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Criticism, Communication and Debate in Public Environment

ABSTRACT

This paper presents models of criticism, communication and debate in public environment, focusing on the types of criticism and countercriticism manifested in political debates and public management. The paper proposes: (i) a normative model showing how rational criticism and countercriticism can be conducted, including process and alternative strategies; and (ii) a model of organizational excellence and rational criticism in public management. The paper also include the comments of reviewers of the journal Public Management Review.

KEYWORDS: CRITISIM; COUNTERCRITICISM; DEBATE; COMMUNICATION; PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

Introduction

Criticism and countercriticism elaboration processes in the land of political confrontation have been neither sufficiently explained nor clearly researched in the literature. At the moment the politicians make use of the same processes with insufficient knowledge of elaboration processes. This situation generates inconsistent and incoherent arguments, reducing the politicians' effectiveness by basing the criticism construction process on their own capacity, ability, and experience as communicators.

The importance of criticism is fundamental as a control mechanism of governmental action. The objective of the present work is to analyze the elaboration process of criticism and countercriticism through proposing diverse models that show their elements, relations, and formulation.

Authors like Donmoyer (1993), Lakatos & Musgrave (1970), Shapiro (1992), McGee (2001), Ortigueira (2008) and others have development meanings about criticism over many years in different fields. This paper propose models in a pragmatic perspective, considering persuasion (Easton & Araujo, 1997; McCloskey, 1985), human interaction (Mey, 1993) and successful communicative action Habermas (1998).

In political debate categories are ideological. Ideology distorts the possibility of reaching an agreement. There are four forms of criticism in scientific theory: (i) objectivity, rigor, and investigator rationality (Descartes, 1649); (ii) criticism as antidogmatism (Kant, 2005), which is not to give validity to any judgment without first checking that it agrees with our knowledge, experiences, and values; (iii) criticism as an alternative to reality (Marx and utopian thought, 1992); and (iv) criticism as a paradigm (Bueno, 1992), or criticism inside rather than outside a paradigm.

In the public sector, criticism is formally established on two levels: external and internal (Salanti, 1989). At the *internal level*, critical functions are carried out by certain bodies within the organizational structure of the state, autonomous administrations, or local entities. At an *external level*, critical functions diverge into three fields: (i) the jurisdictional (external control institutions); (ii) the political (national parliaments, parliaments of autonomous provinces, and assemblies of local organizations); and (iii) the judicial (justice tribunals). In addition to the functions of these formal bodies, criticism in the external sphere of the public sector is ultimately the responsibility of citizens, the media, opinion leaders, political parties, and employee and employer

associations. We have considered the external level of criticism as a type of public management control.

This paper focuses on criticism and countercriticism within political debate and public management. The paper proposes: (i) a normative model showing how rational criticism and countercriticism can be conducted, including process and alternative strategies; and (ii) a model of organizational excellence and rational criticism in public management. The paper also presents examples taken from everyday life.

Theoretical background

Two important aspects of the criticism elaboration process should be kept in mind: first, the presence of persuasion, argument, and motivation, and, second, that of verbal, nonverbal, and literary communication components. These are communicative aspects and impact or effectiveness components intended to influence, motivate, criticize, or cause psychological damage to an audience (according to positive, negative, singular or collective criticism), acting on beliefs, culture, values, attitudes, and behaviors.

Although communication research has enjoyed great popularity in recent years, its origins can be traced back to ancient Greece and Rome where it was discussed by philosophers and scholars. One of the precursors of research into the communication process is found in Marco Tullius Cicero (first century BC). Cicero described the perfect speaker's qualities, the styles of speech in function to rhetorical purposes, the techniques of speech, and their parts. Cicero analyzed how to sustain one's own arguments in the face of contrary ones, disposition and order, the way in which one speaks, and the relationship between verbal and nonverbal communication. Oratory has also been studied more recently by other authors such as Studer Jürg (1999), Lassus, (1992), von Wartburg (1998), Ortigueira & Ortigueira (2001), Ortigueira (2008) and Gallo (2008).

As for verbal communication, the types of criticism and countercriticism examined here are located in a framework of an oral intervention process, which can be structured into several interrelated stages. However, Cicero considered the necessity of coherence between verbal and nonverbal communication (Pease, 1994; González, 1998), and the same should be applied to criticism and countercriticism. Nonverbal communication is understood by Sheppard (1986) to be communication that takes place through actions and human behaviors and not by means of words. Ekman & Friesen

(1969) categorized different nonverbal behaviors, and other authors such as Mehrabian (1971) researched the influence of verbal, phonological, and facial components on message interpretation.

The aspects relating to persuasion and communication have been broadly researched in cognitive psychology. Examples of theories relevant to persuasion research are: Social Judgment Theory (Sherif & Hovland, 1961) explains how a person accepts or rejects the communicated messages after comparing the message and his/her values; Inoculation Theory (McGuire, 1961) explains how the order of information presentation influences its perception and how information given to the receiver before communication increases his/her resistance; Balance Theory (Heider, 1946) establishes that people attempt to persuade themselves or others when tensions arise to reduce these tensions; Rank's Persuasion Model (Rank, 1976) establishes two strategies that persuaders use to achieve their objectives; Source Credibility Theory (Hovland, Janis & Kelley, 1953) concerns the relationship between persuasion and credibility; Congruity Theory (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955) concerns the sensation of pressure on a person with regard to a judgment between two contradictory postures that are presented; Belief Congruency (Rokeach & Rothman, 1965) concerns the relationship between beliefs and a person's values; Cognitive Dissonance (Festinger, 1962) concerns a person's attitude when he/she acts on the margin of his/her beliefs; Reinforcement Theory (Hovland, Janis & Kelley, 1967) concerns attention, comprehension, and acceptance; Information Manipulation Theory (McCornack, 1992); considers the relationship between information and a person's expectations regarding its quantity, quality, relation, and channel; The Elaboration Likelihood Model (Baxter, 1988) concerns the routes to persuasion and their relation with attitude change; Attribution Theory (Heider, 1958) seeks to explain the causes of behaviors. As previous research has commented, communication processes act on beliefs, culture, values, attitudes, and behaviors, concepts that this study seeks to elucidate below.

