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Executive Entrepreneurship in National Departments

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Abstract

Leadership by senior public managers in national departments is increasingly called for in response to many policy challenges and limitations of appointee and political leadership. This study defines "executive entrepreneurship" as senior, career public managers furthering new policies and initiatives, with input from stakeholders and support from political appointees. Study results from a dyadic survey of executives reporting directly to (deputy) ministers show that executive entrepreneurship is significantly furthered by (a) executives' commitment to public causes, (b) orientation of appointees to their obligations and agency roles, and (c) external accountability of department performance. Implications are discussed for future studies.

Keywords

Introduction

An important challenge of leadership at the apex of national departments in many countries is ensuring strategic responses to many complex problems (e.g., sustainability, unequal outcomes) and unprecedented threats in many policy areas (health, security, economy, etc.). The literature raises key concerns that senior public managers are too narrowly focused on technical and operational issues, or specific policy priorities of appointees, rather than providing broad, strategic, and visionary leadership that is needed for many policies and programs (e.g., Chenok, 2015; Gallo & Lewis, 2012; Light, 2008). In fact, the extent of such senior public leadership is not well established, as research into it is very scarce at the

present time. This study examines an important aspect of such leadership, executive entrepreneurship. In current usage, this refers to senior managers' (called "executives") drive for realizing new solutions, done with appropriate democratic oversight and broad-based stakeholder input, while avoiding perils of unaccountable risk-taking noted in past studies (e.g., Moe, 1994; Terry, 2003). Current research has examined public managers' entrepreneurship in networks (e.g., Bryson & Crosby, 2015) and innovation (e.g., De Vries, Bekkers, & Tummers, 2015), but studies of executives' entrepreneurship in national ministries are very few and anecdotal or based on case studies only (e.g., Berry & Bridgman, 2013; Forrester, 2007; Rhodes, 2011).

This study defines "executive entrepreneurship" as senior, career public managers furthering new policies and initiatives, with input from network stakeholders and support from political appointees. Such broad-based participation is consistent with modern notions of public leadership, addressing strategic and complex challenges in collaborative and accountable ways. This study examines executive entrepreneurship in ministries and departments (called "departments") and addresses two study questions: (a) what is the extent of executives' entrepreneurship, and (b) which intrapersonal, appointee, and/or organizational factors affect executive entrepreneurship. Study data are based on a dyadic survey of senior executives directly reporting to (deputy) ministers in Taiwan. Taiwan is an appropriate study setting in which the above concerns of executive leadership in democratic governance are widely present.

This study contributes to understanding public administration leadership at the apex of national departments. Past studies often focus on political leadership and/or control of departments (e.g., Dull, Roberts, Keeney, & Choi, 2012; Miller, 2015), including dynamics around appointee–executive relations (e.g., Aberbach, Putnam & Rockman, 1981; Heclo, 1977; Hood, 2010). This study adopts a public administration perspective that focuses on department leadership advancing mission-based leadership through development, implementation, and enforcement (Getha-Taylor, Holmes, Jacobson, Morse, & Sowa, 2011). Within this context, it acknowledges that executive leadership should build on well-established traditions in public administration that safeguard and further institutional mission and the public trust, and exhibit "transformational stewardship" (e.g., Kee, Newcomer, & David, 2007; Terry, 2003). This study contributes to this literature by examining a broad range of factors, not only individual factors (e.g., public service motivation [PSM]) and appointees' factors but also strategies and conditions relevant to public administration, such as the use of modern management and performance strategies (e.g., Walker, Boyne, & Brewer, 2010; Walker, Jung, & Boyne, 2013) and external accountability. Systematic studies of very senior officials in national governments such as presented here are highly challenging and scarce (Van Wart, 2013). This study complements other studies that examine leadership at much lower levels (e.g., Karaca, Kapucu, & Van Wart, 2012; Park & Rainey, 2008; Trottier, Van Wart, & Wang, 2008) or in local governments (e.g., Meier & O'Toole, 2006; Svara, 1985, 2001; Zhang & Feiock, 2010) or through cases and profiles

(e.g., Lambright, 2016). This study also has practical relevance for executive selection, described below.

While executive entrepreneurship may suggest notions of activist or Promethean government, the concept of "executive leadership" is not predicated on this. This article argues that executive leadership is needed for ensuring that department policies and programs, including those that are not a focus of appointee or political priority, in order to advance agency missions consistent with authorizations and resources. This applies to activist and conservative or restraining governments alike (Dahl & Soss, 2014; Pierson & Skocpol, 2007). Indeed, experience suggests that both require executive entrepreneurship. By example, New Public Management has often been promoted by conservative-minded governments requiring entrepreneurship from officials furthering new policies and initiatives in such areas as homeland security, school and welfare reform, business promotion, privatization, and e-government (e.g., Kamerman & Kahn, 2014). The need for executive entrepreneurship is inherent to democratic governance in which not all leadership can come from elected and appointed officials.

Executive Entrepreneurship in National Departments

This study defines *executive entrepreneurship* as senior, career public managers furthering new policies and initiatives, with input from network stakeholders, and with support and oversight from political appointees. Public entrepreneurship are acts that identify and realize unexploited opportunities that create new public benefit (or value). This definition is consistent with established usage (e.g., Klein, Mahoney, McGahan, & Pitelis, 2010; Leyden & Link, 2014); it addresses executives' innovation and bringing motivation, energy, and initiative to their roles (Borins, 2014; Doig & Hargrove, 1990; Windrum, 2008), while appointees' involvement speaks to essential democratic oversight of executives' policy making. Examples of executive entrepreneurship include senior public managers taking initiative for strategic planning, advancing pilot programs and policy improvements, ensuring new long-term investments in capability development (e.g., IT systems), and building consensus with stakeholders around policy and program initiatives. Entrepreneurship in large organizations has also been called "intrapreneurship" and initiative-taking, albeit in other contexts (e.g., Bernier & Hafsi, 2007).

