

Methodological Nationalism and Epistemological Diversity in (American) Public Administration

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Abstract: This paper outlines an agenda for overcoming methodological nationalism in contemporary public administration studies. Our agenda reflects an acknowledgement of diverse lived administrative experiences around the world. Such experiences are the results of local administrative conditions and their interaction with transnational pressures and cross-border activities that transform the administrative landscape over time. However, the hegemonic intellectualism prevalent in American public administration studies has legitimized only a few experiences worthy of attention. Our proposed agenda starts with this baseline observation and advocates taking two bold steps to challenge this hegemonic intellectualism. First, it is essential to recognize the empirical and theoretical vacuum in public administration studies concerning how “beyond the state” activities configure and reconfigure national and local administration and policy. Second, taking a step towards intellectual pluralism, it is fruitful to recognize that connecting with those pushing research on transnational administration and global policy could benefit the discipline. We conclude by describing how the articles in this special issue connect with this agenda.

Keywords: Epistemology; Global Policy; Methodological Nationalism; Public Administration; Transnational Administration.

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Introduction

The discipline of (American) public administration, as we argued (Moloney et al., 2022), has a serious epistemology problem. This problem is rooted in a disciplinary tendency to overlook, or even discourage, epistemological diversity. By blindfolding our analytical, empirical, and epistemological eyes to what is also “knowable,” the study of public administration misses an opportunity to gain additional theoretical and conceptual depth and breadth.

In this second half of a double Special Issue, we outline an agenda towards epistemological diversity in the public administration discipline. Our proposed agenda revolves around one baseline observation and two suggested steps to move forward. The baseline observation is our recognition that methodological Americanism and methodological Whiteness are pervasive in the discipline. As we briefly summarize below, methodological Americanism proselytizes the “belief that the state is not only the primary unit of analysis but that the American state and its administration are what should be prioritized” (Moloney et al., 2022, p. 265).

To move forward, the first step is to recognize that public administration is no longer bounded by strictures of the “nation state.” Indeed, the significance of activities “beyond the state” in determining how the “state” designs and delivers its services, and to what effects, must be examined and theorized. This is to ensure that our discipline, emerging from another century, will continue to critically evolve. Second, it is intuitive to recognize that public administration studies could benefit from connecting with disciplines and subfields advancing research on transnational administration and global policy.

Readers may consider our agenda (im)modest. Removing the pillars which uphold hegemonic intellectualism requires deliberation and repetition. Epistemology and method are entwined. To fully unravel each, time and care are fundamental to transforming how we see, understand, and believe. Only when mindsets no longer anchor to one intellectual tradition will actions towards intellectualism flourish. We start by delineating the main features of methodological Whiteness and methodological Americanism to show how the pillars supporting the discipline's hegemonic intellectualism are structured and positioned. This overview intends to remind readers of the perils of methodological nationalism and methodological Whiteness and provides the background for our agenda to foster epistemological diversity in public administration studies. Our agenda creates a space for identifying concrete steps to challenge systemic bias within the discipline. In doing so, our agenda acts as scaffolding for dismantling existing pillars and enabling new pillars to be erected in the study of public administration. We are optimistic because we are not alone (cf., Candler, 2008, 2014; Haque et al., 2021; Nzewi and Maramura, 2021; Santis, 2022; Silva and Batista dos Santos, 2022; Stone and Ladi, 2015; Tapscott, 2021). Let us begin!

The Disciplinary Core? Methodological Whiteness and Methodological Americanism

This section briefly restates two of the fundamental concepts shared in our introduction to the first half of this double Special Issue (Moloney et al., 2022). In our December 2022 article, we noted that there is a methodological Whiteness and a methodological Americanism of public administration's disciplinary literature. Given the dominance of certain administrative journals and their often West-educated editors, each concept often influences (and perhaps also, drives) what is or is not administrative scholarship. It is present within what our

discipline defines as its intellectual history. This history, its theories, and its concepts drive what is researched and analyzed within domestic administrative states either as singular case studies or in a comparative form. There is limited space to suggest that knowledge may exist beyond the “West to rest” directionality. Each concept limits our disciplinary ability to imagine other directionalities.