Values are continually discussed: justice, sincerity, freedom, solidarity, loyalty, generosity, responsibility, honor, etc. In 1994, McGregor researched beliefs and leaders' values. Values refer to the subjective importance that people place on things or on people's conduct and behavior. Thus, for example, for some people love is more important than sincerity whereas for others the reverse is true. This situation results in the first group being more willing to forgive or reward lies told for the sake of love, also known as "white lies". In contrast, those that place sincerity over love will condemn

white lies and probably be offended by those who defend them. The great majority of human confrontations or disagreements between people are due to contradictions between acts or behaviors and their scales of values, that is to say, that positioning of values as a function of the importance that each person confers on each value.

There are people that consider human life to be the supreme value. Obviously, they can never penalize and resist all people who attempt to take human life: terrorists, abortionists, and so on. However, there are people who place, for example, love at the top of the scale. In these cases there are situations in which suicides take place for love, or people become martyrs (those that die for love of God), etc. For them love is even more important than their own lives.

Those that die in place of others are a frequent example. When doctors tell a mother she must choose between her own life and that of her son, she would respond that her son's life must be saved. Here a clear priority is placed on the loved one rather than on self. Doctors sometimes delegate this tremendous dilemma to husbands and/or parents. This raises another problem of hierarchy of values: the love for a wife versus the love of a son. The decision is usually made in favor of the wife. However, in this process, the doctor's values are also relevant: when a doctor chooses whether to ask the mother or the father, he/she is offering a clear manifestation of the importance of the choice between the mother's and the son's life.

Thus, values are the organizing principles of people's behavior. There are different theories on behavior, some depending on organizational variables. Maslow (1954) researched behavior based on the acquisition necessities. Herzberg (1966) outlined the factors that guide the behavior of people. McGregor (1994) compared antagonistic styles of management in function to worker's behavior considerations. Likert (1961) studied the influence of administrative styles on behavior; others have examined his work from the viewpoint of psychology.

When behaviors stray from values, remorse and uneasiness arise in people. When these are coherent, it is more difficult to feel grief and negative sensations. Behavior refers to what a person says, does not say, does or does not do. For example, a doctor who refers a decision to a mother (being able to ask the father) can be severely criticized for this behavior by those who consider that such decision should be made by the father. A student that insults another student in class and in the professor's presence will be penalized by many people, but perhaps not by all the students. Everything depends on the importance that each confers on that value called "respect". The professor will also

be criticized for his/her behavior if he/she does not act with the rigor appropriate to the level of the insult, if he/she says nothing or says something excessively weak, or even if the intervention is to say something so severe that it surpasses the level of the insult. This raises another value called “justice”, that is to say, the constant will to giving each person his/her due. This concept of values is vastly complex, and becomes more complex when one considers how values are made and their environment. Thus, different values are found in different environments, such as the school, military, university, and sporting environments.

In the business environment, the justice value is developed in the theory of organizational justice (Greenberg, 1987). Sometimes, when a person’s life is examined in daily life in various environments, the relative importance of values is not the same in each. Thus, courage has a very high value in the military environment and little in the academic world, it is even difficult to specify its meaning. On the other hand, rationality, studied by Taylor, Fayol, and Weber in the classic organization theories, and thinking have a very high position in an academic environment and perhaps a much lower one in a military environment.

There are two values that we find it opportune to specify: one is justice and the other freedom. Justice is a value located on the highest position on the scale of social and economic organizational systems called socialism; it is a value that imposes freedom on it. Freedom is the highest value in the social and economic organizational systems called capitalism, and imposes justice on it. It is not that the justice is not present in the capitalist system—undoubtedly it is and has an extraordinary importance—but freedom is located above it.

Another important concept is belief. Beliefs are aspects of reality for which experimental knowledge has not been achieved. They are knowledge that people incorporate in their models of the world (Robbins, 1987) based on the credibility that we grant to other people’s experience. Most people are limited in their realizations by their beliefs.

Culture is another concept to specify. It can be defined as a group of principles, beliefs, values and symbolic representations (language, dress, music, myths, rites, rituals, heroes, metaphors, legends...) shared by a community. This means that people that share values and beliefs share the same culture.

Naturally, inside this shared culture subcultures can exist. Furthermore, what is organizational culture? It is a significant system shared by organization members that

determines the way its employees act (Robbins & Coulter, 2000) and allows it to distinguish itself from other organizations. In all organizations, values, symbols, ritual patterns, and myths exist that determine the image that the organization members have of the company and of the world in general.

Ethics, as a branch of philosophy, facilitates the knowledge of some superior values and favors a positive attitude of wanting to make good in freedom and with personal responsibility.

The philosopher Wagensberg (1985) affirms “I understand ethics to be that type of knowledge dedicated to establishing a moral system, to distinguish among what men should do and what they should not do, to choose between bad habits and virtue, among good and bad. Ethics is the science that avoids the consequence of substituting the objective world for men, true or false for good or bad, theory for ideology and description for the prescription.”