As a concept, "public entrepreneurship" has become increasingly popular in recent years. Intellectually, it builds on efforts in the 1990s to unleash the creative and innovative capacities of public managers, partly in response to stereotypes of public employees being risk-averse and constrained by red tape (Moon, 1999; Peters & Savoie, 1995). Entrepreneurship is also context-dependent. Whereas private sector uses emphasize risk-taking and wealth creation, quite obviously, top echelon entrepreneurship in national departments occurs in contexts that value social stability, transparency, political inputs, multi-actor participation, stewardship, and public value (Kee et al., 2007). In such contexts, entrepreneurship does not seek to celebrate or advance risk-taking but rather to correctly

identify, manage, and, to the extent possible, reduce it. In the public sector, this is usually achieved through input and cooperation among stakeholders and appointees in ways that ensure adequate and sustainable mobilization of authority, commitment, and resources over time.

Such public executive entrepreneurship is needed in departments. Current emphases on policy complexity and stalled political processes heighten the issue, but the matter is fundamental and inherent to the functioning of national departments. Concisely, while conventional theory starts with political officials leading the uppermost tiers of departments, the scope of strategic, operational, and democratic top leadership tasks is very large, and, importantly, there are no logical, theoretical, legal, or constitutional reasons to presume appointee priorities and political inputs extending to all top leadership tasks. Table 1 shows top leadership tasks adapted from the job descriptions of senior managers in large departments; this is a very extensive list. Indeed, Behn (1998) has long ago argued that executive leadership is "a necessary obligation" due to the many imperfections of the U.S. governance system, including inadequacies and "insufficiencies" of political and appointees' leadership (see also Meier, 1997), and executives bring knowledge and responsibility to expertise on key decisions. Beyond this, the consensus of many studies is that appointees have short-term horizons, uneven interest in governance, and emphasize policy priorities of political import (Aberbach & Rockman, 2006; Askim, Karlsen, & Kolltveit, 2016; Boin, Hart, McConnell, & Preston, 2010; Dull et al., 2012). In short, the fulfillment of myriad top echelon tasks in departments requires leadership by both appointees and executives. Theoretically, this refers to distributing top leadership responsibilities across actors rather than exercising such tasks jointly (Currie & Lockett, 2011; Gronn, 2002; Meijer, 2014). Unlike collaborative leadership in which leaders work on common issues, distributed leadership suggests that leaders work different sets of issues or a different aspect of the same issue. This suggests significant roles of executive leaders in decision making and, hence, also a need for accountability for such roles as our theoretical discussion and modeling process below highlight.
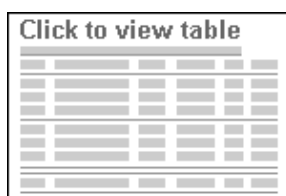
Table 1. Top Echelon Leadership Tasks in Public Agencies.

While significant unanswered questions exist in public administration about the allocation of tasks (Who does what and with what incentives and accountability?), studies suggest that executives should not only follow appointees' leads but also exercise independent judgment. This is implied in our definition ("seeking out opportunities"), consistent with the above, and explicitly mentioned by, for example, Hood and Lodge (2006) who write about "trustee bargains" that "public servants are expected to act as independent judges of public good to some significant extent, and not merely take their order from some political master" (p. 25). This is the first dimension of the study concept, along with seeking input from

stakeholders, too. Many case studies show executives taking initiative, involving judgment (discretion) about tasks in Table 1, such as decisions about which cases for policy or mission-based changes to embrace; getting support from other departments, professional and policy networks, and stakeholders; championing change and implementation; and more (e.g., Bingham & O'Leary, 2008; Bourgault, 2011; Lane & Wallis, 2009; Mack, Green, & Vedlitz, 2008; Mintrom & Norman, 2009). Such efforts are consistent with distributed leadership, while processes of strategic planning, performance management, long-term capacity development, and others that are used are suitable vehicles for both initiative-taking and support building.

Of course, the correlate of independent judgment is accountability, and executive entrepreneurship is defined in the tradition of bureaucratic leadership that involves authority and discretion, as well as democratic accountability and oversight (e.g., Terry, 2003). The second dimension of executive entrepreneurship thus involves accountability. While exercised in many ways, for public executives this notably includes seeking and getting support from political bodies and appointees that bring democratic accountability to leadership decisions about new initiatives. Such processes include appointees vetting proposed policies according to political imperatives of the day, as well as oversight preventing executive leaders' abuse or overreaching of authority. Broadly, executives' entrepreneurship requires agreements (or "bargain" or "understandings" or "psychological contract" or "being over-authorized or hyper-empowered") understood as informal and working understandings rather than official or legal mandates (see also Brehm & Gates, 2014; Forrester, 2007; Hood & Lodge, 2006). These usually informal agreements concern how executives should bring new initiatives to appointees for approval, about processes for ensuring accountability, and as needed, working with the (deputy) minister to ensure legislative approval of such initiatives. Very little is known about such appointee–executive agreements today, and even less is known about the allocation of leadership tasks (Table 1) involving such agreements.

