

FOURTH EDITION

THE NEW PUBLIC SERVICE

SERVING, NOT STEERING



JANET V. DENHARDT and ROBERT B. DENHARDT

THE NEW PUBLIC SERVICE

FOURTH EDITION

The New Public Service: Serving, not Steering provides a framework for the many voices calling for the reaffirmation of democratic values, citizenship, and service in the public interest. It is organized around a set of seven core principles: (1) serve citizens, not customers; (2) seek the public interest; (3) value citizenship and public service above entrepreneurship; (4) think strategically, act democratically; (5) recognize that accountability isn't simple; (6) serve, rather than steer; and (7) value people, not just productivity.

The New Public Service asks us to think carefully and critically about what public service is, why it is important, and what values ought to guide what we do and how we do it. It celebrates what is distinctive, important, and meaningful about public service and considers how we might better live up to those ideals and values. The revised fourth edition includes a new chapter that examines how the role and significance of these New Public Service values have expanded in practice and research over the past 15 years.

Although the debate about governance will surely continue for many years, this compact, clearly written volume both provides an important framework for a public service based on citizen discourse and the public interest and demonstrates how these values have been put into practice. It is essential reading for students and serious practitioners in public administration and public policy.

Janet V. Denhardt is Chester A. Newland Professor of Public Administration and Director of the Price School Sacramento Center at the University of Southern California, USA.

Robert B. Denhardt is Professor and Director of Leadership Programs in the Price School of Public Policy at the University of Southern California, USA.

“The first edition of this book was published just after 9/11, a time when renewed attention to public service was exemplified by the firefighters and other volunteers who reminded us all what the true value of public service is. However, with the Great Recession government has been used to prop up markets and the Denhardts’ call for renewed attention to serving the public is sorely needed. New Public Management’s failure has been to equate government with market and substitute consumers for citizens. But, the Denhardts remind us that democracy, not consumer choice, must be the basis for government, and public service, not market service, is its primary function.”

Mildred E. Warner, Cornell University, USA

“This book is a great read full of insights that challenge our status quo ways of thinking. It is a ‘must read’ for everyone who cares about building a better public service.”

*Rosemary O’Leary, Edwin O. Stene Distinguished Professor
of Public Administration, University of Kansas, USA*

THE NEW PUBLIC SERVICE

SERVING, NOT STEERING

FOURTH EDITION

JANET V. DENHARDT AND ROBERT B. DENHARDT

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK AND LONDON

First published 2015
by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

and by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2015 Taylor & Francis

The right of Janet V. Denhardt and Robert B. Denhardt to be identified as authors of this work has been asserted by them in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilized in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

The new public service: serving, not steering/Janet V. Denhardt,
Robert B. Denhardt.—Fourth edition.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Public administration. 2. Public administration—United States.

I. Denhardt, Robert B. II. Title.

JF1351.D4495 2015

351—dc23

2014042776

ISBN: 978-1-138-89121-0 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-138-89125-8 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-1-315-70976-5 (ebk)

Typeset in Times New Roman

by Florence Production Ltd, Stoodleigh, Devon, UK

To the women and men of the public service

This page intentionally left blank

Contents

Preface to the Fourth Edition	xi
Acknowledgments	xv
Chapter 1. Public Administration and the New Public Management	1
The Old Public Administration	3
The New Public Management	11
Engaging the Debate	20
Chapter 2. The Roots of the New Public Service	23
Democratic Citizenship	25
Models of Community and Civil Society	31
Organizational Humanism and the New Public Administration	35
Postmodern Public Administration	39
The New Public Service	42
Chapter 3. Serve Citizens, not Customers	44
Civic Virtue and Democratic Citizenship	45
Public Service as an Extension of Citizenship	54
The Old Public Administration and Client Service	58
The New Public Management and Customer Satisfaction	58
The New Public Service and Quality Service for Citizens	61
Conclusion	65
Chapter 4. Seek the Public Interest	66
What is the Public Interest?	68
The Old Public Administration and the Public Interest	76
The New Public Management and the Public Interest	78

