associate Fellow with In2: InThinking Network and a board member of W. Edwards Deming Institute, he and his colleagues created two hypothetical rival companies (APICS, June 2015). One company, created a Red Pen where the caps often were loose or easily fell off or too tight and difficult to remove and a Blue Pen company where the caps fit tight and were easy to remove” (G. Roth, A. DiBella, 2016). In the workshop, students dissected both companies and theorized that the Red Pen company represented a traditional, Weberian style of government and the Blue Pen company represents an enlightened or new form of government. (Bellows, 2015). Throughout the context of my paper, I will explain the advantages and disadvantages of both forms of government as it relates to the pens. The red pen which represents the traditional form of government and the blue pen which represents a new model of government and whether or not, I agree or disagree that a NMG is needed.

### The Red Pen

The current view of government, i. e. Red Pen is a top-down government. This form of traditional government can be classified as familiar and structured. The red pen traditional form of government is currently in use because that is the only form of government that we know. So the question is, why would we want to change it? When looking at both arguments for <https://assignbuster.com/arguments-for-new-models-of-governance/>

and against NMG, I am absolutely certain that we should not do a pendulum swing in one direction or the other. Change needs to be thought-out, debated, slowly integrated and tirelessly vetted through checks and balances before one theory of government takes over another. After all, when our founding fathers laid out the groundwork for a new constitution, it didn't happen overnight (UNM, n. d., para 1 and 2). However, once the constitution was established, it changed the course of history forever. Can you imagine what an NMG would do? Could it really change the course of history? Those are two entertaining questions to think about as we dive in deeper.

Taking a look back at this historical view of traditional government, in the 1920, Weber's style of government was viewed as a relatively positive development. The evolution of the machine age was taking over and a structured system needed to take place. However, a few decades later, the traditional system was often to blame due to its complicated rules, harsh processes, and red tape that made getting things done hard to do (Wirl, 1998).

In an article by Sjoberg's on Social Research on Bureaucracy, she explains that "bureaucracy (as defined by Weber) is a hierarchy of authority with a specialized function for governing set with specific rules and authority", (1973). She goes on to explain that bureaucracy in a professional setting must keep their knowledge and information a secret (p. 130). There is no doubt that the traditional form of government has led to a huge mistrust in governance. The government didn't trust the people and the people didn't trust the system. Likewise, in an article by Eccles, Wanna explains that the <https://assignbuster.com/arguments-for-new-models-of-governance/>

secrets and lies of wars, Watergate and Lewinsky were just the tip of the scandals that lay the foundation for mistrust in our government (2015).

Looking back, clearly keeping things a secret has done more harm than good, for the system.

In contrast, Weber argued that the most efficient way in which government activity can be organized is in a systematic approach with organized hierarchies (Swedberg, 2005). However, Swedberg argues that one of the weaknesses of Weber's view is it often traps individuals in impersonal "iron cages" (if this is a quote, it needs a cite) of a rule-based, rational thought. The question becomes, can a traditional "Weber" form of government become more transparent, communicate better and regain trust while maintaining a formal hierarchy chain and rule-based form of government?

### The Blue Pen

One of the statements for this assignment is that the traditional form of government is not working. However, from my perspective, I think the traditional view of government that we know, is evolving. I think we can all agree that traditional form of government has worked in the past but a more persuasive argument now is, we just don't like it and that is why it has got to change. The good news is, we are at an important crossroads where traditional and new ideas are intersecting and being adopted.

A great example of this evolution can be found in B. Guy Peters and Jon Pierres, article, Developments in intergovernmental relations, where they describe the evolution of a traditional government to a vertical and horizontal form of government (pg. 132). The traditional form of government  
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is no longer one dimensional. This vertical ‘ layering’ and horizontal movement allows institutions to operate at all levels.

In addition, in an article by Eggers called, *The Changing Nature of Government*, he explains that Australia had to shift their traditional hierarchical form of government to a “ government of networks”, (2008). They had to do this because the traditional form did not meet the demands of the complex and rapidly changing age of technology. The once working bureaucratic system had now become too rigid with “ command-and-control procedures, narrow work restrictions and inward-looking cultures and operational models that were particularly ill suited to addressing problems that often transcend organizational boundaries (Eggers, p. 23). Egger also explains, that problems of the traditional government had become so complicated that new tools and resources were needed in order to solve the issues at hand.

