

# 1

---

## *The Key to Networked Government*

DONALD F. KETTL

Even the most casual look at how government programs actually operate raises big questions about orthodox theories of public policy. Translating big ideas into reality requires collaboration among many players. Government social service programs ripple out through a huge collection of nonprofit community-based organizations, and these organizations typically blend funding from federal, state, local, foundation, and voluntary contributions. Airport security is a complex partnership among airlines, airport authorities, and federal, state, and local governments. Attacking issues such as climate change requires global partnerships. Doing important things typically means bringing together a big collection of players. That, at its core, is the meaning and puzzle of networked government: gathering the players, coordinating their work, and ensuring that the result promotes the public interest.

The power of networked government lies in its pragmatism. Its proponents begin with the assessment that most classical theories fall short in describing how public programs actually work, and they seek to lay out a straightforward explanation policy implementation. As soon as anyone points out the interconnections among the programs citizens encounter every day, the more apparent such connections become everywhere. But networked government raises a problem. It provides an explanation for the way much of government operates, but the explanation is a long way from the theories that guide thinking about how government *should* work. The basic theory of government holds that policymakers delegate

power to administrators to do good things and hold them accountable for how well administrators do them. This generations-old theory has proved remarkably robust, as scholars adapt it to changing governmental strategies and tactics, and thus has allowed policymakers to give government administrators more power in exchange for a process that holds them accountable. The problem has come as government's ambition has grown, with more government power extending into more nooks and crannies of civic life, more players with a role in exercising that power, and more hands responsible for how well public programs work.

The mismatch between academic theories and operating realities is more than just an arcane puzzle for academics. A fundamental puzzle for governance in the twenty-first century is the question: How do you make government effective enough to get its job done while holding its officials accountable in their exercise of power? In the late nineteenth century, the Progressives tackled this ageless dilemma by making a quiet deal: give government more power to do progressive things, and they would build institutions and processes to ensure that the bureaucrats exercising that power did not run amok. The institutions and processes they created presumed a chain of command from citizens to elected officials to bureaucrats. The Progressives could license the bureaucrats with great power because they believed that the system would hold the bureaucrats accountable. This approach became enshrined both in the theory of how government ought to work and in the practical understandings under which elected officials operated.

As public policies developed throughout the twentieth century, two big problems emerged with this theory. First, more public programs involved more players, so it was hard for elected officials to hold any single person or agency accountable for results. That posed big problems for accountability, because policymakers often puzzled over who was responsible for what. Second, the tools that elected officials used to track and control these programs did not keep up with the changing strategies and tactics. Growing partnerships made programs more complex and harder to manage and control. More players with weaker links to policymakers combined to create a twin dilemma: big performance problems along with weakened accountability.

That did not necessarily mean that effective and responsive government was doomed. Out of the expansive programs and complex partnerships came individual leaders who concentrated on the job at hand and worked to figure out how to get it done. By focusing on the immediate mission, many of them have proved remarkably effective in moving their programs forward. But how this works, and how the individual leadership might be integrated into a broader model for how to approach networked government, is an unanswered question. Among academics there is no consensus about whether networks are a theory, an approach, a phenomenon, a pattern, or a relationship.<sup>1</sup> Recognition of the importance of

1. For a review of the academic literature on networked government, see the bibliography.

networks has been growing since the end of the twentieth century, but just what they are is anything but clear.

Instead of adding high-level conjecture to this debate, the authors of this book took a different tack. Each author chose a policy area of clear importance and sought to describe the policy arena—who did what, and how well it worked. The methodology was deep immersion and thick description. Some authors shadowed public officials to get a sense of how their programs worked. Others convened day-long sessions of intense interviews about the issues the managers faced. Some gleaned important insights from often-neglected sources. Together, the authors present seven detailed cases about how networked government actually operates. The cases are wide-ranging: a cooperative conservation initiative, by William Eggers (chapter 2); climate change, by Barry Rabe (chapter 3); wetlands protection, by Paul Posner (chapter 4); changes in eligibility for governmental programs, by Steve Goldsmith and Tim Burke (chapter 5); coordination of national intelligence, by G. Edward DeSeve (chapter 6); port security, by Anne M. Khademan and William G. Berberich (chapter 7); and even “dark networks” such as al Qaeda, by H. Brinton Milward and Jörg Raab (chapter 8). The disparate cases provide clues to a basic question: How do the politics and management of public policy in the twenty-first century actually work? Networked government has become more prevalent and more important. What implications does it have for governance?