Methodological Whiteness describes how “racist thought remains fundamental and integral to the production, legitimation, distribution and application of security knowledge, and the manner in which that, in turn, transform people and social groups in spaces outside Europe into objects rather than subjects of security” (Bhambra, 2017; Danso and Aning, 2022, p. 68; Guess, 2006; Heckler, 2017; Portillo, Humphrey and Bearfield, 2022). If we replace “Europe” with “United States” and “security” with the “administrative state,” then its relevance for our administrative discipline becomes clear. It has relevance for studies of the United States and localities outside of it. It highlights the historical and structural barriers which continue to prevent a full articulation of not just the American experience but the global experience too. As suggested in our first introduction, such Whiteness often limits the “potential kaleidoscope of non-American (and non-West) epistemologies” which, due to their faced barriers, become “*de facto* delegitimized” (Moloney et al., 2022, p. 264).

We define Methodological Americanism as the scholarly choice which largely seeks to examine the American case, to use concepts and theories arising from U.S.-focused scholarship, to implicitly or explicitly expect that non-American cases should “speak to” the Americanist literature, to implicitly or explicitly discourage the development and publication of non-American theories and concepts, and to assume a directionality of disciplinary knowledge from the U.S. to the rest of the world. It attempts to “equalize all society with

American society. It looks at America from an American point of view with categories drawn from American life” to understand the world (Beck, 2011, p. 662). In short, methodological Americanists suggest that the United States is “the” most important case to study.

It is also not a new idea or trend. We know that public administration scholarship is infrequently comparative outside of Western countries (Candler, 2014; Candler, Azevêdo and Albernaz 2010; Ko, 2013; Sigelman, 1976; Van Wart and Cayer, 1990). As such, it is no surprise that administrative scholarship outside of the U.S. and the West is often a “small-scale, disparate, descriptive, qualitative, and noncomparative subfield dominated by researchers from the global North” (Gulrajani and Moloney, 2012, p. 78). If our discipline can neither “imagine multiple administrative realities as authentic” (Nisar and Masood, 2021, p. 5) nor be open to what is considered “good” administrative knowledge originating outside the West, then any potentially fulsome exchange of multilateral knowledge is limited. In this methodological choice, the methodological American (or European) sees limited value in questioning the “pervasive ideational framework rooted in Western traditions” (Haque, van der Zwal and van den Berg, 2021, p. 345). It is a choice to be methodological White and/or to be methodologically American. It is a choice that has, we argue, limited the potential of the administrative discipline.

It is also a choice, as we will suggest in our next section, to be methodological nationalist. That is, to choose regardless of one’s country that the only core of administrative knowledge and its creation is the nation state and its sub-localities. Our next section attempts to puncture this claim and to showcase which transnational and global actors also claim influence over the administrative state. This encourages an agenda for epistemological diversity. This

agenda is the preview for our paper's final section. That is, how each of the articles in this Special Issue encourage reconfigurations of the administrative discipline.

The Administrative State: No Longer the Center of the Administrative Universe

Social science scholars often analytically ascribe to the state the role of our “natural” analytical unit (Wimmer and Schiller, 2003). This “natural” role assumes that the state is the most important actor for understanding administration and policy. It is a methodological nationalist claim that the state should be our primary actor for analytical and methodological purposes. While methodological nationalists may create space for international organizations (e.g., World Health Organization, United Nations) or non-governmental organizations (e.g., Oxfam, Doctors without Borders), their power is often portrayed as being directly or indirectly influenced by the state. But this simplistic understanding of the state and its role is no longer exclusively valid. The administrative world has changed and will continue to evolve. European administrative scholars could no longer exclusively think in methodologically nationalist terms.

As European Union's (EU) multilevel governance, Europe's prior methodological nationalists researched new relations among local government, the state, and supranational European institutions (Callaghan, 2010; Kern, 2019). This led to new scholarship on bureaucracy, on politics, on culture, and on leadership, among others (Johansson and Raunio, 2010; Moravcsik, 1994; Shore, 2000). Whether the topic was policy transfer, policy implementation, decision-making, regulation, or management reforms (e.g., Bauer and Knill,

2007; Bulmer and Padgett, 2005; Chowdhury and Wessel 2012; Gollata and Newig, 2017; Lajh, 2006), the EU's creation altered administrative and policy boundaries.

But the EU was just the start. In one theorization beyond the EU, scholars suggested that “there are authoritative domains of public policy separate from the state, de-linked from international organizations and functioning in an autonomous manner that deviates from conventional Westphalian understandings of boundaries” (Stone and Ladi, 2015, p. 4). Instead, such domains are “methodologically transnational” and cannot be simplified into domestic (or national) and international. In doing so, the methodological transnationalists challenge methodological nationalists and question the limits of a state's administrative sovereignty (Muth, 2019).