The New Public Service and the Public Interest	80
Conclusion	84
Chapter 5. Value Citizenship over Entrepreneurship	85
A Governance Perspective	86
The Old Public Administration and the Administrator's Role	91
The New Public Management and the Administrator's Role	93
The New Public Service and the Administrator's Role	96
Conclusion	105
Chapter 6. Think Strategically, Act Democratically	106
Implementation in Historical Perspective	107
The Old Public Administration and Implementation	114
The New Public Management and Implementation	115
The New Public Service and Implementation	117
Conclusion	121
Chapter 7. Recognize that Accountability isn't Simple	123
The Classic Debate	124
Administrative Responsibility: To Whom, for What?	129
The Old Public Administration and Accountability	134
The New Public Management and Accountability	135
The New Public Service and Accountability	136
Conclusion	143
Chapter 8. Serve Rather than Steer	144
Changing Perspectives on Leadership	145
The Old Public Administration and Executive Management	147
The New Public Management and Entrepreneurship	148
The New Public Service and Leadership	150
Conclusion	160
Chapter 9. Value People, not just Productivity	161
Human Behavior in Organizations: Key Concepts	162
Groups, Culture, and Democratic Administration	165
The Old Public Administration: Using Control to Achieve Efficiency	168
The New Public Management: Using Incentives to Achieve Productivity	169
The New Public Service: Respecting Public Service Ideals	169
Conclusion	174

Chapter 10. The New Public Service and Citizen Engagement:	
Cases and Recommendations	176
What are the Goals of Citizen Engagement?	177
What is Citizen Engagement?	178
Listening to the City: The Rebuilding of New York	180
Iowa's Citizen-Initiated Performance Assessment	182
Civic Engagement around the World	185
Alternative Approaches	190
Choosing When and How to Use Citizen Engagement Tools	197
Conclusion	199
 Chapter 11. Fifteen Years Later: Are We Rowing, Steering, or Serving?	 202
Does Citizen Engagement Work?	204
How Have the Values of the Public Interest, Shared Leadership, and Collaboration Fared?	208
Has the Reliance on Market Models of Entrepreneurship and Privatization Decreased?	211
Are We Rowing, Steering, or Serving?	213
Conclusion	215
 Chapter 12. Conclusion	 217
References	227
Index	247
About the Authors	255

This page intentionally left blank

Preface to the Fourth Edition

This book has two primary aims. The first is to synthesize some of the many ideas and voices that have called for a reaffirmation of democratic values, citizenship, and service in the public interest as the normative foundations for the field of public administration. The second is to provide a framework to organize those ideas around principles, giving them a name, a mantle, and a voice that we believe had been lacking. This book is a call to think about and act on our values. It is intended as a challenge for us to think carefully and critically about what public service is, why it is important, and what values ought to guide what we do and how we do it. We want to celebrate what is distinctive, important, and meaningful about public service and to consider how we might better live up to those ideals and values.

Two themes form both the theoretical core and the heart of this book: (1) to advance the dignity and worth of public service, and (2) to reassert the values of democracy, citizenship, and the public interest as the preeminent values of public administration. It is our hope that the ideas presented here may help us, not only to initiate more conversations, but also to look within ourselves for the soul of what we do. We want words such as “democracy” and “citizen” and “pride” to be more prevalent in both our speech and our behavior than words such as “market” and “competition” and “customers.” *Public servants do not deliver customer service; they deliver democracy.*

These themes—the dignity and worth of public service and the values of democracy, citizenship, and the public interest—were the subject of two online articles we wrote for the American Society for Public Administration website following the September 11 attacks on the United States. In the first article, we expressed our grief and disbelief, along with our admiration for the brave public servants who went to the aid of those in need. The story of the police and firefighters running up the stairs of the World Trade Center as others struggled down was particularly compelling to us:

These people showed America, once again, that they stand apart. What makes them different is their quiet, often anonymous heroism. They are public servants. They serve their fellow citizens in a way that many people would find very difficult if not impossible to understand. . . . In a peculiar way, this ghastly act of terrorism reminds us of why we are in the public service. We care about our country, our community, and our neighbors. Each of us, whether we wear a uniform, a suit, a jacket, coveralls, or a hard hat, plays a role in improving the lives of others. Service to the public—helping people in trouble, making the world safer and cleaner, helping children learn and prosper, literally going where others would not go—is our job and our calling.