Executive initiative-taking and appointee–executive agreements go hand-in-hand, and we propose that these two dimensions are strongly interwoven. Understandings with appointees about which type of policies they will support reduce, ex ante, uncertainty and risk for executives as they engage with internal and external stakeholders for their support (e.g., West, 2005), as part of executive entrepreneurship. Likewise, once prospective opportunities are identified, accountability agreements will need to be ex post firmed up as programs and their implications are increasingly specified. Finally, the practical and strategic importance of executive entrepreneurship is emphasized. Not only is executive entrepreneurship essential to the execution of the long list of Table 1, it also suggests an active and proactive role of executives in developing and clarifying performance goals, having broadening and possibly cascading leadership efforts throughout departments that lead to further innovation, as well as the development of policies and infrastructures to assist in unforeseen and complex challenges.

Factors Affecting Executive Entrepreneurship

This study examines several hypotheses affecting executives' entrepreneurship. Past research identifies myriad factors shaping public managers' leadership generally, involving intrapersonal (e.g., PSM and other motivations), interpersonal (e.g., supervisory relations), job and workplace (e.g., role clarity, job resources), organizational (e.g., management practices, culture), and external conditions (e.g., public support). This study similarly examines such factors, selected based on current theoretical and practice-based interests of the field.

This study examines two factors of executives' intrapersonal orientations. First, past studies firmly establish PSM as a predictor of managerial behavior, with measures often adapted to study contexts (e.g., Perry & Vandenabeele, 2015; Ritz, 2009; Wright, Moynihan, & Pandey, 2012). Executives may have several decades of career experience in the public sector, and a question is whether they still have a strong, motivating commitment to public causes that predicts leadership behavior (rather than, say, employment choices; Christensen & Wright, 2011). Specifically, some executives are near retirement age whose commitment may have become more subdued or who are less inclined to undertake new initiatives. Second, this study also hypothesizes that some managers with a propensity or commitment for innovation may find executive entrepreneurship an attractive activity or outlet for these motivations (Bekkers, Edelenbos, & Steijn, 2011; Berman & Kim, 2010; Kroll & Vogel, 2014; Windrum, 2008), as well as, possibly, a buildup of usable or transferrable skills for entrepreneurship. Practical experiences with innovation can sharpen strategies for implementing change, building coalitions in support of change, resources acquisition, use of authority, and more. Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

> **Hypothesis 1a (H1a):** Commitment to public causes increases executive entrepreneurship.

> **Hypothesis 1b (H1b):** Commitment to innovation increases executive entrepreneurship.

These intrapersonal factors, PSM and propensity for innovation, also have practical relevance as executive selection criteria in Human Resources Management (i.e., fitting the "right" person with the job). Evidence of successfully and energetically furthering public causes through new programs and policies and/or adopting new innovations are relevant factors in hiring and performance expectations for executives.

Apart from intrapersonal factors, the literature strongly, albeit often anecdotally, also points to appointee factors affecting executives' interpersonal relations with appointees. For example, many studies note appointees have only modest interest on matters of governance and quite some appointees also lacking professional capabilities as managers or in the area of their departments (Cohen, 1996; Fukuyama, 2013; Mackenzie, 1987; Miller, 2015). Other studies note that appointees are more motivated than executives to work in government for reasons of preparing for a more lucrative career outside government later

(e.g., Brewer & Maranto, 2000). Appointees with limited interest in governance and/or professional capability may be less inclined to support executives' initiatives, and, indeed, even avoid interactions that could lead to these; all this increases difficulty in building support for initiatives. By contrast, appointees who are motivated to further agency performance are more likely to solicit and welcome executive initiatives that do so. Some appointees are said to strongly focus on implementing policy agendas, as is consistent with distributed leadership involving leadership by appointees. While furthering appointee agendas requires executive leadership and may provide some opportunity for entrepreneurship, we hypothesize that appointee-led policy agendas will, on balance, crowd out (reduce) executives' entrepreneurship as appointees' political capital is directed elsewhere and executives are foremost working on appointees' policy agendas (Fukuyama, 2014; Gallo & Lewis, 2012). Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

> **Hypothesis 2a (H2a):** Positive perceptions of appointee professional abilities increase executive entrepreneurship.

> **Hypothesis 2b (H2b):** Appointees' commitment to agency governance increases executive entrepreneurship.

> **Hypothesis 2c (H2c):** Appointees' pursuit of political policy agendas decreases executive entrepreneurship.

In the context of distributed leadership, the negative relationship in H2c surely suggests a need for practices and policies to ensure executive-led leadership in departments. This study examines a number of practices and conditions of theoretical and practical relevance for this. First, anecdotal evidence suggests that many appointees are ill-prepared for public service, lacking experience in leadership, management, and/or the public sector (National Academy of Public Administration [NAPA], 2015). In response, some jurisdictions increasingly provide in-depth orientation and follow-up training for appointees about ethics, media interactions, and agency processes (P. S. Kim, 2009). While some of this is narrowly focused on avoiding legal and media difficulties (scandals) that damage political reputations, broader aspects include sensitizing (deputy) ministers and political officials to the roles of civil servants, explaining key process and regulations in agencies, and setting expectations and establishing practices for best working with officials. We hypothesize that such training improves working relations and the climate among appointees for executive entrepreneurship:

> **Hypothesis 3a (H3a):** Appointee training of their legal and ethical duties and agency processes increases executive entrepreneurship.