If, as we suggest, “global governance is transnationally administrated” (Moloney, 2021, p. 175), then the transnational and transboundary influences of multiple non-state actors should be examined (Stone and Ladi, 2015; Volkmer, 2019). Such actors may include trans-governmental networks, transnational public-private partnerships, social movements, global commissions, science/expertise networks, quasi-judicial actors, global citizen activists, informal international organizations, global foundations, among others (Jung and Harlow, 2019; Legrand, 2019; Moloney, 2021; Roger, 2020; Schäferhoff, Campe and Kaan, 2009; Vabulas, 2019).

Each actor and their influence have led to new discussions on how transnational administration and global policy (Moloney and Stone, 2019; Stone and Moloney, 2019a, 2019b) challenge assumed state primacy in its administrative and policy life. We are in the midst of an ongoing “global deconcentration” in which policy actions and administrative

behaviors may be “decentralized, devolved, dispersed, and/or delegated from prior expectations of state and/or IO-led controls and influence” (Moloney, 2021, p. 186). It is past time to reconsider the methodologically nationalist boundaries of public administration.

An Agenda for Epistemological Diversity: Reshaping the Disciplinary Table

This section identifies three components of our agenda for reshaping the public administration disciplinary table. Each component acts as scaffolding enabling us to begin dismantling the pillars of hegemonic intellectualism within the discipline. In introducing our agenda, we intend to create space for reflection (self, collective) and (cross-disciplinary) engagement that may gradually and/or ultimately, as the extant theories of institutional change predict (Mahoney and Thelen, 2009), generate the momentum for disciplinary transformation. How quickly the scaffolding is removed, or whether it remains a permanent feature, depends on the scholarly resources and attention devoted to reshaping the disciplinary table.

The first component of our agenda is to recognize that methodological Whiteness and methodological Americanism are widespread. “Am I a hegemonic intellectual?” is rarely a question public administration scholars ask about their role in the field. It is a question, however, we must all answer regardless of our nationality, ethnicity, gender, religion, and/or university location or training. This is an important step because it is essential to recognize the hegemonic intellectualism that dictates how we see the world, approach our research, articulate our findings and more. Only when we acknowledge the problem of the discipline’s hegemonic intellectualism can we begin to examine the relationship between epistemology

and method. Often, this problem is dismissed because academics are trained to strive towards occupying the intellectual hegemon position. Indeed, from which Ph.D. granting university one graduated, in which field journals have one's publications appeared (and how frequent) and overcoming the travails of promotion and tenure all matters to academics as part of discerning one's (self-assumed) position.

The problem of hegemonic intellectualism is not unique to (American) public administration, but some disciplines have evolved to recognize how delimiting this tendency is towards mapping and debating the "knowable." For instance, it is common to observe sociologists, geographers and anthropologists acknowledging one's positionality vis-à-vis the objects and subjects of fieldwork as an essential methodological declaration; discussions concerning positionality are also visible in migration studies. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to declaring positionality, and debates remain concerning whether positionality or reflexivity statements are effective research tools (cf., Allen, 2007; Ganga and Scott, 2006; Savolainen, Casey and Schwerdtle, 2023). At the same time, acknowledging our position is important because where we start and how we are situated have implications for epistemology and methodology.

We propose that public administration scholars embrace reflexivity as essential to research design and implementation. A good starting point is to identify the tools we can use to explore positionality in our research. Knowing our position is part of any sensemaking exercise. Disciplinary "gatekeepers" such as series and journal editors, (anonymous) peer reviewers, and promotion and tenure committee members have key roles to play. They are especially encouraged to reflect on how, and to what extent, their positions and comments contribute to supporting or dismantling the existing disciplinary hegemonic intellectualism.

Within the scholarly community and at associational meetings, discussions concerning positionality would motivate collective debate and reflection on the past, present and future of the discipline.

The second component of our agenda for epistemological diversity is to acknowledge the significance of “beyond the state” activities in (re-)configuring public administration. The administration of public goods and service delivery is no longer bounded by the strictures of the nation state (Stone, 2019). In the section above, we gave the example of the EU. We pointed to how the integration process has been transforming the European administrative space, along with the civil servants who traverse its multiple governance levels. The European experience is an established empirical and theoretical field for public administration studies when it comes to “beyond the state” activities, but it remains an anomaly.