## The Roots of Networked Government

Traditional approaches to public policy, especially the strategies framed by the nation’s founders and the Progressives, are fundamentally *structural*. The founders put their faith in “separated institutions sharing power,” as Richard Neustadt put it.<sup>2</sup> The Progressives built new regulatory agencies, the Federal Reserve, and new management processes, such as the executive budget. They sparked a century of lively debate by promoting separation of policymaking from policy administration, but that separation really attempted to solve one important problem: how to increase government’s reach and power while holding government administrators accountable for the exercise of that power. The founders’ and Progressives’ solutions were structural and procedural: granting power but constraining it, within government organizations and through tough management accountability rules. The approach was boundary based. Elected officials were the principals; government administrators were their agents.

During the twentieth century those boundaries were breached. When private and nonprofit programs could not handle the overwhelming burden of responding effectively to the Great Depression, Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal vastly expanded government’s reach, working through an alphabet soup of federal agencies

2. Neustadt (1964, p. 42).

and new partnerships with state and local governments. World War II magnified the organizational challenge. Faced with a two-front war, the federal government could have nationalized war production or operated its own armament factories. No one wanted to admit the possibility of a large permanent military establishment and, in any event, creating a government-owned and government-run military-industrial complex would have taken a long time. Instead, defense planners relied on private contractors so that the war mobilization effort could be dialed up and down as needed. The government signed huge deals with contractors such as Boeing, Northrop, and Kaiser to produce the needed military materiel and equipment.<sup>3</sup> In response to the crisis, Howard Hughes built his Hughes Aircraft Company from a tiny outfit employing just four people into an 80,000-person leviathan.<sup>4</sup>

The Roosevelt administration set a course of providing public funds, through incentives and direct finance, for private construction. A combination of special depreciation deals and outright construction grants created the facilities. Government contracts paid for supplies and equipment. The strategy became known simply as “GOCOs,” for government-owned, contractor-operated facilities. In some cases private companies simply expanded their own operations, with government financial help, to meet the wartime demand. It was a war-fighting strategy born of pragmatism, but it had profound implications for the distribution of government power. Private companies became important, indeed indispensable, agents of governmental policy. They also became independent sources of influence that prompted Dwight D. Eisenhower to warn famously in his farewell address at the end of his presidency: “In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.”<sup>5</sup> Not only were the government’s private partners important to the pursuit of public goals, but they were also becoming important independent sources of political power.

Similar partnerships grew in other areas. New space technologies, spun off from the World War II research and development effort, led to the creation of a large ballistic missile program to launch nuclear weapons. That in turn led to the manned space program. By the early years of the twenty-first century, private contractors were responsible for 90 percent of all the spending in the space shuttle program. The interstate highway system, launched in 1956 as the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, gave the states federal money to build a new national road network. It was irresistible to the states—the federal government paid 90 cents

3. U.S. Army, *Mobilization: The U.S. Army in World War II—The 50th Anniversary* ([www.history.army.mil/documents/mobpam.htm](http://www.history.army.mil/documents/mobpam.htm)).

4. U.S. Centennial of Flight Commission ([www.centennialofflight.gov/essay/Aerospace/Hughes/Aero44.htm](http://www.centennialofflight.gov/essay/Aerospace/Hughes/Aero44.htm)).

5. Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Military-Industrial Complex Speech, January 17, 1961” (<http://coursesa.matrix.msu.edu/~hst306/documents/indust.html>).

for each dollar spent on highway construction, and private contractors did most of the work. At the local level, the federal government helped cities tear down derelict neighborhoods in a major urban renewal effort, in the hope that large plots of developable land would spur new investment and revitalize neighborhoods. For decades critics have argued about the success of these strategies, but there is no mistaking their two fundamental impacts. First, they transformed the temporary pragmatism of the public-private partnerships that helped win World War II into a permanent policy strategy. Second, these partnerships moved well past the boundary-based strategies for expanding but controlling government power that the Progressives had envisioned. The ultimate impact of these gradual shifts might not have been clear, but they cast a long enough shadow for Eisenhower to register his concern.