On the other hand, Fromm (1947) offers these statements full of trust in the human condition and in their vital possibilities: “Good in ethics is the statement of the life, the unfolding of human powers. Virtue is humans’ responsibility for their own existence. Bad things constitute the mutilation of human forces; bad habits are irresponsibility toward oneself.”

Kant (2005) establishes a maxim of categorical imperative as conscience of duty and dignity: “works in such a way that the maxim of action can be worth its own time, like a universal norm of behavior.”

An ethical person’s attributes, without which he or she cannot act with fullness in community, are three: freedom, autonomy, and responsibility. Only free people are responsible, and can decide with autonomy among alternative good actions. This is the concept of personal ethics, which are not subject to the power of religious, political, social, or economic structures.

Morals (Catholic, Protestant, Islamic, communist, anarchist, bourgeois, socialist ...) are different from ethics. Morals lack personality if they are the same. The statement by Etkin (1993) is of interest in this analysis: “Morals implies a contextualization and refers, fundamentally, to certain values, uses and customs in the community. Through morals in organizations, adhesion is looked for, but now in certain projects, credos or specific values. That is to say, the possibility of handling moral codes for political power is established here.”

Public administrations are complex organizations and are formed by people who

conduct very diverse functions. For example, politicians that come from electoral systems where political parties are in opposition are. In addition, these parties, and organizations, are created and run by people. Organizations can have different ideological systems, different cultures, and different morals. For diverse reasons these organizations have still not been able to build homogeneous shared morals, culture, and values for all. That is to say, a view of what is good and bad in politics is not something that all share.

Many people consider that when a member of an organization steals from the public, it is bad. The honesty value in such a case is defended. Here Aristotelian morals are consecrated in the principle of common above individual interests, general above particular interests. This value can be shared by a great majority of people. However, this same value of not stealing to finance a political party seems no longer to have so many followers. This is a problem to be solved to avoid contaminating the nonpolitical structures of the administration.

However, apart from ethical or moral problems, there is also an infinity of cases where injustices, violations, outrages, mistreatment, infidelities, and thousands of strictly administrative bad habits or politico-administrative occur. In this environment it is also necessary to introduce mechanisms that avoid negativity, inequity, lack of transparency, the interpretive distortion of legality, and excessive waste and poor allocation of resources, etc.

Proposed models

Figure 1 presents a model showing the process by which judgmental criticisms are formulated based on Ortigueira (2008). Previous models were developed by Vahidov & Elrod (1999); Vahidov & Fazlollahi (2004) and Silverman (1992). Panel A includes the criticism elaboration process and Panel B shows the countercriticism elaboration process.

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

To strengthen the effectiveness of the countercriticism, panel 10 offers alternative strategies of criticism and countercriticism. These alternatives, as can be seen from the panel, reflect alternative positions of the critic. Panel 10 of Figure 1 has been developed

with the examples in Table 1.

In line (a) of Table 1, a criticism that has been based on sound principles (such as efficiency and economy as essential factors) could oppose a countercriticism supported by the principle of equity. In a similar way, a criticism that is fundamentally based on established facts (such as the national inflation rate) could neutralize a countercriticism using other facts (such as high wages) or another interpretation of these facts (such as the rate of regional inflation) (see Jorgensen et al., 1998; Gordon & Miller, 2004).

In line (b) of Table 1, criticism based on irrational and unreal arguments is offered. In this case rational arguments must be used.

In lines (c) and (d) further confrontations are presented. These reflect the logic, vagueness, paradoxes, and annoyances of the real world: the ideological and emotional factors, rationalities, and principles.

In lines (e) and (f), criticism and countercriticism cases supported by different epistemology foci are offered.

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Given that the activities of public-sector services have expanded to unexpected levels, much of the critical political debate has centered on questions of organizational excellence. Efficiency and effectiveness in public management have become topics of widespread interest and concern. The terms ‘efficiency’ and ‘effectiveness’ are used with such frequency that they are often used lightly and gratuitously. Criticism that a service is ‘not efficient’ or ‘not effective’ has become commonplace in everyday conversation, in the media, in business, and in parliaments. The present study addresses this debate by contributing some novel approaches that demonstrate the critical processes that are involved, with a view to providing a normative model that provides a critical base for a more informed debate than is presently the case.

In Figure 2 organizational excellence and rational criticism in a public management normative model is proposed. Figure 2 provides a brief summary of the terms and concepts of the model. As the figure shows, three methods are used to measure the success or excellence of a productive public-sector organization: (i) efficiency; (ii) effectiveness; and (iii) social effectiveness. In the proposed scheme, various aspects of efficiency are presented—output, productivity, and profitability (with special emphasis on some types of productivity). The key concept is the global

productivity surplus (GPS), which has not received the attention that it deserves, as revealed by studies carried out in various French sectors, in particular the energy sector (French Gas and French Electricity). The concept of ‘efficiency’ specified here is similar to the concept of ‘efficacité social’ used by the French administration.

INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

Parliamentary criticism alleging ‘inefficiency’ is frequently directed at the economic management of public-sector organizations in nearly all countries. In many cases, such criticism lacks sound arguments (Gordon & Miller, 2004). To facilitate debate on a more rational basis, the present study proposes a model whereby such criticism might be more solidly based on the public interest that politicians should endeavor to serve. A realistic example is provided of an investment by a public-sector organization that will be called the ‘Community Education Public Limited Company’ (CE Plc).

The human resources of this public-sector organization constitute an authentic investment in human capital for the community.