(Denhardt and Denhardt 2001a)

In the second article, we wrote about our continuing admiration for the many public servants who work tirelessly on our behalf and also about the importance of citizenship and our responsibility to promote citizens' active involvement in their government:

The spirit of public service extends beyond those formally working for government, those we think of as public servants. Ordinary citizens have also wished to contribute. However, the avenues through which they might bring their many talents to bear have been somewhat limited, in part, we think, because over the past several decades we have severely constrained the citizenship role, preferring to think of people as customers or consumers rather than citizens.

(Denhardt and Denhardt 2001b)

We were gratified and a little surprised at the response. Many people wrote to us and talked with us about what the articles meant to them and, most importantly, how much they wanted to hear and talk about the values, the soul, and the nobility of public service. In this book, we are trying to extend that discussion by grounding it in history and in the development of thought and practice in public administration. The ideas are not new, but they are beginning to have a clearer voice and spark a renewed interest. What happened to the ideals of public service, and when did we stop hearing about them? How have changes in management philosophy and theories about the proper role and identity of government altered how public servants act, think, and behave? What values of public service, especially those that give the field dignity, courage, and commitment, have been lost in the process? How can we rediscover and affirm them?

In the time since the first edition of *The New Public Service* was published, this discussion has continued. We have been grateful for the opportunity to

visit with, and listen to the ideas of, those interested in the New Public Service in communities and organizations across the United States, as well as in Brazil, Sweden, the Netherlands, Italy, Korea, and China, where a Chinese translation of the book was published in 2004. The insights and ideas we gained from these discussions have reinforced our convictions and deepened our respect for the very difficult and important work of public servants in democratic governance. It reminds us of why we wrote this book in the first place—not to lay claim to a set of novel and original ideas, but rather to give voice to the democratic ideals and perspectives that are so critical to effective governance but have too often become overshadowed by other efforts to use business values and approaches to reinvent and otherwise *fix* government.

Subsequent editions of this book (2007, 2011) included new materials on how the principles of the New Public Service can be put into practice and factors to consider in choosing among the many approaches to citizen engagement that have been found successful.

In 2014, the original *Public Administration Review* (PAR) article, “The New Public Service: Serving Rather than Steering” (2000) was selected as one of the 75 most influential out of the more than 3,500 articles appearing in the journal since its inception in 1940. We were asked to revisit the key features of the New Public Service and provide an update on how and to what extent those ideas have been discussed, promoted, practiced, and applied over the last 15 years. That review became the basis for a new chapter in this edition titled, “Fifteen Years Later: Are We Rowing, Steering, or Serving?” Our review of the empirical evidence suggests that New Public Service principles and practices have become increasingly evident in scholarship and practice. Citizen engagement has proven to be both effective and widely used, the “public interest” is increasingly significant both as an ideal and as a guide to practice, and the reliance of governments on entrepreneurship and privatization has decreased.

We do not pretend that these developments are a result of this book. Rather, they are a result of the dedication of public servants to the difficult and all-important task of making democratic governance work for citizens. We have never claimed to provide the answers or to define the *correct* values of the field; rather, we want people to continue to thoughtfully examine what values ought to guide action in public service. Ultimately, our purpose is to reinforce the nobility and calling of public service and to help public servants rediscover the soul and meaning of what they do and why they do it.

Janet and Robert Denhardt

This page intentionally left blank

Acknowledgments

We are indebted to many people for their guidance and help during our work on this project. We especially want to acknowledge the important models of public service and civic engagement provided by forward-looking public servants and active and engaged citizens across the country and around the world. These are the people who have already established the “New Public Service.” We have simply given their work a name.

We also want to thank friends and colleagues in the academic community for their assistance and support during our work on this project. Among the many practitioners and academics we might mention, we especially want to recall the intellectual contributions, support, and friendship of Marvin Andrews, Maria Aristigueta, Lynn Bailey, Eric Bergrud, Dick Bowers, Harry Briggs, Joe Cayer, Linda Chapin, Jeff Chapman, Manuella Cocci, Paul Danczyk, Tom Eichler, Eileen Eisen, Frank Fairbanks, Mark Glaser, Elizabeth Graddy, Elizabeth Granda, Joe Gray, Joe Grubbs, Jay Hakes, John Hall, Mary Hamilton, Mark Holzer, Ed Jennings, Jim Keene, Cheryl King, Jack Knott, Christiaan Lako, Lena Langlet, Juliet Lee, Roz Lasker, Brian Marson, Barbara McCabe, Cynthia McSwain, John Nalbandian, Nico Nelissen, Robert O’Neill, Phil Penland, Jan Perkins, Jeff Raffel, Randy Reid, Dan Rich, Faye Schmidt, Scott Steele, Camilla Stivers, James Svara, Larry Terry, John Thomas, Karen Thoreson, and Orion White.