Following the creation of permanent public-private partnerships in the 1950s, the floodgates of innovation opened wide in the 1960s. The space and interstate highway programs vastly expanded. So did the military establishment, nurtured by the cold war and then the war in Vietnam. Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty expanded federal grants to local governments, and the rise of the administration's Model Cities Program spread federal cash to nonprofit neighborhood organizations. The Medicare and Medicaid programs extended health care programs for older and poorer Americans through extraordinarily complex arrangements with for-profit and nonprofit health care providers and private companies that managed reimbursement. Regulatory programs grew through similar partnerships, ranging from efforts to improve environmental quality to broad-based strategies to improve the health and safety of workplaces.

The privatization movement of the 1980s, championed by Ronald Reagan during his presidency, sought to rein in government and return more power to the private sector. In fact, it scarcely (if at all) reduced government's role but significantly expanded the array of services that government contracted out. From cafeterias to maintenance services, governments at all levels sought private providers of support services. Politicians of both parties—Reagan in the 1980s and Bill Clinton in the 1990s—accelerated the contracting-out movement. Politicians continually pledged to rein in government's reach into the private lives of citizens, but regulations expanded, covering everything from the safety of children's car seats to that of supermarket spinach.

A complex array of cross-cutting forces prompted the growth of these partnerships. Political demands for more government solutions to big problems balanced by political opposition to expanding government employment to do the job led to reliance on nongovernmental partners. So, too, did the rise of complex problems, from putting astronauts into space to managing tens of millions of Medicare transactions. Relying on private partners was far easier for government than building its own internal expertise to accomplish these goals.

The federal government has long had an official policy of encouraging such partnerships. In 1955 the Bureau of the Budget (now called the Office of Management

and Budget, OMB) issued circular A-76, requiring the federal government to buy goods and services from the private sector whenever it was proper and cost-effective to do so. Contracting out was proper for functions that were not “inherently governmental,” that is, functions that were not intrinsically tied to the government’s basic responsibilities and power.

However, as government contracting spilled into more areas, setting the “inherently governmental” standard became ever more difficult. In fact, Stephen Goldsmith argues in chapter 5 of this book, there are few functions that government can do better than the private sector and no functions that truly are inherent to government. If anything can be contracted out, is there anything that should not be? This question lies at the core of a sharp ideological divide between conservatives and liberals, but it also raises a tough question for networks: Since networks are about effective bridges over boundaries, are there any boundaries that networks should not bridge?

The cost-effectiveness standard likewise proved hard to define. As the so-called A-76 movement evolved, a basic principle emerged: whenever government had a job to do, it should be done by whoever (in either the private or public sectors) could do it most cheaply. Over the years, the rules gradually changed to favor contracting out even more, and conservatives seized on circular A-76 to back up their privatization initiatives. Employees of government agencies regularly complained that the playing field was never level when they competed for contracts. They said that the competitions were often rigged against them: because the government pays relatively generous benefits while private competitors often skimp on benefits, contractors frequently low-balled the price to get the work. Government employees at all levels won a surprising number of these competitions, but contractors competed ever more aggressively, with substantial help from the Reagan and both Bush administrations.

Pragmatism, policy, and politics—together these forces further blurred the boundaries between government and its private and nonprofit partners. Networks emerged as a form of adaptive behavior, an effort to find ways to solve problems under tough political and substantive constraints. How should a spacecraft be built and launched to put astronauts into space and bring them back via a plane-like landing? How should lakes be made swimmable and rivers drinkable again? How should greenhouse gases be reduced or management of national intelligence improved? How should the transportation system be strengthened or health care improved? Other nations, especially in Europe, have answered these questions through an expansion of the welfare state. The special nature of U.S. federalism, coupled with Americans’ deep-rooted love-hate relationship with government, made that impossible. The government’s response to the financial meltdown in 2008 further blurred the neat boundaries around government programs and the agencies assigned to manage them. Bit by bit, Americans have jury-rigged a sys-

tem of enormous complexity, adapting governmental structures and processes to new problems by tacking on new partnerships as the problems demanded.

