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### **The Ambiguity of Results: Assessments of the New Public Management**

**Author: B. DOUGLAS SKELLEY**

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This article embraces Guy Peters' suggestion that those assessing organizational reform must distinguish between the theories of reform used by organizational members and the theories of reform used by social scientists in their efforts to understand reform phenomena. An examination of the findings of recent assessments of the New Public Management is guided by Peters' categories of reform models. This study concludes that the institutional perspective may offer the most promise in understanding the ambiguous results of these appraisals. This ambiguity, however, should be neither surprising nor dismaying, for reforms are likely to have cumulative effects that make managerial and institutional differences over time.

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