Managing Complexity in the Public Services

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The application of complexity theory to management and the social sciences has been a key development in theory and practice over the last decade. This approach questions the possibility of finding universal methods of practice, and proposes a pragmatic and humanistic management style that evolves out of a reflective method. The focus is on practitioners observing patterns of similarity and being adaptable in decision-making.

Bringing complexity theory into management reveals the importance of organizational culture and effective communication because people, their values and their objectives are at the heart of this method. Information technology provides a framework for complex communication and knowledge use, but it cannot replace highly developed professional negotiations and cooperation.

This book argues that the complexity of the public service world limits the usefulness of classical and rational scientific management approaches such as *New Public Management*. Excessive marketization threatens a collaborative approach and overly rigid approaches to performance management and strategic management can be dysfunctional.

Managing Complexity in the Public Services *2ⁿᵈ Edition* advances a method of management practice that copes with the stark realities of the complex and unpredictable public policy world. It develops pragmatic management practices from action research that will be valuable to both academics and practitioners. The result is a new value-based practice for the post-crisis public service world.

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