Networked government, in fact, is something like the networked brain. Many of the brain's basic functions are hard-wired. Neural networks adapt to new stimuli, and new patterns of interconnection emerge as needed to help the brain solve fresh problems. The brain's learning is adaptive behavior. Government's networks likewise have learned to adapt to fit and solve the shifting patterns and growing expectations of public policy. Networked government has emerged as a strategy to help government adapt and perform in the changing policy world.

The closest that the U.S. government has come to embracing networked government as an explicit strategy is the A-76 process of encouraging contracting out. But networked government extends far past the mandate of circular A-76. State and local governments' contracting out has expanded into virtually every function, from libraries to fire protection. Welfare reform has been built on a network of contracts with private and nonprofit social service and job placement organizations.<sup>6</sup> For-profit and nonprofit organizations deliver most community social service programs, and the connections among them rival the most intricate neural map of brain activity. Most local governments have mutual assistance agreements with their neighbors for large public safety problems. For instance, in Virginia, Arlington County's response to the attack on the Pentagon was an intricate ballet performed by federal, state, regional, and local agencies.<sup>7</sup> State governments work with each other to improve the quality of the rivers and streams they share. Networked government is like an anthill. It might not look like much on the surface, but the deeper one scratches, the more intricate interconnections one finds.

Some networks connect government and the private and nonprofit sectors. Some are between government agencies at a single level of government, while others are within government but across its levels. Some stretch across international boundaries and, like the international space station, past the boundaries of earth itself. These networks are all pragmatic efforts to adapt existing organizations, through practical partnerships, to pursue public purposes. The very nature of these networks makes it difficult to assess how large they are, but their role and importance are unmistakable. The deeper one scratches below the surface, the more important the network phenomenon becomes.

## Central Questions

Establishing the importance of networked government is one thing. Assessing its role in governance is quite another. In fact, the rise of networked government

6. See, for example, Sanger (2003).

7. Arlington County (2001).

raises a host of difficult issues, which constitute the central questions discussed in this book.

### *Is Networked Government New?*

The role of networked government is inescapable. But is it really new—or just newly noticed? After all, governments have relied on contractors for millennia. An essential element in Caesar’s campaign to extend the reach of the Roman empire was to ensure a steady supply of provisions for his army. Ill-fed troops make unreliable warriors. Napoleon, too, worried about creating and sustaining a supply network to feed his troops. He is widely credited with the adage “an army travels on its stomach.” Both had to rely heavily on a complex chain of local suppliers to keep their troops moving.

Networked government is nothing new. Moreover, much networked government is ad hoc and out of sync with the conventional view of how government operates. Governments tend not to keep their books in a way that makes it easy (or even possible) to assess the full measure of the private sector’s contribution to the public sector’s work. The Federal Procurement Data System tracks federal contracts, but it has struggled to capture all federal contracting activity, and long-term analysis is extraordinarily difficult.<sup>8</sup> In 2006 Barack Obama cosponsored the creation of the website [www.USASpending.gov](http://www.USASpending.gov), which is a database that tracks where federal grant and contract dollars go, making it possible, for example, to identify how many dollars flow to each community or congressional district. There is no similar database for state and local governments, although they have relied extensively on these indirect tools of government as well.

Table 1-1 shows estimates from [USASpending.com](http://USASpending.com) of total federal spending, broken down by the type of fiscal tool used to administer the funding: contracts, grants to state and local governments, loans, insurance, direct payments (such as Social Security and Medicare), and others. The time period is short and the data are raw, but there is no escaping the expansion of networked government just from fiscal year 2000 through 2007, a period in which the volume of contracting out increased from 11.5 to 16.0 percent of all federal spending and grants grew from 16.2 to 18.7 percent. Getting a clear and consistent measure of networked government is extremely difficult, but two things are clear: it is large, and it is growing. If historical data were available for the pre–World War II years and we could compare them to the postwar years, there is no doubt that the conclusion would be dramatic: we would see that contracting expanded significantly and that the twenty-first-century U.S. government is vastly more networked than were Caesar’s and Napoleon’s.