Second, we consider executives' accountability. While performance management systems have continued to increase in recent years, their impact on senior executives is seldom examined. This study hypothesizes that external evaluations of agency performance, using various performance measures, increase executive entrepreneurship by providing

executives with leverage over appointees, furthering programs and policies that may not be of political or appointee priority. Such external performance information is much needed in modern departments (e.g., Te Kawa & Guerin, 2012), as, among executives reporting to appointees, appraisal continues to often be based on appointee relations and their efforts furthering appointees' policy priorities (Ferrara & Ross, 2005; Heclo, 1977; Lewis, 2007). This study also hypothesizes that modern management practices at lower levels increase executive entrepreneurship, as these include elements of performance management, performance standards, and employee empowerment, all of which increase prospects for executive entrepreneurship (e.g., Berman et al., 2013). Last, this study examines perceived public support for departmental missions and programs creating a favorable context for new policies and programs. This is theoretically aligned with continuing research interests into effects of public trust. Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

> **Hypothesis 3b (H3b):** External evaluations of agency performance increase executive entrepreneurship.

> **Hypothesis 3c (H3c):** Modern management strategies increase executive entrepreneurship.

> **Hypothesis 3d (H3d):** Public support for department missions and programs increase executive entrepreneurship.

These hypotheses are of theoretical and practical importance, relating to possible levers affecting appointee and executive selection, role development, and appraisal. In short, while executive entrepreneurship is seen as essential to department leadership, this study hypothesizes that intrapersonal, appointee, and organizational practices and external conditions (public support) affect it, either by promoting or deterring it. The next section discusses study methods and analytical strategies.

Study Methods

Setting

While concerns of executives' leadership exist in many counties, few settings provide systematic access to executives in national departments. Our study setting, Taiwan, does so and is a relevant study setting. First, Taiwan has well-developed democratic institutions and political processes, and its presidential form of government and constitutional practice ensures important leadership roles for executives. Specifically, constitutional practices limit appointees to one minister and only two or three political appointees per department. This is quite similar to other democratic setting such as U.S. states, having a limited number of appointees in agencies. Second, concerns exist that executives are reluctant to exhibit leadership where political initiative is absent. Taiwan officials are viewed as being highly able, and departments show strong performance where presidential and political support is present. By example, Taiwan ranks 12th out of 148 nations for its environmental

performance, 13th for health care and basic education, and second for business cluster development (World Economic Forum, 2014), all of which are political priorities. In other instances, officials are seen as reluctant. The need for greater executive leadership, undertaken with democratic accountability, is present in Taiwan, which makes this a relevant study setting. Taiwan's population of 23.3 million is similar to Texas, its GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) is comparable with Germany (International Monetary Fund, 2013), and its corruption score is not dissimilar from the United States (Transparency International, 2015) .[1]

Study Sample and Data

Data are from a dyadic survey of executives and their subordinates, as well as an administrative data set. Dyadic surveys are recommended and implemented in business and medical literature (e.g., Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006), but seldom used in public administration because they require extra efforts and costs in data collection. Responses from two sources increase reliability, richness of responses, and effectively resolve issues of common-method variance (CMV; G. Lee, Benoit-Bryan, & Johnson, 2012). The survey called Taiwan Government Bureaucrats Survey-II (TGBS-II), was undertaken between November 2013 and May 2014, in which one version was completed by executives and a second version by their direct subordinates (called "senior managers").

The sampling frame of executives consists of the following: (a) career civil service deputy agency directors, (b) department directors reporting to appointees who are agency directors or deputy agency directors (some of whom have titles as deputy minister but are civil servants), (c) directors of agency-affiliated organizations reporting to agency directors, and (d) directors of administrative support functions who directly report to political appointees (including some civil service career staff). This is truly the leadership elite of Taiwan's civil service; no higher civil servants exist. Names are compiled from an internal personnel directory of Taiwan's Directorate-General of Personnel Administration (DGPA), government websites, and other public records. After removing police or military personnel, retired individuals, political appointees, part-time or vacant posts, and persons not present in Taiwan during the survey period, we verified 441 civil service executives (respectively, 55, 80, 162, and 144 of the above categories); thus, this effective study population is also this study's sampling frame.

To ensure that executives completed the survey (and not assign it to other staff, for example), interviewers made in-person appointments and stayed nearby as executives completed the surveys. Upon completion, interviewers then requested to be introduced to two subordinate line senior managers (directly supervised by executives) for completing the subordinate version of our TGBS-II survey. This "foot-in-the-door" technique was developed by social psychologists 50 years ago (Freedman & Fraser, 1966); once the respondent has agreed to be surveyed, it is more likely that he or she will comply with a more modest request such as providing access to subordinates. All senior manager surveys were

completed on the spot, too, and without input from executives. After two waves of efforts to secure appointments with executives, 204 surveys were completed by executives and an additional 376 paired surveys by direct subordinates (in some instances, only one subordinate survey was obtained). The response rate (204 / 441 = 46.2%) compares favorably with response rates reported in the literature, and we find no evidence of sample bias across the four subgroups (p = .29) or by gender (p = .63) compared against the sampling frame.[2] As suggested in the literature, the multiple subordinate responses were averaged (Kenny et al., 2006). The resulting data set has 204 rows of data, with each row consisting of executive and (averaged) senior manager responses, and administrative data are discussed below.