The questions raised by the hypothetical opposition members of parliament, and those that any citizen might legitimately ask in relation to this company (or in relation to any public investment in human capital), are as follows:

- Are we receiving from this investment everything that it could possibly provide?
- Would it be possible to obtain a better financial return than that which is currently being achieved?

The study posits that the answers to the proposed questions are in the negative and the affirmative, respectively.

It is not the intention of the present study to construct an alternative overall strategy for this company. That would be outside its purposes. The intention is restricted to indicating that the company appears to have ignored measures that might have had a beneficial effect. These measures fulfill three important requirements. They should:

- be technically viable;
- be financially legitimate; and
- be politically and socially acceptable.

The position adopted by the present study is based on five essential steps:

- symptoms;

- etiology;
- aims;
- strategy; and
- consequences.

Each of these is discussed below.

Symptoms

Investigations of CE Plc's educational services have detected significant deficiencies in study methods among students. In many cases they use methods that are inappropriate for their particular abilities and resources. The lack of an established study method is the most significant finding.

Similarly, serious deficiencies have been detected in the students' use of their 'logical intelligence', 'critical intelligence', and 'creative intelligence'. These weaknesses were noticed by professors during a period of interaction with the students and were clearly apparent from their final marks.

Third, a general lack of enterprising spirit was noticed. There was an inclination to avoid undertaking enterprising actions and incurring the risk involved in such activities.

In addition to these symptoms, other deficiencies were apparent: (i) insufficient grounding in knowledge and abilities (for example, in languages); (ii) lack of a study routine; and (iii) insufficient motivation.

If the students were companies, they might be said to have serious problems with competitiveness. They do not select their inputs correctly, they take too much time and effort to acquire them, and they place such inputs in a disorganized warehouse (with the consequence that they later employ too much time in finding them). In addition, they have to deal with limited stock levels and an exaggerated decrease in time units.

These 'companies' thus manufacture their outputs with rudimentary, out-of-date, and defective production programs. Their operations require a considerable amount of time and energy. In addition, a lack of experience and motivation within human teams means that the products generated are not in a position to compete with established players in the market. These 'companies', in most circumstances, would be content to merely survive in marginal markets.

Etiology

Those associated with CE Plc apparently do not recall that, during their time as students, they were provided with effective instruments that allowed them to undertake the tasks of study and reflection effectively. These instruments and methods were appropriate to their personal characteristics, abilities, and resources. With respect to an entrepreneurial spirit, if any of them had such a spirit the system removed it from them.

Aims

CE Plc should provide its students with study methods, methods of reflection, and the abilities needed to use these methods. Similarly, it should encourage an entrepreneurial spirit among its students. These tasks should be carried out at all active levels within CE Plc.

Strategy

CE Plc should instigate training programs for its production personnel (preferably new teachers). They should also prepare Internet teaching programs and other technology-based teaching methods (for example, video and CD programs). These innovations will service the direct and indirect users of the organization (teachers, students, and other interested parties).

Consequences

With the measures outlined above, an increase in CE Plc user output will be achieved, along with an increase in the level of competitiveness. This will lead to an increase in the profitability of the investment (efficiency) in CE Plc. Its social efficiency will similarly increase.

It is important to highlight that, whenever possible, both benefit and detriment should be defined in exact terms—either quantitative (in monetary terms) or qualitative (high, medium, low). People are not motivated by vague concepts of ‘money’, ‘justice’, ‘social harmony’, or ‘achievement’, but rather by *certain amounts* of money, or *certain levels* of justice, social harmony, and achievement (Jorgensen et al., 1998).

Discussion

To summarize, effective criticism can be formulated in various ways. This can serve to improve the actions and results of the public sector. It can also be used effectively in countercriticisms that rebut absurd speculation that does not contribute to the public interest (Price, Capella & Nir, 2002). Against this background, the following conclusions are presented.

First, in the example presented here (CE Plc), the *references* have not been specified. It might well have been another organization from the same education sector with a better production system. If knowledge of the *real situation* is demonstrated, this allows criticism to be mounted on the basis of *logical argument*—which extends to, and includes, the solutions being offered.

Second, in this case it would have been regrettable to use the argument of ‘inefficiency’ or ‘ineffectiveness’ without further explanation. Such behavior is typical of those who lack a rational basis for their criticism, or of those who adopt a simplistic position of criticism. Criticism is a difficult task that takes time, energy, and collaboration. When this fails, critics turn to that which is easy—an argument attributing ‘inefficiency and ineffectiveness’ to the organization.

Third, against this argument, without REFERENCES, without reasonable knowledge of reality, countercriticism can be delivered providing that truly serious criticism is articulated by mentioning more than just inefficiency. The variable of efficiency can take different values; or more exactly, it could be said that there are different levels of efficiency and inefficiency, including one where efficiency is nonexistent. On the other hand, there are many indicators to measure this concept and the difference between them is significant. An informed, reliable criticism requires accuracy. Indicators of effectiveness include profitability of a company and the (GPS). Similar arguments apply when speaking of ‘inefficiency’. What does it refer to? Does it refer to internal or social efficiency? Are the objectives set out by the company being questioned? Is the range of these objectives questioned?

Fourth, when speaking of inefficiency and ineffectiveness, other questions should be formulated in addition to those above. What are the telltale signs of these deficiencies? What causes are associated with these signs? What objectives should be modified or established? What strategies, measures, or resources should be activated? What effects can be expected? Ultimately, can the relationship between effectiveness

and social efficiency be contemplated? In achieving certain objectives in social efficiency in public-sector companies, high levels of efficiency (for example, profitability) are not always easy to attain. This might be so in the case, for example, of a public-sector company that has been created in the general interest of a community that has been shaken by high unemployment.