8. See the Federal Procurement Data System website ([www.fpds.gov](http://www.fpds.gov)).



Table 1-1. *Government Spending*

U.S.\$ billions

	<i>FY 2000</i>	<i>FY 2001</i>	<i>FY 2002</i>	<i>FY 2003</i>	<i>FY 2004</i>	<i>FY 2005</i>	<i>FY 2006</i>
Contracts	208.84	219.80	259.60	298.51	341.88	382.12	419.89
Grants	294.51	330.74	406.15	493.28	449.61	441.02	488.52
Loans	107.98	141.81	216.76	210.83	154.78	118.78	95.39
Insurance	431.32	492.21	556.59	567.21	603.89	653.23	771.28
Direct payments (for example, Social Security)	768.25	839.65	841.51	947.94	965.48	1,004.07	1,092.67
Other	2.82	2.68	0.23	0.66	0.38	0.30	3.85
Total	1,813.72	2,026.89	2,280.83	2,518.45	2,516.02	2,599.51	2,871.59

Source: See [www.usaspending.gov](http://www.usaspending.gov).

Through the fiscal tools mentioned previously, the true size of government has expanded (see table 1-1).<sup>9</sup> In the decades since World War II, the reach and impact of government at all levels has unquestionably grown significantly, breaking down the very boundaries that the Progressives created to license but restrain bureaucratic power. Eisenhower was prescient when he warned of the specter of a military-industrial complex. The twenty-first-century complex stretches far past the military into virtually every cranny of the U.S. government. In short, the government has become ever more networked, through a collection of collaborations that has materialized to get the work done, as often on an ad hoc basis as by design.

## Is Networked Government the Product of Conscious Design?

Another reason why analyzing networked government is difficult is that it takes such different forms and follows no consistent model. In fact, it stands in stark contrast to the organizational strategies of the Progressives. They strengthened government by constraining its power within clear boundaries and held it accountable through tough processes. Networked government, by contrast, developed to escape the constraints imposed by the Progressives' design. Where the Progressives focused on holding power within organizational structures, networked government seeks to reach across political and organizational boundaries. Where the Progressives sought to hold power accountable through a variety of finance-based mechanisms, networked government pragmatically focuses on how best to solve the problem at hand. In short, the traditional model of policy and politics seeks consciously to design the system in advance. Networked government evolves in

9. See Light (1999).

response to problems, and solutions emerge that seem best to fit the problem, sometimes ad hoc and sometimes following previously used models.

This gives networked government enormous flexibility, but it also makes building a theory to explain what it is and how it works far more difficult. The Progressives had an inward approach, a straightforward, structure-based model that provided not only a road map for building a government but also a theory about how their model of government would work. Networked government, by contrast, is outward looking. Because the nature of the policy problem defines the role of the players and their interactions, it is far more difficult to generalize about what networked government is or how it works. The traditional system framed by the Progressives is indeed a product of intelligent design. Networked government is evolutionary. That is its strength, in helping government adapt to new problems, but it is also its conceptual fragility. Its adaptive nature has made it easy to posit the approach to networked governance as “we know it when we see it,” but it has also made it that much harder to build a theory that describes what it is, how it works, and how it can be deployed.

### *In Networks Is Government Just One Player among Many?*

The adaptive nature of networked government helps it evolve to fit new problems, but it also creates opportunities for new political games. The nature of policy problems defines the players in networks; stakeholders in a problem are the ones most likely to gather around it. For instance, the question of how best to clean up a bay brings together a coalition of the governmental units responsible for the bay’s environmental health, the commercial interests that might have to pay a price for cleanup, and the citizens most likely to benefit from cleaner water and better-protected wildlife. National security and climate change debates bring together completely different coalitions of players. Networked government thus not only is a tactic for administering public policies, but it also creates its own tremendously varied political ecology, a pluralism in which different policies define different politics.