Sample demographics reflect the high seniority of both groups. On average, executives and senior managers (subordinates) have worked, respectively, 29.6 and 20.0 years in government, of which 3.2 and 4.1 years in their current positions. They are, respectively, 57 and 47 years old and, reflecting growing gender participation, 26.5% and 50.6% are women. Among executives, 13.3% have a PhD degree and 64.5% have a master's degree, and the remainder (22.2%) has a college degree (among subordinates, respectively, 5.3%, 63.4%, and 31.3%).

In addition, an administrative data set was used for supplemental analysis, consisting of expert judgments of the performance of Taiwan national departments. These detailed ratings assess key strategic goals, business results, administrative efficiency, financial management, and organizational learning, involving about 10 to 14 key issues in each dimension, tailored to each agency's mission, or about 50 to 70 assessments per agency. This rating, conducted through 2013, is akin to exercises in other countries, such as Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) in the United States (Heinrich, 2012) that are represented as "traffic lights" (green/yellow/red/white or good/pass/poor/unclear). While the selection of indicators are criticized (W.-Y. Lee & Yih, 2007; Lin, 2003), such measures do assess real differences in performance and provide external source separate from the dyadic survey (Lewis, 2008).

Measures

Measures of entrepreneurship are developed from Mintrom & Norman (2009) and our previous work (Berman, Chen, Jan et al., 2013) developed from conceptual categories and previously used measures. Index variables are shown in the appendix. *Executive entrepreneurship* is measured by seven items for its two dimensions, initiative-taking (α = .81) and appointee–executive agreement (α = .73). The accompanying note shows the factor analysis of items across the two dimensions, and the aggregate measure has alpha = .80.[3] The dyadic survey also allows this research to take these two dimensions from separate sources and finds that initiative-taking (from the executive survey) and appointee–executive agreement (from senior managers' survey) are moderate to strongly associated, r = .29 (p < .01), providing further support for this construct.

Other study measures are as follows: Political Appointees' Leadership (four items, α = .77), Modern Management (seven items, α = .88), and Executive's Commitment to Public Causes (three items, α = .73). All index measures have single factor dimensions, and all other analyzed variables are single measure constructs from the surveys shown in Tables 3 and 4. Table 2 shows the correlation matrix of study variables. The measures of Executive Entrepreneurship and Commitment to Public Causes are strongly associated (r = .55), despite using very different items, and we later examine the effect of this on study results.
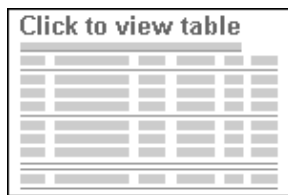
Table 2. Correlation Matrix.

Surveys are a useful and valid data collection approach, and our study design follows preferred strategies for addressing CMV (Favero & Bullock, 2015; Jakobsen & Jensen, 2015; Meier & O'Toole, 2013; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Nonetheless, some variables are part of the same instrument as the dependent variable. To assess the impact of CMV on our main study, we use both the Harmon's single factor test and the marker variable approach, described by Williams, Hartman, and Cavazotte (2010), which parcels out common-source variance and provides CMV-adjusted estimates of our Structural Equation Model (SEM) estimates; this approach is superior to, for example, the Harman's single factor test.[4] The mean amount of marker variance in each indicator is just ($.22^2$ =) 5%, which also does not suggest much CMV. Our main results show CMV-adjusted estimates, which correct for any CMV.

Finally, the multisource approach also provides additional opportunities for testing construct and predictive validity of key study measures. Item analysis was conducted in this regard, and some relevant findings are included in the accompanying note.[5]

Results

This study finds that about one third (37%) of executives agree or strongly agree that they engage in executive entrepreneurship,[6] with the remainder about evenly divided between "somewhat" agreeing (36%) and disagreeing to varying degree (27%). Very few respondents rate their perceived level of entrepreneurship as very high; only 7% of respondents strongly agree with at least half of the items of executive entrepreneurship. Thus, while executive entrepreneurship occurs, these findings are consistent with above concerns about leadership at the apex.

Table 2 shows that all study variables are bivariately associated with executive entrepreneurship, thus lending credence to the above concerns. For example, appointee commitment to governance is associated with executive entrepreneurship (r = .45, p < .01),

though other associations are weaker. However, multivariate testing does not find support for all hypotheses. Table 3 shows a hierarchical testing of the SEM model with CMV-adjusted estimates, starting with the base model (Model 1), and sequentially adding model intrapersonal factors (Model 2), appointee factors (Model 3), and organizational practices and other factors (Model 4). As regarding intrapersonal factors, Table 3 shows executives' commitment to public causes (H1a) being strongly associated with executive entrepreneurship. Indeed, across all models, the beta coefficients of this factor are the highest. It might be noted that the survey items of this construct are clearly different from executive entrepreneurship (see the appendix), and that this bivariate relationship is also very strong (r = .53). As regarding the other intrapersonal factor, SEM analyses do not find support for commitment to innovation (H1b) being associated with executive entrepreneurship. This is discussed later.
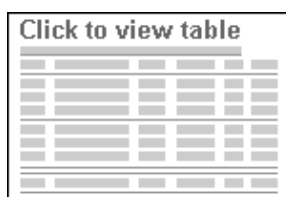

Table 3. Executive Entrepreneurship: Hierarchical SEM Results.