The ideas presented here have already been successfully applied in various environments characterized by strong confrontations. However, it should be noted that, for reasons of lack of space, not all questions relating to the present advanced models and techniques of communication and motivation have been dealt with here. We continue to improve the critical and countercritical models and methods presented here in a variety of different fields.

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Figure 1: How rational criticism and countercriticism can be carried out: a normative model

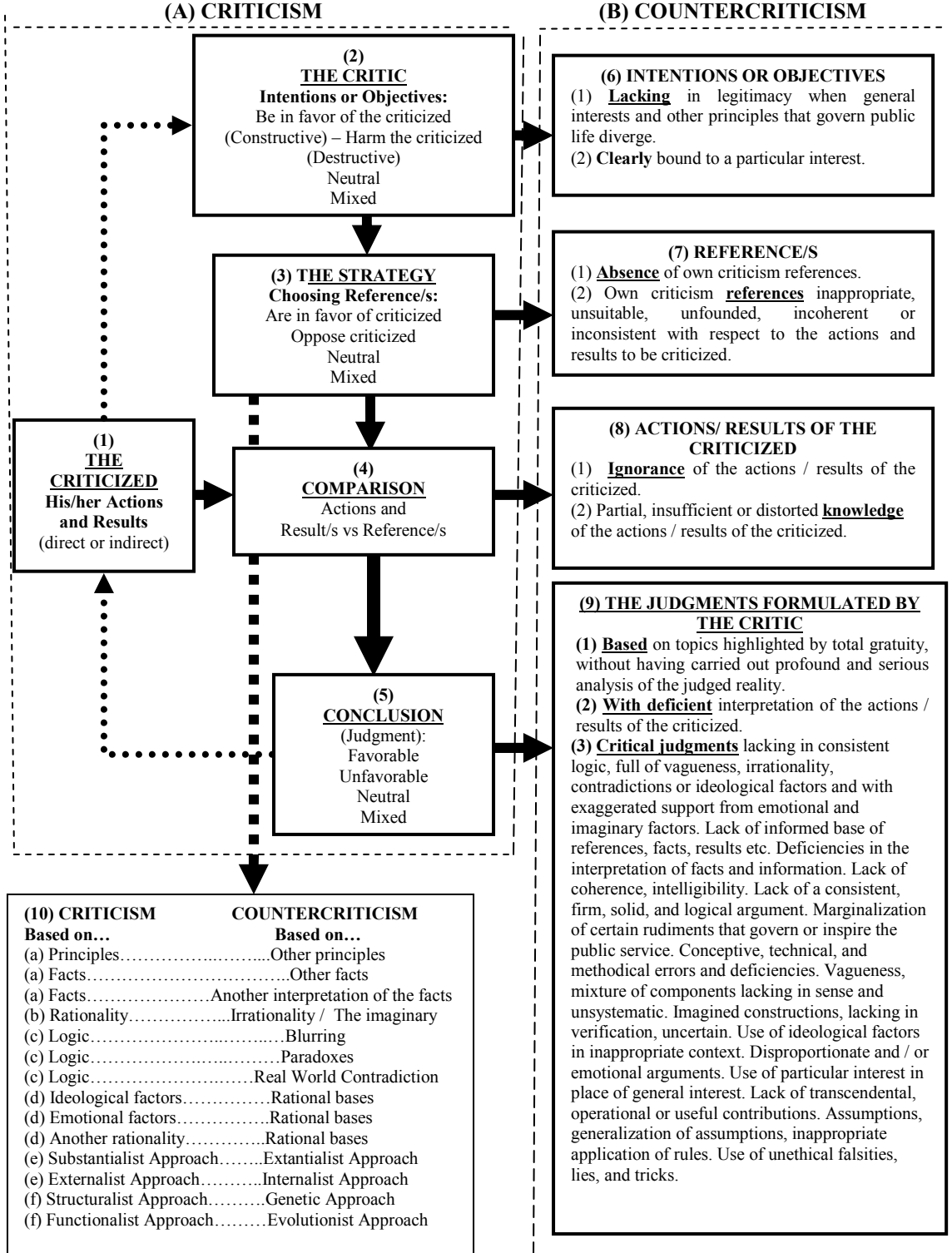


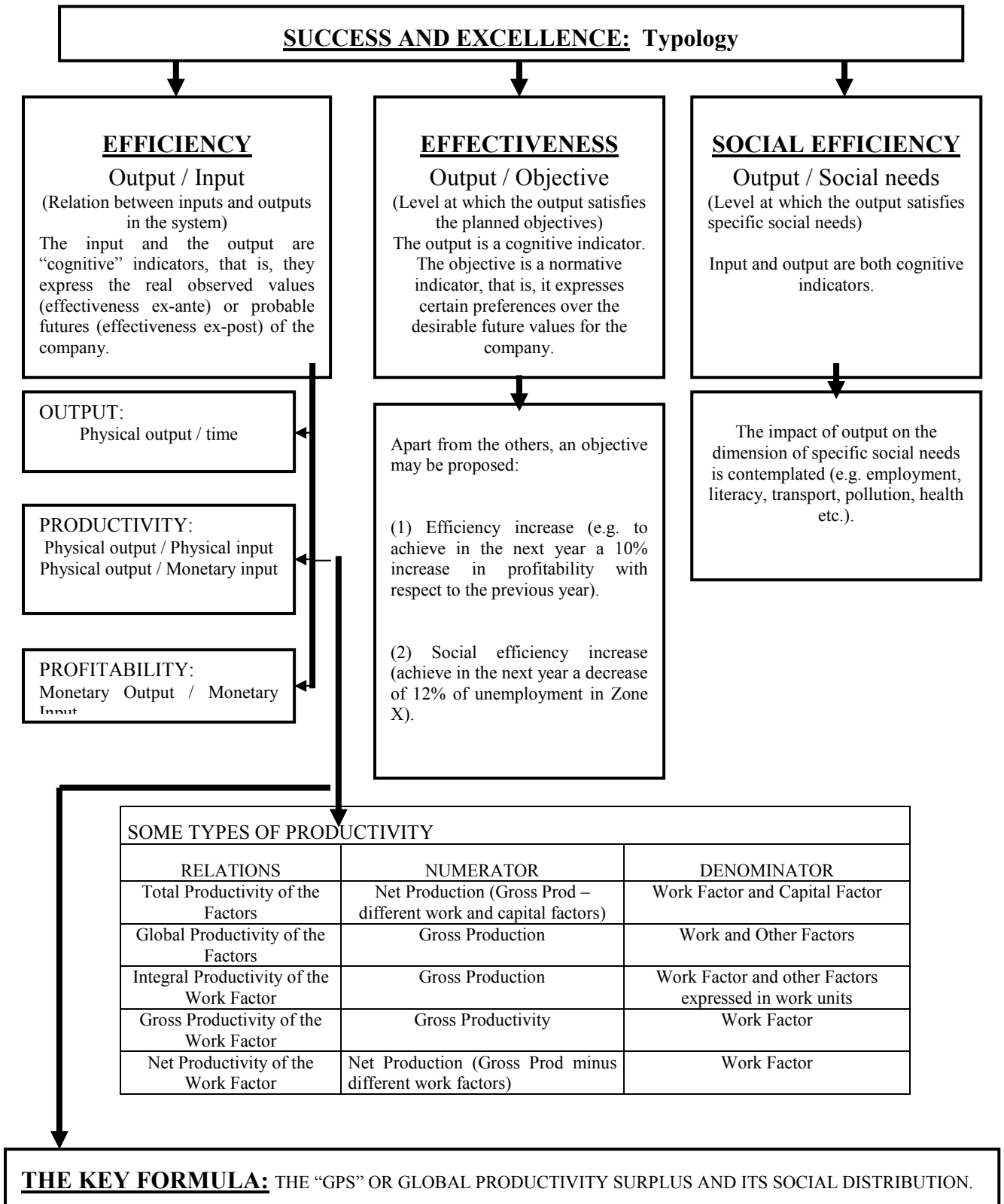
Table 1: Alternative strategies of criticism and countercriticism.

<p style="text-align: center;">(1)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CRITICISM</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Based on....</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">(2)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">COUNTERCRITICISM</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Based on....</p>
<p>(a) Principles: —————</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“The policy that you present is clearly too extravagant. There are alternatives that are much more economic and efficient.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Facts: —————</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“The country’s average yearly inflation rate is 4%, and in your proposed budget, civil servants’ income has only been put up by two points.”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">→ Other principles:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“But those alternatives do not introduce fairness, always so highly sought after, into the ‘system’. Our policy, although slightly more costly than the alternatives you refer to, is infinitely fairer.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→ Other facts:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Another interpretation of the facts</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“The income of the civil servants under our government is three points higher than the average income under our counterpart governments. Furthermore, the yearly inflation rate in our region is 2.9%, in other words, lower than the national rate by 1.1 points.”</p>
<p>(b) Rationality —————</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“Given that the <u>goal</u> that you have set for your <u>Sports Policy</u> is to get 70% of citizens taking part in some form of sport, it seems to us that your <u>decision to build a large racecourse in Area 7 of our town</u> is completely irrational; it is not coherent with your goal. And all of this <u>bearing in mind</u>, of course, that the <u>income in this region is very low and none of the inhabitants takes part in horse sports</u>.”</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>CRITICISM:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">BASE: Transparency principle.