We also owe a very special thanks to Gregor McGavin, Kelly Campbell, Qian Hu, and Ljubinka Adonoska, our brilliant research assistants, who have made and will continue to make great contributions to the field of public administration. We are also thankful for the assistance of our publisher at Routledge, Laura Stearns. A sincere thanks to all! And, as always, we want to express our love and admiration for our children: Michael, Ben, Cari, and Mary.

This page intentionally left blank

Chapter 1

Public Administration and the New Public Management

Government shouldn't be run like a business; it should be run like a democracy. Across this country and around the world, both elected and appointed public servants are acting on this principle and expressing renewed commitment to such ideals as the public interest, the governance process, and expanding democratic citizenship. As a result, they are learning new skills in policy development and implementation, recognizing and accepting the complexity of the challenges they face, and treating their fellow public servants and citizens with renewed dignity and respect. Public employees are feeling more valued and energized as this sense of service and community expands. In the process, public servants are also reconnecting with citizens. Administrators are realizing that they have much to gain by *listening* to the public rather than *telling*, and by *serving* rather than *steering*. At the invitation of public servants, even their urging, ordinary citizens are once again becoming engaged in the governance process. Citizens and public officials are working together to define and to address common problems in a cooperative and mutually beneficial way.

These developments can be understood as part of a movement that we call the "New Public Service." The New Public Service seeks to pose and inform a number of central, normative questions about the field. How can we define the essential character of what we do in the public service? What is the motivating force that propels our actions? What gives us strength and capacity when the trials and turmoil of our work get us down? How can we

keep going, even as we face problems that are complex and intractable, with extremely limited resources and a public that often resents and criticizes what we do? We think the answer lies in our commitment to public service.

We find no other reasonable explanation for the extraordinary dedication and commitment of the people who work to make the world safer and cleaner, to improve our health, to teach our children, and to unravel the host of societal maladies that confront us. Where else can we find the foundations for our efforts to facilitate citizenship and public engagement as a central part of our work? What else can keep the firefighters, the police officers, the social workers, the planners and the inspectors, the receptionists and the clerks, the managers and the analysts serving their communities and their country with energy, resolve, and determination?

Research tells us that the ideals of public service are critically important in understanding how public servants can be successful in the work they do. Our objective is to present a unifying set of themes and principles that both express and reaffirm the importance of these public service values. Questions about these values have, of course, been debated throughout the history of public administration in this country, and elsewhere, but there seems to be more concern for these issues today than before. Certainly, there are some important *driving forces* that have been widely discussed in the field of public administration: the New Public Management and the Managing for Results movement, to name just two. Although these influences have been important, none has satisfied our more basic yearning to answer some core questions: Who are we? Why are we here? What does all this mean? People in public administration throughout the history of our field have been encouraged to make things work, but that's only a partial answer. We also want to do something of societal value.

Therein lies the soul of public administration. What is most significant, and most valuable, about public administration is that we serve citizens to advance the common good. Public administrators are responsible for improving the public health, for maintaining public safety, for enhancing the quality of our environment, and myriad other tasks. Ultimately, for them, for us, what really matters is not how efficiently we have done our jobs, but how we have contributed to a better life for all. In this book, we call for an affirmation of the soul of the profession through the New Public Service, a movement grounded in the public interest, in the ideals of democratic governance, and in a renewed civic engagement. This movement, we will argue, is more than ever being manifest in the way we interact with political leaders, in the way we engage with citizens, and in the way we bring about positive changes in our organizations and our communities.