Model 3 examines whether appointee factors affect executive entrepreneurship, over and above executives' intrapersonal orientations in Model 2. Executives' confidence in appointees' professional abilities (H2a) is significantly associated with executive entrepreneurship, as is executives' perceptions of appointees' commitment to leadership and increasing the performance of agency staff (H2b). Clearly, appointees' preparedness for, and commitment to, their roles matters. Also, Model 3 shows that appointee commitment to strongly promoting political agendas (H2c) significantly *reduces* executive entrepreneurship. Thus, a crowding-out effect occurs when executives are strongly tasked with working on others' leadership initiatives. This is a consistent theory of distributed leadership, as showing appointees' leadership standing apart from executives' leadership and involving different types of leadership and relationships between appointees and executives.

However, the effect of appointee factors is diminished when organizational practices and other factors are added, shown as the Full Model 4—an important specification of the above findings. Model 4 shows that providing appointees orientation and training about their legal and ethical obligations and agency processes and duties of staff (H3a) is significantly associated with increased executive entrepreneurship. Indeed, the standardized coefficient of .31 is second only to executives' commitment to public causes (.51). Results also show that external evaluations of agency performance (H3b) increase executive entrepreneurship, as do public support for agency missions and programs (H3d). Both factors point to the role of external accountability furthering executives' efforts, and Table 2 shows that public support is significantly associated with other study concepts, as well. Modern management practices are not associated with executive entrepreneurship (H3c). Comparing Models 3

and 4, organizational practices that further executives' entrepreneurship are seen to reduce appointee factors. Table 4 summarizes the results of our study hypotheses.
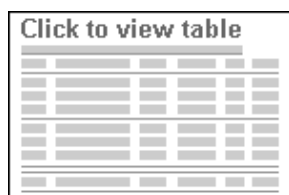
Table 4. Study Findings.

Further analysis of the study data allows for the following conclusions, as well. Based on the standardized coefficients, two factors stand out: (a) executives' commitment to public causes along with (b) orientation of appointees to their obligations and agency roles. In specific terms, among executives with strong or very strong commitment to public causes, 52% also have a strong level executive entrepreneurship, as defined above, compared with only 15% of those who have moderate or weak commitment to public causes. Also, the sum of standardized coefficients of management practices (H3a-H3c) is similar to that executives' commitment to public causes (H1a), suggesting a case for taking a comprehensive perspective on practices supporting executives' efforts. Indeed, among respondents who agree or strongly agree that their department has management practices (H3a-H3c), 61% report a strong level executive entrepreneurship, compared with only 32% of those who disagree or only somewhat agree that these practices are present. The effects of both factors are not dissimilar, suggesting a somewhat broader interpretation that organizational practices and executives' own commitment are both important.

Finally, further analysis from survey items also shines light on *how* executive entrepreneurship may bring new efforts and initiatives into being, as well. Executive entrepreneurship is significantly associated with senior managers' perceptions that "My superior manager (i.e., the executive) proposes new programs and policies," ". . .requires subordinate managers to propose initiatives for new programs or policies," and ". . . helps subordinates to generate new ideas for initiatives and improvements" (respectively, r = .19, .18, and .22, all ps < .01). Then, requiring subordinate managers to propose initiatives is also associated with "managers setting high performance expectations for employees" and "empowering employees to make important decisions" (respectively, tau-b = . 44 and .24, both ps < .01), showing yet further cascading and broadening efforts to employees. This suggests that executive entrepreneurship can increase staff energies too.

Discussion

This study finds that executive entrepreneurship is significantly furthered by (a) executives' commitment to public causes along with (b) organizational practices that further orientation of appointees to their obligations and agency roles, and which provide accountability for executives' performance. Also, organizational practices appear to overcome effects of appointee factors that otherwise also affect executive entrepreneurship. In the following, we first offer discussion of these research findings, and then provide some broader implications.

The role of executives' intrapersonal commitment to public causes as a predictor of their entrepreneurship is consistent with other research showing strong effects of PSM on performance and leadership. While studies of PSM rarely survey high-level executives as in this study (e.g., S. Kim et al., 2013), anecdotal cases and biographies of exemplary senior executives routinely note their strong commitment to public service values and ideals (e.g., Doig & Hargrove, 1990; Forrester, 2007; Lambright, 2016). The strong magnitude of prosocial orientations is somewhat unexpected, but this may reflect that the above organizational practices are sometimes only weakly present—This reality is reported in many countries, including the U.S. Federal Senior Executive Service (SES). Regarding commitment to innovation (H1b), while associated with entrepreneurship (r = .39), perhaps the actual measure "being innovative has been good for my career" points too narrowly to intrapersonal competencies that are needed for executive entrepreneurship.

Our study results show that organizational practices trump effects of appointee factors on executive entrepreneurship. However, good appointee–executive relations lie at the heart of the study measure of executive entrepreneurship. Our construct incorporates older frameworks in the tradition of Heclo (1977), which continue to find expression in the work of NAPA (2015). Specifically, our findings suggest that while executives must have productive working relationships with appointees, thereafter, organizational practices may overcome further effects of appointee factors (Model 4). Also, past studies show widespread concern about appointees' commitment to, and even knowledge of, governance practices (Van Wart, Hondeghem, & Schwella,2014). Our study now provides systematic evidence of positive effects of orienting appointees to their obligations and duties and of the roles of department staff. Additional analysis shows that only 23% respondents agree or strongly agree that management practices relating to H3a to H3c are present (among which, only one seventh strongly agree), hence affirming potential for considerable improvement.