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“The explanation you have just given us exposes your lack of respect for the principle of ‘transparency’. You have revealed your deliberate lack of clarity with those of us who are the legitimate representatives of the citizens.” ←</p> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Rationality —————</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“The policy you propose is simply not rational, insofar as the <u>objectives</u> you establish <u>go way beyond</u> the accurate <u>forecasts</u> released by highly accredited institutes, made using the most reliable and accurate economic econometric instruments.”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">→ Irrationality (relative)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“<u>Sports Policy</u>, just as any other public policy, is not a closed issue but rather an open one, that is to say, it interacts with other policies. From a <u>closed perspective</u>, the decision to build a racecourse in Area 7 could be viewed as irrational, and lacking in coherence with the proposed objective. But, looking at it with an <u>open attitude</u>, the decision is rational, since the future racecourse will attract large crowds, and will enable us to achieve significantly the aims set out in our Municipal Integration Policy. Area 7 is the chasm that divides our town into two, and this racecourse is the “bridge” that will solve this problem. Furthermore, the cost will be null, since we have reclassified the land in Area 7, which will benefit the <u>Promotion and Employment policy</u>, the urban policy, and the <u>Financial Policy</u> of our town council.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→ The imaginary</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“The objectives we have set for our policy are supported by speculative objectives generated by our creative imagination. It was that same creative imagination that led us, in the past, to put all our faith in the Tourist Policy that you described as ‘crazy’, and nobody could possibly doubt the success of that policy nowadays.”</p>
<p>(c) Logic —————</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“The colossal bill that you plan to pass is not the result of a selection process based on traditional logic criteria, criteria that we are highly familiar with and have always used. It is the result of a complex and strange logic, barely intelligible to us.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Logic —————</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“The prevailing logic in our time holds that for success to be achieved within any organization there must be strict control. This logic vanishes in the system of</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">→ Blurring</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“The reality associated with our bill is extraordinarily complex and blurred. It cannot be circumscribed by simplistic traditional logic. We must use logic that takes account of the previously ignored relevant ‘constructs’ of our public problem. Hence, the logic of blurred methodologies that we have used clearly illuminates the complexity of our reality, and has led us to draft a bill that has proved to be very stable in the light of several very reasonable hypotheses.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→ Paradoxes</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“Certainly control can be a success factor, but there is a limit to how much harshness and intensity can be tolerated. When that limit is passed, control becomes a</p>