We lack comparable insights into other regional experiences and how these experiences interact with the national and local administration and policy. Scholars of regionalism have similarly highlighted the hegemonic intellectualism in the form of “EU-centrism” in regional studies (Mattheis, 2017, p. 482). The promise of comparative regional studies awaits (Warleigh-Lack, 2006, 2015; Warleigh-Lack and Rosamond, 2010; Warleigh-Lack and Van Langenhove, 2010). Supranational-level developments are not, however, the only activities affecting the reconfiguration of the administrative state.

We do not have to exist within the European Union to break free of methodological nationalism. Cities have also become prominent actors in transnational activities. For instance, cities were the first to address climate change issues, with Toronto being the first

city government to adopt an emission reduction target (Barber, 2017; Bulkeley and Betsill, 2003; Kern and Bulkeley, 2009; Kern and Mol, 2013; Kern, 2019; Kousky and Schneider, 2003). Similarly, more than 5,000 cities around the world are engaged in the Mayors for Peace group, which the then-mayor of Hiroshima launched in 1982 to tackle the proliferation of nuclear weapons (Acuto, 2010; Travers, 2013). Cities are also involved as actors on counterterrorism activities (Frost, 2009; Ljungkvist, 2015, 2021), on forced migration issues (Betts and Memisoglu, 2021), on global health governance (Sample, 2012), and on knowledge governance (Erkkilä, Chou and Kauppi, 2023). Cities are, as one author suggested, paradiplomatic actors on the global stage (Smith, 2019).

Cities and regional organizations are merely examples to illustrate the potential of theorizing and empirically examining “beyond the state” developments for public administration studies. What unites recent studies on cities and regional organizations is their recognition of these non-state entities’ actorhood. Indeed, unlike earlier studies on global or “world cities” (Friedmann, 1986, 1995), recent studies conceptualize cities as powerful actors (Acuto, 2013; Curtis, 2014) and not just sites where transnational activities take place. The methodological choice to operationalize non-state entities as actors affecting administration and policy is deliberate and acknowledges the lived realities around the world. Similar choices can be made with other non-state actors with administrative power, including but not limited to trans-governmental networks, transnational public-private partnerships, social movements, global commissions, science/expertise networks, quasi-judicial actors, global citizen activists, informal international organizations, and global foundations.

Our agenda’s third component takes another step towards intellectual pluralism and recognizes that public administration studies would benefit from cross-disciplinary

engagement, particularly with those pushing research on transnational administration and global policy. In addition to the above research on regional organizations and cities in subfields of politics, area studies and urban studies, this research can also be found in studies of international relations, international political economy and public policy (cf., Bieler, Higgott and Underhill, 2000; Chou and Ravinet, 2019; Higgott, Woo and Legrand, 2021; Peters et al., 2018, sec. 4; Stone 2008, 2013, 2019). In the *Oxford Handbook of Global Policy and Transnational Administration* (Stone and Moloney, 2019a). In publication outlets such as Bristol University Press's series on *Transnational Administration and Global Policy* (Erkkilä et al., 2023; Verheijen et al., 2022) and, of course, this journal. *Administrative Theory & Praxis* has consistently sought to reimagine our disciplinary space. Our non-comprehensive list is meant to illustrate the expansive potential for studies of public administration—as the contributions to this special issue below also show.

This Special Issue

In “**Keeping up with the migrant workers,**” Kidjie Saguin and Richa Shivakoti offer a nuanced account of the role and powers of the administrative state in a context of increasing transnational administration. Through an analysis of the involvement of the Philippines in transnational migration issues, the article questions assumptions about the role of the state in transnational administration. Instead of taking as given the assumption that transnational administration necessarily leads to a decentering of the state, Saguin and Shivakoti interrogate and critically assess this thesis.

By challenging the notion that the sovereign state is automatically decentered by transnational actors, and the circumstances in which this might not hold true, the article

provides us with theoretical insights that broaden our understanding of transnational administration. The authors rightly point out that a weakness in current approaches inheres in a lack of appreciation of the complexities that attend the provision of government services and transnational activities. They show how highly adaptive states are when faced with conditions that motivate them to reach beyond the state to provide protection for citizens or protect the interest of the state. They theorize that states have been at the center, not merely on the fringes, and have intentionally developed policies to influence administrative processes beyond the state.