We will approach the task of describing the various elements of the New Public Service by contrasting it with both traditional and more contemporary approaches to public policy and public administration. In this chapter, we will very briefly review the history and development of traditional public administration, what we must now call the Old Public Administration. Then, we will outline what has been the dominant or mainstream approach to contemporary public administration, the New Public Management. In [Chapter 2](#), we will note some of the most important alternative views of public administration, views that have been less than “mainstream” throughout the history of the field, but are now being voiced with increasing urgency. Having examined the context and historical grounding for understanding the New Public Service, in [Chapters 3 to 9](#), we will explore seven aspects of the New Public Service that we find most compelling. In [Chapter 10](#), we provide some examples of how New Public Service values are being implemented in the United States and around the world. At the outset, we should note that we have not attempted to develop a complete theoretical argument for the New Public Service, nor catalog all of the many examples of its practice. Rather, our purpose is to simply lay out, in a very basic way, the normative issues and the alternative ways of thinking about public administration that may be helpful to those working to build the New Public Service.

The Old Public Administration

Although governments have used complex structures of management and organization throughout human history, public administration as a self-conscious field of study and practice is generally thought to have begun around the turn of the century. Its American version, for example, is typically dated to a well-known essay by Woodrow Wilson, then college professor, later president of the United States. Wilson acknowledged the growing and increasingly complex administrative tasks of government by commenting that, “it is getting harder to run a constitution than to frame one” (Wilson 1987/1887, 200). In order to more effectively run government, Wilson advised that we look to the field of business, as, “the field of administration is a field of business” (209). In order to follow the model of business, Wilson advised, government should establish executive authorities, controlling essentially hierarchical organizations and having as their goal achieving the most reliable and efficient operations possible.

Those residing at these centers of power, however, were not to be actively or extensively involved in the development of policy. Their tasks were,

instead, the implementation of policy and the provision of services, and in those tasks they were expected to act with neutrality and professionalism to execute faithfully the directives that came their way. They were to be watched carefully and held accountable to elected political leaders, so as not to deviate from established policy. Wilson recognized a potential danger in the other direction as well; the possibility that politics, or more specifically corrupt politicians, might negatively influence administrators in their pursuit of organizational efficiency. This concern led to Wilson's well-known dictum, "Administration lies outside the proper sphere of politics. Administrative questions are not political questions. Although politics sets the tasks for administration, it should not be suffered to manipulate its offices" (Wilson 1987/1887, 210). Thus, Wilson established what was known for many years as the politics-administration (or policy-administration) dichotomy.

Two Key Themes

In Wilson's essay, we find two key themes that served as a focus for the study of public administration for the next half-century or more. First, there was the distinction between politics (or policy) and administration, with its associated ideas of accountability to elected leaders and neutral competence on the part of administrators. Second, there was concern for creating structures and strategies of administrative management that would permit public organizations and their managers to act in the most efficient way possible. Each of these ideas deserves further comment.

First, the idea of separating politics and administration received much early commentary and came to guide practice in a number of important ways. For example, the dichotomy is clearly the basis for the council-manager form of local government, which involves the council being given the responsibility of establishing policy and the city manager being charged with implementing it. Of course, in the council-manager example, as in other areas, a strict separation of politics and administration proved difficult. Members of governing bodies, whether members of city councils or state or federal legislators, always maintained an active interest in the operations of administrative agencies. Especially through the oversight function, they exercised considerable influence in the operations of agencies. Conversely, administrators came to play a more active role in the policy process, especially as they brought expert advice to bear on the legislative process. Over time, many commentators, such as Luther Gulick, first city administrator of New York and a founder of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), argued that policy and administration could not be separated, that every act of a public manager involves a "seamless web of discretion and

action" (1933, 561). Others, such as Paul Appleby, dean of the Maxwell School at Syracuse University, were even more to the point: "public administration is policymaking" (Appleby 1949, 170).

The distinction Wilson drew between politics and administration has certainly blurred over time. Yet, in many ways, the relationship between politics and administration remains important to the field of public administration. Although a *dichotomy* between politics and administration is overdrawn, the interaction of political and administrative concerns is certainly key to understanding how government operates, even today. Perhaps more important, however, the separation of politics and administration lies at the heart of the Old Public Administration's version of accountability, one in which appointed administrators were held to be accountable to their political "masters"—and only through them to the citizenry. In this view, the requirements of democratic governance are satisfied where a neutral and competent civil service is controlled by and accountable to elected political leaders. Frederick Cleveland, an early writer, commented that democratic accountability is maintained where there is a "representative body (such as a legislature) outside of the administration with power to determine the will of the membership (the citizens) and to enforce (that) will on the administration" (Cleveland 1920, 15; parentheses added). In this view, the legislature operates somewhat like a board of directors overseeing a business operation.