Beyond the above comments relating to main study findings, we offer the following broader observations, too. First, as regarding the main study construct, executive entrepreneurship, interest and concerns exist that it should not be associated with undue risk-taking. Some past studies note rule-breaking and some public managers being "loose cannons" and causing a loss of public trust (Borins, 2000; Wilkins, 2014). Such concerns cannot and should not go away, as they are inexorably linked to ethics and risks associated with any leadership. In our view, the issue is not about risk-avoidance, as leadership is needed, but rather about risk management given the presence of leadership. Our main study construct is built quite strongly around modern notions of collaborative governance and accountability, which other scholars note is consistent with overcoming and managing risk. Having examined prevalence and antecedents in this study, we recommend that future studies examine risk management practices associated with executive entrepreneurship.

Second, notwithstanding risk, we find some evidence that, on balance, executive entrepreneurship is associated with positive outcomes. In addition to preceding analysis of *how* executive entrepreneurship brings new efforts and initiatives into being, data exist of

aggregate assessments about the performance of national departments (see "*Study Sample and Data*" section). Figure 1 shows that executive entrepreneurship is modestly associated with increased perception of performance ($r = .19$, $p < .01$), and that effect is most marked in the sharp decline of poor and fair performance. Specifically, high levels of executive entrepreneurship reduce the prevalence of poorly or fairly ranked departments by more than half, from 31% to 14%. This finding is consistent with this article's theory of distributed leadership in departments. Executives' leadership is necessary to ensure coverage of the myriad challenges noted in Table 1, where appointee interest or priorities may be absent. The absence of executive entrepreneurship may result in lower performance across the broad range of many programs and policies that, then, is reflected in expert judgment of department performance, as well.
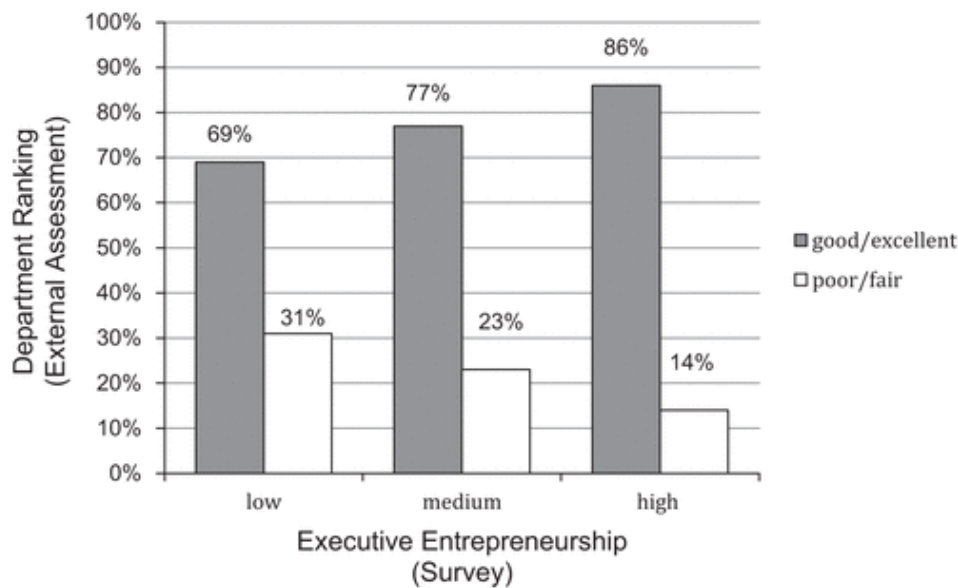
Figure 1. Department ranking by executive entrepreneurship.

Third, the study framework of distributed senior leadership responsibilities suggests different streams of leadership by appointees and executives. The implications of such a model are unique to the public sector and require further investigation. On one hand, there is conventional appointee-led leadership for policy priorities that require executives' implementation. On the other hand, there is executive-led leadership for ensuring mission-based leadership of all department policies and programs, and capability development that is future and performance-focused. What incentives do executives have to provide such leadership? What incentives do appointees have to support and provide oversight for such leadership? Study results suggest that executive-led leadership is furthered by both PSM and organizational practices. As regarding the latter, despite past efforts that include mandatory strategic planning and performance management, present concerns suggest that still more is needed. By example, New Zealand is one of several jurisdictions in which executives' terms of employment are also linked to departmental performance, which, in that country, is assessed by independent strategic review (apart from political accountability; Te Kawa & Guerin, 2012). Heightened accountability can be an important driver of leadership, indeed. In any event, rethinking the governance of executive-led leadership continues to be

a major challenge in many democracies, and we call for increased public administration scholarship on the matter.

Finally, while our study data are of one country (Taiwan), some speculations are appropriate about the relevance of study conclusions in other jurisdictions, where conditions of distributed leadership and deficits of executive leadership are present. As previously noted, Taiwan governing systems are similar to many U.S. States, reflecting a limited number of appointees in agencies and the chief executive (president or governor) having commanding influence over policy priorities. As regarding differences, perhaps the largest difference is with jurisdictions having many political appointees, such as the U.S. federal government and some countries (e.g., Brazil). Such systems invite further research about leadership by civil servants reporting to appointees at much lower levels, as well as comparison of the performance of appointees and executives in similar leadership roles (e.g., Lewis, 2007). Other jurisdictions may have greater political and/or corruptive influences on executives' decision making (e.g., India), stronger/more effective performance management of executives (e.g., Singapore; Neo & Chen, 2007), or less capable or professional public officials (e.g., developing countries). It might be noted that differences among jurisdictions also exist within the United States.