I think Eccles says it best:

“ In order to ensure that we are able to act in an inclusive manner when dealing with citizens, community and stakeholders, the public sector needs to address the critical challenges of increasing transparency in how decisions are made and implemented. This can be achieved by paving new ways to increase citizen and stakeholder participation and engagement in formulating public service and products. Facilitating greater involvement and engagement with and amongst stakeholders is critical to assisting government delivers on the expectation of citizens, (pg. 20).”

One of the strengths of transitioning to a “government by network” is that they were able to figure out solutions more quickly and efficiently while taking advantage of the opportunity to enhance learning and building trust with the community. I believe they did this through engaged communications and greater transparency. Eggers says, “Government by network cannot succeed without robust knowledge sharing.” Likewise, in Denzau and North, they say, “...no single agency or department operates in a vacuum or in isolation of other organizational entities. A given agency’s ability to perform its duties effectively is the result of a myriad of interdependent processes and operations with other organizations.” In order for a NMG to be successful, Deming theorizes that individuals and agencies have to communicate in order to increase the value for its citizens and employees. In addition, after Bellows workshop, it could be argued that one of the key components to the blue pen’s success was communications.

Another question to forming a NMG is, “Is the network governance framework a viable model of governance?” To answer this question, it is important to realize that Agranoff study focused on collaboration between governments, called a New Public Organization (NPO). Agranoff said, “a government must work together with other entities in contractual and forms of collaborative relations to seek the kind of public value expected of them,” (Eitel 2013). Likewise, Braunstein argues that, “No government is in control because every government is in control.” He expands his argument by debating “who” the people are in the term, “We the people.” Are they the taxpayers? The net payers? The all-Americans? When Braunstein debates about the term “We the people”, we too must understand who we are

arguing for. Whose voices should be heard and whose interests should be served?

This concept takes me back to my opening statement where the only thing we can agree on is that we cannot agree at all. However, I do believe we (the future generation of young professionals) are open to the theory that change is needed and it will be up to us to figure out if it will be done.

Therefore, do we need a new government model? In my opinion, it has already begun. I believe since the advent of the social media age, government was forced to evolve into a better form of government. To expand on my theory, Agranoff's describes a NPM, as applying private sector techniques to the public sector (Eitel p. 1009). We have already started seeing company's like Google and Zappos start to transition to a "blue pen" form of organization and it won't be long before government agencies begin to catch on. Agranoff explains that in order for a NPM to take place, "citizen becomes the consumer." Meaning, the efficiency and success of the government is directly related to, and by, the consumer. Likewise, just as the government depends on the consumers, SUU (and other universities) depend on the student (aka consumers). While SUU's existence does not directly relate to the student, the success of the program does.

When reviewing the current state of governance, I recognize that some old habits are hard to break and for most leaders, the traditional style of management, is the only system that they know. In this traditional setting, they have not been trained (or educated) to study the system holistically. However, I don't think the NMG is at the mercy of the traditional run, top-



down (Weberian style) bureaucratic system either because the culture of management is already changing.

In closing, just like in the movie, Liar Liar with Jim Carry, after discovering that he cannot lie and he decides to try and change something simple by saying, the blue pen in his hand, is red. After a minute of intense argument with himself, he cannot change the fact that the pen is blue and ends up writing all over his face, “ The pen is blue,” (Movie Liar Liar 1997). Like Liar Liar, I believe we are in a state where we want to see a NMG (defined as a blue pen) however at the end of the day we are all holding red pens in our hands. To further support this theory, Frederickson and Smith (2003, 208) argue:

“ The administrative state is now less bureaucratic, less hierarchical, and less reliant on central authority to mandate action. Accountability for conducting the public’s business is increasingly about performance rather than discharging a specific policy goal within the confines of the law.”

However, unlike Jim Carry’s character, I believe we have created a hybrid governance, where we are holding both pens in our hand and it’s up to us to figure out which pen to write our future history with.

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