Second, Wilson held, and others agreed, that public organizations should seek the greatest possible efficiency in their operations, and that such efficiency was best achieved through unified and largely hierarchical structures of administrative management. Certainly, that view was consistent with thinking among business managers of the period. Many, such as the efficiency expert Frederick W. Taylor (1923), employed a "scientific management" approach to try to learn, through detailed "time and motion" studies, exactly how the productive process could be improved. Taylor, for example, sought to determine the "one best way" to shovel dirt by designing an experiment that would calculate the ideal weight of a single shovelful of dirt—ideal in the sense of producing the most shoveled dirt per day!

Other early theorists, such as Leonard White (1926) and W.F. Willoughby (1927), focused on building organizational structures that would operate with high efficiency. Again, most found attractive the idea of a strong chief executive vested with the power and authority to carry out the work assigned to the agency. Moreover, that chief executive would be most successful if he or she operated through an organizational structure characterized by unity of command, hierarchical authority, and a strict division of labor. The job of the executive, therefore, was to determine the best division of labor, then to develop the appropriate means of coordination and control.

Or, following Gulick's classic acronym POSDCORB, the work of the executive was planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting (1937, 13). But again, efficiency was the key value accepted by most early writers and practitioners.

Dissenting Views

That is not to say, however, that *all* accepted efficiency is the ultimate criterion by which to judge administrators. Marshall Dimock, an academic and practitioner, challenged that idea, writing that mechanical efficiency is "coldly calculating and inhuman," whereas, "successful administration is warm and vibrant. It is human" (Dimock 1936, 120). Successful administration, he continued, "is more than a lifeless pawn. It plans, it contrives, it philosophizes, it educates, it builds for the community as a whole" (133). Others suggested that administrators, as well as political leaders, were ultimately concerned with issues such as justice, liberty, freedom, and equality—issues far more formidable and difficult than efficiency alone.

Finally, many writers noted that the search for organizational efficiency might easily occur at the expense of involving citizens in the work of government. Writing somewhat later, Dwight Waldo, perhaps the best-known public administration theorist of his generation, summarized the emerging orthodoxy in the field of public administration by writing that, "The means and measurements of efficiency, it was felt and strongly stated, were the same for all administration. Democracy, if it were to survive, could not afford to ignore the lessons of centralization, hierarchy, and discipline" (Waldo 1948, 200). Moreover, he commented, "Both private and public administration were in an important . . . sense false to the ideal of democracy . . . by reason of their insistence that democracy, however good and desirable, is nevertheless something peripheral to administration" (Waldo 1952, 7).

So, in contrast to using efficiency as the sole criterion for assessing administrative performance, one might employ other criteria, such as responsiveness to the concerns of citizens. An appealing view, one might say. Yet these alternative voices were counterpoint at best, as the emerging field of public administration moved firmly through the ideas of "politics and administration," "scientific management," "administrative management," and "bureaucratic management." In each case, theory and practice confirmed the importance of tightly integrated hierarchical structures, controlled from the top by managers interested in achieving the organization's goals and objectives in the most efficient manner possible. Interestingly, even as the field moved through the next several decades and into its behavioral or

“scientific” phase, these same issues continued to be highlighted. Though the justification was somewhat different, the resulting recommendations were much the same.

The Rational Model

The classic *Administrative Behavior* (1957), written by Herbert Simon, a political scientist who later won a Nobel Prize in economics, laid out the argument best. According to the positive science viewpoint Simon represented, statements may be classified according to whether they are true or false. Scientists, of course, are concerned with establishing the truth of certain propositions. In order to do so, they must strip away those pesky “values” that tend to interfere in human affairs. So, those terms that speak to individual or group preferences are not to be admitted into scientific study, in this case the study of administrative behavior. Rather, Simon argued that a single standard, the standard of efficiency, may be used to help remove values from the discussion of organized action.