The ability and motivation of a state to shape transnational administration, as suggested by the state of the Philippines, are determined by forces including the economic status of a country, how a state's economy and society are impacted by transnational administration, the type of policy issue, and its importance to the administrative state. The Philippines relies heavily on remittances from migration and a large number of its citizens export their labor to high-income countries. This makes migration a very important trans-border issue for the Philippines, ensuring that the state has deliberately and actively created opportunities to shape transnational administration.

The authors' case study adds to our understanding of transnational administration in two important ways. Firstly, it provides answers about why some administrative states' sovereignty is less threatened by activities and actors beyond the state and the factors that motivate a state to become directly involved in transnational administration. And secondly, it highlights potential institutional arrangements and programs that can be implemented by states to exercise power beyond their own territory and jurisdictional boundaries. The embassies of the Philippines provide one way of achieving this.

Saguin and Shivakoti's research raises questions for future scholarship and practice. In what other sectors are states that are traditionally seen as less powerful most likely to successfully shape transnational administration? Is there anything peculiar about the relationship between the political and bureaucratic elites in the Philippines that makes it easier for the state to assume a central role in transnational administration? What lessons can other countries learn from the Philippines about implementing programs to protect citizens and safeguard their interest beyond the borders of the state?

While Saguin and Shivakoti's article is concerned with how the state shapes transnational administration, Tatyana Bajenova's article "**Transnational think tank networks**" shifts our gaze to European think tanks. She examines how think tanks position themselves in national and transnational networks as well as their relational structure, providing us with a lens to understand policy-making processes both within and beyond the traditional nation state. The article utilizes Bourdieu's (1986) concept of social capital as well as field theory and social network analysis to explain how European think tank networks form social boundaries and how they transfer their networks and social capital from the national or regional to the supranational level.

Consequently, Bajenova's article adds new conceptual and theoretical insights. Bajenova is able to move beyond studies that focus mainly on a singular policy theory, generally policy networks, to explain transnational actors and their activities. The article also provides a multi-country analysis, adding to our understanding of the European context, where transnational networks have continued to proliferate as a response to democratic deficits and the need for greater cross-border cooperation on issues such as climate change and immigration.

Through an empirical, multi-sited study of various European think tank networks operating in major cities, the article offers critical explanations of their goals and objectives, how they are formalized through various mechanisms and the important role of social capital. Bajenova's fieldwork sheds light on a number of factors in relation to transnational think tanks, including how they are characterized and differentiated, types of network ties, their structure, level of political influence, criteria for membership which facilitates social boundaries and identity, limits of membership, benefits, costs and how they navigate European bureaucracy to accomplish their objectives. Transnational think tanks do not all operate in the same sphere, and neither do they enjoy equal power and influence. Geographic location and the type of policy issues in which they are involved play a key role in determining how well they are able to connect with other European think tanks.

Bajenova's article answers pertinent questions about transnational administration and provides a guide for future research on transnational think tanks. Given the level of social capital possessed by these groups and given their networks, to what extent have they contributed to the establishment of private governments and a decentering of the state? In whose interest do think tanks function? Does the need for external funding, and political ties, weaken or strengthen the effectiveness and legitimacy of transnational think tanks? What other forms of capital allow these groups to transpose from the national to the transnational level?

In "**Policy transfer capacity**," Osmany Porto de Oliveira and Natália Massaco Koga explore how state capacities affect policy transfers in terms of policy adoption and internationalization. They note that "policy transfer practices are not neutral, rational, or technical" and "they do not necessarily lead to policy success" (2). Moreover, a country's

“assumed lack of capacity... can be used by different types of agents to legitimize international intervention or softer forms of foreign participation in domestic affairs” (2). They express rightful concern that the links between capacity and policy transfer have been insufficiently theorized. Given a difference between state capacity (macro-meso level) and policy capacity (meso-micro level), they question the operationalization of the capacity concept and, in particular, the limited research on the “internal dynamics of capacity mobilization” (7).

The authors suggest three skills and competencies for policy transfer: analytical, operational, and political. Each can be linked to three levels of resources and capabilities: individual, organizational, and systemic. What is unique about their analytical framework is its potential applicability to domestic administrative systems and international or transnational systems of administration regardless of whether the domestic or international actor is a recipient of transfer or agent of transfer to elsewhere.