Conclusion

This study defines executive entrepreneurship as senior, career public managers furthering new policies and initiatives, with input from network stakeholders, and with support and oversight from political appointees. Study results in national departments show that 37% of executives agree or strongly agree that they engage in executive entrepreneurship. Executive entrepreneurship is significantly furthered by (a) executives' commitment to public causes along with (b) organizational practices that further orientation of appointees to their obligations and agency roles, as well as providing accountability for executives' performance. Organizational practices appear to overcome effects of appointee factors that otherwise also affect executive entrepreneurship. These findings also support current efforts in human resources management (HRM) to assist appointees in their on-boarding processes and to strengthen the development and selection of executives.

This study adds to the literature by examining an important aspect of senior public leadership, namely, executive entrepreneurship. It does so in the context of a framework of distributed leadership at the top echelon of national departments, bringing in public administration to both appointee-led leadership and executive-led leadership. This study also suggests that executive-led leadership may play a role in reducing perceptions of poor department performance, hence adding to public trust in government, too. As all studies, qualifications are in order, and study results will benefit from additional and corroborating research. Additional factors might include executive selection, leadership development and performance appraisal processes, processes of legislative overreaching, and a further focus on appointees' willingness to provide accountability. While surveys are appropriate for

scientific work, other approaches such as field experiments and case studies can add to the richness of findings, including examination of lagged effects. Finally, future research might also examine whether executive entrepreneurship occurs at similar levels in other countries? How does it vary in activist and conservative governments? How is it affected by different governance practices involving training and/or external assessments for accountability? Which tasks in Table 1 are most (un)fulfilled? Whatever the future of executive leadership, a clear need exists for having more of it.

Appendix

Measurements

The following index measures are used in this study. All other items are single item measures as shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Executive entrepreneurship (α = .81)

I am active in networks of people that influence policy making.

I influence how the agency defines and analyzes policy issues.

I insist that our agency leads in implementing new policy ideas.

I often discuss new agency initiatives with leaders in society.

There exists a high degree of trust between (deputy) ministers and senior executives.

I am often able to get support from the (deputy) minister for new policy and program proposals that we want to initiate.

The (deputy) minister provides oversight of programs and policies that I am responsible for.

Appointee–executive agreement (α = .83; Senior Manager survey)

My superior manager . . .

has a clear understanding with political officials about which programs and policies we should take initiative for;

brings new agency initiatives to the (deputy) minister for his or her approval;

works with the (deputy) minister to ensure legislative approval of our initiatives.

Executives' commitment to public causes (α = .73).[7]

I am passionate about one or more social causes.

I am willing to use every ounce of my energy to make the world a more just place.

An official's obligation to the public should always come before loyalty to superiors.

Appointees' political leadership (α = .77)

The minister and political deputy ministers . . .

strongly promote the president's agenda in our area;

are highly responsive to political interests and agendas;

have an agenda of programs and policies they seek to implement;

are advocates for specific causes that they promote.

Modern management strategies (α = .88; senior manager's survey)

Achieving good results gets people promoted around here.

Managers set high performance expectations for employees.

Our department encourages open and constructive dialogue.

We empower employees to make important decisions.

Managers in our agency are highly skilled and motivated.

We collaborate a lot with other ministries.

Appointee orientation and training

We provide orientation for new (deputy) ministers about their legal and ethical obligations.

We provide orientation for new (deputy) ministers about agency processes and duties.

Notes

1. The relative corruption scores are as follows: the United States: 15/168 and Taiwan: 30/168.

2. A slight under-sampling of career civil service deputy agency directors and oversampling of directors of administrative support functions exist that is neither significant nor affects study conclusions.

3.
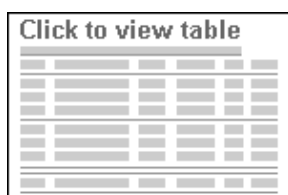
Table

These two dimensions explain 65.4% of variance.

4. For example, the Full Model 4 in Table 3 does not show a single factor (it has four factors), and the largest factor explains only 28%, well below the norm of 50%.

5. Executive entrepreneurship is associated with senior managers' perception that "my superior manager is aware of political agendas and priorities as affecting our initiatives" ($r = .20$, $p < .01$) and also "my superior manager brings new agency initiatives to the (deputy) minister for his or her approval" ($r = .25$, $p < .01$). These results support construct validity, as does association between the executive entrepreneurship construct item "I often discuss new agency initiatives with leaders in society" on the executives' survey, and the "identical" item on the senior managers' survey "My superior manager often discusses new agency initiatives with leaders in society" (tau-$b = .26$, $p < .01$). Beyond this, executive entrepreneurship is also associated with senior managers' perception of their executives' "helping subordinates generate new ideas for initiatives and improvements" ($r = .22$, $p < .01$), showing predictive validity. Likewise, the item "My superior manager proposes new programs and policies" on the senior managers' survey is also associated with measure of department ranking ($r = .15$, $p < .01$).

6. Defines by a cutoff point 5.5 on both dimensions of executive entrepreneurship.

7. This measure includes some of Perry's (1996) measures (PSM33 and PSM37), but survey length restrictions do not allow for the full suite. The selection here is guided by the research interest regarding a broad commitment to public (including social) causes. Beyond this, the theorem of interchangeability of indicators states that if several different indicators all represent to, some degree, the same concept, then any combination of indicators will behave in much the same way as if the concept could be directly observed. Hence, however imperfect, we believe ours is a usable measure of commitment to public causes.

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