<p>control you hope to implement in your model of government. This soft and weak approach will do nothing to avoid two terrible evils: inefficiency and corruption.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Logic</p> <p>“Logically, a left-wing government shouldn’t show itself to be in favor of the privatization of public companies, particularly in the area of telecommunications and transport.”</p>	<p>factor of failure, of inefficiency. These deficiencies can eventually undermine the government administration and even the government itself. The system of control we hope to implement has levels of strictness that are within the maximum tolerance limits allowed by our authorities; we have taken into account both current measures and circumstances and future ones.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→ Real world contradiction</p> <p>“Be that as it may, this is one of the contradictions of the electorate in general, including those who voted for us. They are convinced that private capital will make these companies much more efficient. Their annual losses will no longer be covered by the tax-payers’ money.”</p>
<p>(d) Ideological factors</p> <p>“This bill regulating the issuing of gun licenses is a far cry from the ideology you have always professed.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Emotional factors:</p> <p>“This bill regarding the reservoir and hydroelectricity plan, which will certainly destroy the countryside and flood our valley, not only saddens even the most insensitive minds, but also buries the soul.”</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p style="text-align: center;">CRITICISM</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>BASIS: Another rationality / Principle of Efficiency and Economy</u></p> <p>“If your government had implemented a strong system of public transport during your time in power, there would be no need to look for more energy. Now, we waste staggering amounts of energy, have intolerable levels of pollution and cities that are impossible to get around, packed with vehicles as far as the eye can see.”</p> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">CRITICISM</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>BASIS: Another rationality / General Interest Principle</u></p> <p>“If our citizens had the alternative of solid public transport services, they would not have taken the crazy option of using their cars. Furthermore, you had the obligation to educate people, to inform them about the consequences of massive car usage. You had quite a few negative experiences, but you still preferred to take the easy route, go for the short-term vote, distract the voters. And this says a great deal about your history of irresponsible behavior in government.”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">→ Rational bases:</p> <p>“Our bill provides for severe precautionary measures that take into account the applicant’s values and self-control. It also introduces the requirement to present periodic psychological reports, issued by renowned and authorized therapists.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Rational bases:</p> <p>“If we want to eliminate poverty and emigration, we have to develop the economy. This achievement requires energy, produced if possible cleanly and cheaply. It’s true that the negative effects of this bill might sadden even the most insensitive minds, and perhaps even bury the soul; but it’s a sadder sight to see thousands of people emigrate; and when people live in poverty, without work and without hope, that is also enough to bury anyone’s soul.”</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p style="text-align: center;">COUNTERCRITICISM</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>BASIS: General Interest Principle</u></p> <p>“People want the freedom given to them by having their own car.”</p> </div>
<p>(e) Substantialist Approach:</p> <p>“The solution you proposed for the public problem that concerns us reveals your inability to separate the problem from its context.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Externalist approach:</p> <p>“The bill you propose to curb the increase of variable</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">→ Extantialist Approach:</p> <p>“Certainly, it is impossible to use a Substantialist epistemological approach, since the problem cannot be separated from its context. We have opted therefore to define a conventional boundary, typical of an extantialist approach, bearing in mind that this problem has very blurred boundaries.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">→ Internalist approach:</p> <p>“The internal causalities were the only ones we were</p>

<p>X in our country has focused exclusively on internal means or factors, when the existence of external causalities is extremely likely. While we remain ignorant of the identity and magnitude of these causalities, the effectiveness of your policy will be very limited.”</p>	<p>able to evaluate with reliable, objective, and precise data. Managing external causalities without any quantified assessment of them will not make our task easier. We are trying to find a solution, as soon as possible, to this problem, for which we have just created Unit M in Department K.”</p>
<p>(f) Structuralist approach: (Existence of relatively stable characteristics in the system) “The policy that you propose to achieve the objectives of economic industry X has been formulated without taking into consideration the existence of characteristics that could reveal themselves to be relatively stable in the industry.”</p> <div data-bbox="252 622 831 860" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Yes, and as a consequence, budgetary investments could reach colossal figures. It would be more reasonable to work with both approaches, offering two hypotheses: one for those characteristics that seem more stable; and another for those characteristics that could prove to be highly dynamic.</p> </div> <p>Functionalist approach: (The system has ways of operating that determine its overall evolution) “In the design of your policy for the X sector, you have established its evolution without taking into account the peculiarities of how it operates, which are important.”</p> <div data-bbox="240 1077 823 1196" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>“Both approaches are complementary and encourage success in the direction of the X industry policy.”</p> </div>	<p>Genetic approach: (Existence of continuous transformations in the characteristics of the system) “In the absence at this time of reliable forecasts regarding the possible future evolution of the industry, we have started from a hypothesis that takes into consideration an evolution made up of continuous transformations. We acknowledge that this position is very protectionist, but it is the most suitable.”</p> <div data-bbox="871 701 1450 887" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>“Who knows which characteristics belong to which group? Our approach (hypothesis) protects us from the types of mistakes that originate from a subjective appraisal for all the various kinds of characteristics.”</p> </div> <p>Evolutionalist approach: (The long-term evolution trends of the system determine how it operates) “We have focused on what we believe to be most important, that’s to say, on the long-term evolution trends of the industry. Because, among other reasons, we believe these trends to be the decisive factors in how the industry operates.”</p>

Figure 2: Organizational excellence and rational criticism in public management.