Using their analytical framework as a guide, scholars can evaluate the capacity of one administrative system to transfer policy to another. For each of the nine interactions of analytical, operational, and political capacities with individual, organizational, and systemic levels of resources and capacity, imaginable scenarios arise. For example, individual-level questions in which analytical capacity is required might include whether there is knowledge of international cooperation, of the recipient country, and of project design. Organizational questions which require operational capacity may include availability of finance and appropriate personnel, which agreements and treaties might influence outputs, and the data and instruments of policy transfer and their missions. Another example arises from a question of political competency. For example, whether the transferring agent and/or recipient has

sufficient capacity at the systemic level to ensure political accountability and/or trust and whether, at the analytical level, there is access to international systems of information, appropriate training, and public data.

The implications are clear. The transfer of policy requires capacity. The transfer of policy without considering capacity is not a question exclusive to a high-income country which attempts to transfer policy to the low-income state or from an international organization to a low-income state. It is also a question in reverse. Does the transferring actor have the capacity to transfer? Does the international organization? Or, by extension, do the trans-governmental networks, transnational public-private partnerships, social movements, global commissions, science/expertise networks, quasi-judicial actors, informal international organizations, and global foundations? By not assuming there is capacity and, instead, suggesting how capacity's under-theorization may hamper transfer, Oliveira and Koga create an analytical framework for not just exploring state-to-state relations but also, perhaps unique for the policy transfer literature, the transnational administration of global policies and their transfer.

Our final contribution to this second of two Special Issues comes from Aroon P. Manoharan and Nandhini Rangarajan. Their on “**public administrators as storytellers**” neatly encapsulates our own story-telling over both halves of this Special Issue and our proposed agenda's concerns with positionality. The authors establish storytelling as a sensemaking tool which help public administrators to create holistic pictures of policy issues, to link policy and deliberation, and to provide essential nuances to policy statistics. They observe that policy processes may be informed by “narrative moments” (2) whether on a local or global scale. Such moments may be effectively used by policy storytellers to “understand and interpret the

changing environment, identify the expectations, and channel the organizational efforts to craft an appropriate response” (2).

To obtain narrative competence, a good story will have characters, agents, and a sense of how employees, as civil servants, fit into the organizational and/or policy story. This includes use of the organization’s “transcendental purpose” (5) to improve citizen lives. In addition, storytellers may wish to differentiate between narratives that “help process past events” and provisional narratives that “promote real time coordination” (5). The means by which the story is told may be as varied as autobiographies and ethnographies to testimonies and digital means. The story’s persuasiveness may be enhanced by “balancing *ethos* (character), *pathos* (emotion), and *logos* (rational appeal)” (5).

Professional identity theory helps the storyteller build their metaphor. This includes stories which intersect the storyteller with their life as a public servant, civil servants who view storytelling as their dominant form of communication, those who compartmentalize the story to specific tasks of the public servant, those who holistically link the story to each task of their job, and those who use stories to co-activate one or more of their roles.

There are clear implications of their article for theory, practice, and pedagogy. But there are also implications for a double Special Issue on transnational administration, global policy, and engaging the epistemological strictures of the administration discipline. The narrative moment brought by COVID-19, a virus which left no sub-region of the world unexposed, told us stories about which administrative structures succeeded (e.g., New Zealand) and those which led to unnecessary losses of lives (e.g., United States). The stories which are told about cooperation at all levels from local governments to international organizations like the World

Health Organization will reshape how we, as public administrators, learn from our pandemic experiences. Similarly, the stories which were told across this double Special Issue about inclusion, exclusion, methodological Whiteness, methodological Americanism, and our increasingly transnationally administered global governance may also reshape how we perceive each other, how we communicate, and how we, if we are hopeful, build a more vertically and horizontally linked administrative discipline in which knowledge is no longer unidirectional but multidirectional.

Conclusion

In this edition of the double Special Issue, we proposed an agenda for epistemological diversity in (American) public administration studies. To reshape the disciplinary table, we began with our baseline observation that methodological Whiteness and methodological Americanism are problems in and for the discipline. To overcome this hegemonic intellectualism, we advocate public administration scholars take the two following concrete steps: (1) acknowledge the need to address the empirical and theoretical vacuum that “beyond the state” activities have on state capacity and power to design and deliver its services, and (2) embrace the insights that connecting with disciplines engaged in research on transnational administration and global policy have for public administration studies. Our proposed agenda revolves around the belief that action will follow changed mindsets, and thus recognition constitutes an essential step towards transformation. We are optimistic that the future is bright for the study of public administration around the world. As we emerge from a pandemic, and war still a reminder of how fragile the “nation state” is as an organizing administrative principle, the time is ripe to set the disciplinary table for critical and rigorous debates about our administrative futures. Let us continue this work!

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