Moreover, networked government not only defines the nature of the political game but also creates a game in which the government is one player among many. Most theories of pluralism put government at the center of competing demands by external players, each involved in cross-cutting battles to influence government’s decisions. In networked government, government itself is often one of the players, sometimes only a bit player in a far larger drama, and sometimes the central mover. Sometimes the players are governments at different levels of the inter-governmental system, governments abroad, different agencies with varied stakes in the policy outcome, interest groups and companies, citizens and neighborhood associations. Sometimes government convenes, stimulates, or controls the network. In national security policy, for example, a handful of relatively anonymous agencies are the prime movers. Sometimes, as with climate change, government is one player among many and seeks to nudge the others in a way that

matches its preferred course. Sometimes other members of the network try to nudge government, in a process more like well-known versions of pluralism.

What all of these approaches to networked government share is that they differ sharply from traditional approaches to politics. Governmental decisionmakers are not so much the focus of competing external forces as part of an intricate web, defined by the policy at play, in which individual governmental decisionmakers are but one player among many. Traditional pluralism, by putting government at the center, makes governmental decisionmakers the principal focus, whereas networked government, by making government one among many players, creates a far more complicated process in which power is far more widely distributed—and in which government sometimes is not even the prime mover or the most powerful player. Left unanswered is the question of who convenes the network.

That leads to an important question: If complex cross pressures shape interactions, and if the outcome of the game is more a product of these interactions than of the decision made by any one player (including a government official), and if it is not clear who convenes the network, who is in charge when power is so broadly shared? The rules of the governance game provide no clear answer because in many cases there are no rules. This version of pluralism on steroids allows the system tremendous flexibility in adapting to new challenges. Indeed, as seen earlier, networked government emerged because boundary-based systems often reacted sluggishly to change. It also allows governmental players to bring in a vast array of other governmental and nongovernmental partners, thereby broadening the political base for public action.

This pragmatic flexibility can, however, also compromise the pursuit of the public interest. If no one is clearly in charge—if government officials are not necessarily the prime movers of the network and if, within government, public responsibility is fuzzy—how does accountability work? Who is responsible for defining, pursuing, and achieving the public interest? Or have the worst fears of pluralism's critics come home with a vengeance? Has the government's role in defining public policy weakened? Are policies being shaped increasingly by the interplay of private forces as government's voice has faded?

The cases in this book explore this question from a wide array of perspectives. One answer they give is that within each network, individual governmental leaders often emerge to define and shape public goals. They subtly work to redefine accountability away from the Progressives' focus on process to a shared focus on making the program work. In the eyes of many of these leaders, the networks are good and accountable in the degree to which they accomplish the programs' goals, not the degree to which the players simply follow the rules. The cases explore the puzzle about how this shift in accountability works—and whether it works well enough to ensure the responsible exercise of government's power in accordance with the wishes of policymakers and citizens. Is this an effective strategy for accountability?

In the case studies, one element is especially important to track. The cases are stories not only about cutting-edge public policy problems that increasingly are managed through networks but also about individual leadership, about governmental leaders who rose to the challenge of solving difficult and complex problems, picked up the flag, and sought to frame a consensus and coordinate network actions. The book's contributors did not commit themselves to a common methodology but rather to a shared mission: to identify important examples of networked government and examine how the networks operated. Thus, the rise of key leaders in each case was not the product of conscious design but signaled the emergence of a pattern that flows across all the cases.

The case studies are instructive at three levels: the emergence of complex policy problems that require response from many actors; the processes that knit together, sometimes well and sometimes badly, the behavior of these actors; and the role of individual leaders in trying to coordinate and focus the work of the network. These levels in turn frame several alternatives to the puzzle of creating effective and accountable government. Could accountability be the product of many actors contributing to the pursuit of a public goal? In this approach, is it the goal that defines accountability? Could accountability be the product of processes, some governmental and some from the private and nonprofit sectors, that nudge network participants in a similar direction? In this approach, is it the joint action that defines accountability, like geese flying in formation? Could it be that it is the role of individual leaders to define accountability? In this approach, it is the power of personal leadership that frames a logic of coordinated work. But in all these alternatives, the central puzzle—the central question of the book—is whether networked government helps or hinders the effective and responsible pursuit of *public* goals. The complexity of policy problems might well make networked government irresistible and inevitable. But how well does it advance the public's work? And if individual leaders emerge as the central drivers of networked government, what licenses their role? In a system where power is broadly shared, how do some leaders become more central than others? That is the central puzzle of the place of the public interest in networked government.