The key to this argument is the concept of rationality. According to Simon, human beings are limited in the degree of rationality they can obtain in reference to the problems they face, but they can join together in groups and organizations to deal effectively with the world around them, and they can do so in a rational manner. After all, in the abstract, it’s not hard to develop a rational course of action to achieve most objectives. The problem comes when we insert real live people, with all their human concerns and idiosyncrasies, into the picture. The issue then becomes one of how to match these people with the rational plan and how to assure that human behavior follows the most efficient path possible.

In contrast to a long philosophical tradition that holds human reason to be concerned with such issues as justice, equality, and freedom, Simon’s more restricted view is that rationality is concerned with coordinating the proper means to accomplish the desired ends. In this view, rationality is equated with efficiency. For what Simon called “administrative man,” the most rational behavior is that which moves an organization efficiently toward its objectives.

Administrative man accepts the organizational goals as the value premises of his decisions, is particularly sensitive and reactive to the influence upon him on the other members of the organization, forms stable expectations regarding his own role . . . and has high morale in regard to the organization’s goals.

(Simon, Smithburg, and Thompson 1950, 82)

Then, through what is called the inducements–contributions model, by controlling the inducements offered to members of the organization, its leaders could secure their contribution and compliance with the rational design of the organization, the result being a far more efficient and productive organization.

Public Choice

Some years after Simon's work, an interesting interpretation of administrative behavior, and one more closely allied with the classic "economic man" position, emerged. This new approach, called "public choice theory," actually provides an interesting bridge between the Old Public Administration and the New Public Management, for, although public choice theory was developed during the time period we generally associate with the Old Public Administration, as we will see later, public choice became much more significant as the key theoretical basis for the New Public Management. For this reason, we will only briefly outline public choice theory here, but return to it frequently throughout the material that follows.

Public choice theory is based on several key assumptions. First, and most important, public choice theory focuses on the individual, assuming that the individual decision maker, like the traditional "economic man," is rational and self-interested and seeks to maximize his or her own "utilities." According to this view, individuals "always seek the biggest possible benefits and the least costs in [any decision situation]. People are basically egoistic, self-regarding and instrumental in their behavior" (Dunleavy 1991, 3). Even if people are not that way, economists and public choice theorists argue that it enables us to better explain human behavior if we *assume* that they are. Second, public choice theory focuses on the idea of "public goods" as the output of public agencies. These can be distinguished from private goods in that a public good, such as national defense, when provided to one person will be provided to all.

A third idea associated with public choice is that different kinds of decision rule or decision situation will result in different approaches to choice making. For this reason, structuring decision rules to influence human choice, and in turn human behavior, is a key to the operations of public agencies and the governance system more generally. In this view, "public agencies are viewed as a means for allocating decision-making capabilities in order to provide public goods and services responsive to the preferences of individuals in different social contexts" (Ostrom and Ostrom 1971, 207). In other words, the public choice approach involves the application of economic models and approaches to nonmarket circumstances, especially

government and political science, so as to provide structures and incentives to guide human behavior.

There are a number of questions that have been raised about public choice theory. The first and most obvious is the empirical one. Do individuals really consistently act in a self-interested way so as to maximize their utilities? Obviously, there are many situations in which they do, but also many in which they do not. This means that the public choice model must sacrifice behavioral accuracy in order to put forward a key construct upon which the rest of its theorizing is based. The result is a set of logical propositions based on assumptions that may only remotely correspond to actual human behavior. To an even greater extent than Simon's model of "administrative man," the more purely "economic man" of the public choice model is based on an assumption of complete rationality. One might ask, "Why not focus on other aspects of the human experience, such as feelings or intuition?" For the public choice theorist, the answer is that, in order to provide better explanations for human behavior, we should concentrate on the way individuals and groups attempt to maximize their own interests and on the way that market mechanisms both influence and respond to individual choices.