Comments of reviewers of the journal Public Management.

De	stephen.osborne@ed.ac.uk
Enviado	Miércoles, Junio 11, 2008 2:45 am
A	lcortsan@upo.es
Asunto	Public Management Review - Decision on Manuscript ID RPXM-2008-0032
10-Jun-2008	

Dear Dr Ortigueira:

Thank you for your paper submission to PMR. It has now been considered by our referees. I regret to inform you that they do not feel it unsuitable for publication in Public Management Review. For your information I attach the reviewer comments at the bottom of this email. I hope you will find them to be constructive and helpful. You are of course now free to submit the paper elsewhere should you choose to do so.

Thank you for considering Public Management Review. I hope the outcome of this specific submission will not discourage you from the submission of future manuscripts.

Sincerely,
Professor Osborne
Editor, Public Management Review
stephen.osborne@ed.ac.uk

Reviewer(s)' Comments to Author:

Reviewer: 1

Comments to the Author

The paper addresses the significant issue of resolving contested ideas in the domain of public policy and strategy making. It is well written and tightly argued. A paper from the author on this issue is likely to sit well within PMR and to promote much debate. However, the paper is not yet ready for publication and should be resubmitted following a deep revision.

The literature section fails to respond to some well known earlier work on rational choice theory by Eskridge and Farejohn and John Elster. Perhaps there is a reason for this, if so, it should be stated.

The criticism and counter-criticism model developed in figure 1 is not a model in the sense of a simplification of a complex processes the application of which to a puzzle predicts an outcome. In short, the model needs greatly simplifying and its use illustrated in a detailed example.

Illustrating the use of a decision model requires close attention to case typicality. The author's choice of example (Community Education Public Limited Company) does not well service his/her purpose. A more bounded, clear and well-known example would less detract from the purpose of the exercise – demonstrating the model. The author needs to conduct some first hand ethnographic research in an area of public decision-making and apply the model to this. The area chosen should be one readily understandable to PMR readers. It is not possible to richly analyse public sector decisions without immersion in their richness and detail (power, coalitions, paths not trodden, compromises etc).

The author is encouraged to carry out some empirical research and then resubmit.

Reviewer: 2

Comments to the Author

I love the idea of connecting Cicero's manual on rhetoric with Kantian and other normative models of

ethics with policy analysis and organizational diagnosis, but I was not really clear on what the central argument of this article is supposed to be. Because there are so many moving parts here, the author really needs to be precise and explicit about what the central points are, and how and why each of the pieces of the argument contributes to making those points.

So for starters, explain what "criticism", "counter-criticism" and their "elaboration process" refer to, and why and how they are important to an audience concerned with public policy and management. Is it criticism of the bureaucracy, of the state as a whole, of political decision makers or their parties, all of those, none of those, or what? Also, although it appears to be centrally important in some way, when it makes an appearance later in the paper, the notion of "global productivity surplus" is never defined.

In terms of what the article seems to be claiming as a contribution, productive efficiency, allocative efficiency, and effectiveness are hardly novel criteria for evaluating public policy or administration, although it is somewhat unconventional to use profitability as a criterion for evaluating governments, and after the extended use of equity criteria earlier in the paper, I was surprised that equity was not presented as a fourth evaluation criterion. And it's not at all clear from the writing how we are supposed to make a connection between those standard policy-analytic criteria and the various literatures of ethics and rhetoric cited in the "theoretical background" section.

The tables and figures are very dense, and could use more elaboration in the body of the text, especially since they seem somehow to embody much of the argument here.

Is the "Community Education PLC" an empirical case, or a thought experiment? What function exactly does it serve in the argument? It is hard to tell from the way it is presently written.

Finally, there has been an abundant literature, especially in the last 20 years or so, concerned with political rhetoric, administrative rhetoric (such as Pollitt's *Administrative Argument*), critical policy analysis (M. E. Hawkesworth, F. Fischer, M. Hajer, D. Yanow, C. E. Lindblom, Schon and Rein, and J. Forester, to name just an arbitrary few), and (gently) critical as well as more mainstream approaches to performance measurement in the public sector (e.g., Hatry, Holzer, Poister, Aristigueta, A. Ho, Yang and Callahan). All of these literatures would seem to be relevant here, but I didn't see any references to these bodies of work. Tying the argument and themes of this piece more explicitly to both mainstream models of policy analysis, performance measurement, and evaluation, and to critiques thereof, would help a reader get a handle on where this piece fits into a large and vigorous ongoing conversation about how best to specify and select public goals and measure the degree to which they have been attained.

Some other stray observations—

Some of the English is a bit unidiomatic. This may be a cause of some of my difficulty in making out the argument, since it seems to turn on many details.

The assertion of a difference between ethics and morals is debatable. In any event, the author does not make a strong case here either for the existence of such a distinction or for the relevance of such a distinction to understanding political rhetoric and policy argumentation.