

## **A Unified Public Administration? Revisiting the Prospects of Constructing a Grand Theory for the Field<sup>1</sup>**

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**ABSTRACT** Since the early origins of Public Administration, scholars bemoan the absence of a grand, unifying theory for this applied, social science as a discipline. From their arguments it seems that the absence of a unified theory is largely to be blamed for the identity, existential and academic crisis which the discipline arguably experiences. If such a unified theory does not exist, and there is a general consensus that it could add value by focusing research and generally facilitating a sharper demarcation of the study field, the appropriate question is: Why not simply attempt to construct one? The purpose of this paper is to reflect on the feasibility of designing a unified theory as a coherent framework for the study of Public Administration. The reflection will include a deliberation on the desirability of such a unifying theory, contemplation on the possible methodology to pursue such a theory, as well as an exploration of the potential challenges which theorists will face in their attempts to design such an integrated and comprehensive foundational framework.