As Yale political scientist Robert Dahl (1947) pointed out in a critique of Simon's view, a critique also applicable to the more recent public choice model, to say that an action is rational is not to say that it serves moral or politically responsible purposes, but merely to say that it moves the organization forward more efficiently. Dahl suggested that, in contrast, efficiency is itself a value and should compete with other values, such as individual responsibility or democratic morality. In many cases, argued Dahl, efficiency would not be the primary value chosen. For example, how would we evaluate the operation of the German prison camps in World War II, camps that by all accounts were run quite efficiently? Or, more to the current point, how would we balance a concern for administrative efficiency in a public agency with the need for that agency to involve citizens in its decision processes? We think that is an important question. But Dahl's point, like similar arguments made by Waldo and others, was relegated to a position somewhat outside the mainstream in the emerging dialogue about the structure and conduct of public organizations.

Core Ideas

Obviously, many other scholars and practitioners contributed to the early development of the field of public administration. And, as we have seen, there is not a single set of ideas agreed to by all those who contributed over the decades to the Old Public Administration. However, we think that it is

fair to say that the following elements generally represent the mainstream view of the Old Public Administration:

- The focus of government is on the direct delivery of services through existing or through newly authorized agencies of government.
- Public policy and administration are concerned with designing and implementing policies focused on a single, politically defined objective.
- Public administrators play a limited role in policymaking and governance; rather, they are charged with the implementation of public policies.
- The delivery of services should be carried out by administrators accountable to elected officials and given limited discretion in their work.
- Administrators are responsible to democratically elected political leaders.
- Public programs are best administered through hierarchical organizations, with managers largely exercising control from the top of the organization.
- The primary values of public organizations are efficiency and rationality.
- Public organizations operate most efficiently as closed systems; thus citizen involvement is limited.
- The role of the public administrator is largely defined as planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting.

There's no question that the Old Public Administration should be given a considerable amount of credit. Administrators operating largely within the confines of this view made (and continue to make) dramatic and important contributions to society, in areas ranging from national defense, to social security, to transportation, to public health, and to the protection of the environment. The Old Public Administration has allowed us to deal effectively with extremely complex and difficult problems and to maintain a balance between political and administrative concerns. Given the circumstances of its time, the Old Public Administration served well, even if imperfectly. It continues to do so. Most government agencies still follow this basic model of organization and management—or at least this model seems to be the “default” position for agencies at all levels of government. But the old model has come under increasing attack, especially by proponents of what we will call the New Public Management.

The New Public Management

As it is used here, the New Public Management refers to a cluster of contemporary ideas and practices that seek, at their core, to use private-sector and business approaches in the public sector. Although, as we have seen, there have long been calls to “run government like a business,” the current version of this debate involves more than just the use of business techniques. Rather, the New Public Management has become a normative model, one signaling a profound shift in how we think about the role of public administrators, the nature of the profession, and how and why we do what we do.

Over the past couple of decades, the New Public Management has literally swept the nation and the world. As a result, a number of highly positive changes have been implemented in the public sector (Barzelay 2001a; Kettl 2005; Kettl and Milward 1996; Lynn 1996; Lynn 2006; Osborne and Gaebler 1992; Osborne and Plastrik 1997; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2000; Shamsul 2007). The common theme in the myriad of applications of these ideas has been the use of market mechanisms and terminology, in which the relationships between public agencies and their customers is understood as involving transactions similar to those that occur in the marketplace. “Painted with the broadest brush, these reforms sought to replace the traditional rule-based, authority-driven processes with market-based, competition-driven tactics” (Kettl 2000a, 3).

In the New Public Management, public managers are challenged either to find new and innovative ways to achieve results or to privatize functions previously provided by government. They are urged to “steer, not row,” meaning they should not assume the burden of service delivery themselves, but, wherever possible, should define programs that others would then carry out, through contracting or other such arrangements. The key is that the New Public Management relies heavily on market mechanisms to guide public programs. Harvard’s Linda Kaboolian explains that these arrangements might include “competition within units of government and across government boundaries to the non-profit and for profit sectors, performance bonuses, and penalties” (Kaboolian 1998, 190). The aim is to loosen what advocates of the New Public Management see as an inefficient monopoly franchise of public agencies and public employees. Elaborating on this point, Christopher Hood, of the London School of Economics, writes that the New Public Management moves away from traditional modes of legitimizing the public bureaucracy, such as procedural safeguards on administrative discretion, in favor of “trust in the market and private business methods . . . ideas . . . couched in the language of economic rationalism” (1995, 94).