### **Is “Networked Government” an Empirical Description or a Normative Prescription?**

These puzzles lead to the last question posed by the cases. In these accounts of government's role and behavior, does networked government emerge as a thick description for the way much policy implementation operates, or is it more a normative prescription for ensuring effective action in response to complex problems that extend beyond the boundaries of individual government entities, agencies, and programs? On the descriptive side, the cases chart the remarkably interwoven strategies and tactics used by network members to frame coordinated

action. On the normative side, the cases hint at an answer. If networked government is not the most desirable strategy for dealing with issues from environmental protection to national security, what would work better?

In the worlds described by the cases, policy problems define processes, goals drive interactions, and leaders coordinate across multiple boundaries. The interactions described lie far beyond the realm of government as conceived by the Progressives. Their purposefulness in pursuing public goals makes them more than just another example of incentive-based, market-driven behavior. Scholars and analysts have long identified politics and markets as the basic alternatives for social action.<sup>10</sup> The Progressives framed the approach to politics that predominated for more than a century. They clearly meant their approach as a guide to frame public action. The market-based approach is just as clearly a normative guide, for it posits that competition in the marketplace produces the most efficient use of resources and the most satisfied consumer behavior. But what happens when neither the Progressives' nor the market approach to government suffices to deal with basic policy problems? The contributors describe how networks arise—sometimes in a halting fashion and sometimes ill formed. As these networks develop, they also raise the more fundamental question, implicit in each case, about whether networked government *should* be the preferred form of response to complex public problems. If so, how should it work? And if not, what are its limits?

Lurking behind the analyses of effective networked government is the specter, raised by H. Brinton Milward and Jörg Raab (chapter 8), that not all networks create positive forces. They powerfully argue that al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations, which they call “dark networks,” grew from network-based patterns of behavior; now these networks threaten the stability of nations. Countering them poses big challenges. G. Edward DeSeve's discussion of networks in the intelligence community (chapter 6) suggests that it may take a “bright” network to counter a “dark” one. Most important, however, the specter of dark networks—networked interactions that seek to undermine, not support, the broad goals of nation states—paints a cautionary tale regarding prescriptive thinking on networks.

## Finding the Key to Networked Government

This book is an effort to learn how modern governments can address and solve complex problems that challenge existing patterns of governance. When difficult issues arise that fit neither the Progressives' traditional model of structure- and process-bound government nor the economists' traditional model of market competition, what should governments do? The cases describe how governments have tackled this dilemma. Each case is a tale of adaptation. In no case did a prime

10. See, for example, Lindblom (1980).

mover leap out of the primordial policy soup to declare boldly, “Let’s create a network!” Instead, in each case policy leaders arose with a clear focus on problems that needed solutions and designed strategies and tactics to advance their goals. Unlike the Progressives, they did not seek a fundamental structural or procedural reform before moving ahead. Unlike market-based theorists, they did not try to reshape the private market to produce better results. Instead, they sought to cobble together effective action from the resources at hand. Their tales of accomplishment are often remarkable. So, too, are the potholes that sometimes broke their axles along the way. Mark Moore’s concluding contribution (chapter 9) charts the big questions that networked government, sometimes intentionally and sometimes not, raises about the future of U.S. government.

Together, the case studies focus a strong light on the alternative of ad hoc adaptation to structural reform in responding to cutting-edge policy problems. They also provide important input on setting standards by which network behavior should be judged—and on how the ability of these networks to advance the people’s work can be assessed in an era in which tough policy problems increasingly challenge democratic institutions.

## References

- Arlington County (Va.). 2001. *After-Action Report on the Response to the 9/11 Terrorist Attack on the Pentagon*. Arlington, Va.: 2001 ([www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/fire/edu/about/docs/after\\_report.pdf](http://www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/fire/edu/about/docs/after_report.pdf)).
- Light, Paul C. 1999. *The True Size of Government*. Brookings.
- Lindblom, Charles E. 1980. *Politics and Markets: The World’s Political Economic Systems*. New York: Basic Books.
- Neustadt, Richard E. 1964. *Presidential Power*. New York: Wiley, 1964.
- Sanger, Mary Bryna. 2003. *The Welfare Marketplace: Privatization and Welfare Reform*. Brookings.