

## PROFESSIONALISM AND PUBLIC SERVICE



## **The Institute of Public Administration of Canada Series in Public Management and Governance**

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# Professionalism and Public Service

Essays in Honour of Kenneth Kernaghan

Edited by David Siegel and Ken Rasmussen



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# Contents

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*Foreword* vii

*Abbreviations* ix

Introduction 1

KEN RASMUSSEN AND DAVID SIEGEL

## **PART I: THE EVOLUTION OF TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS 13**

1 New Public Management and New Public Governance: Finding the Balance 16

PETER AUCOIN

2 The Swirling Meanings and Practices of Accountability in Canadian Government 34

PAUL G. THOMAS

3 An Ideal Model in a Practical World: The Continuous Revisiting of Political Neutrality and Ministerial Responsibility 63

DAVID A. GOOD

4 Fifteen Years of Privatization: Kenneth Kernaghan as Editor of the *International Review of Administrative Sciences* (1990–2005) 84

MICHAEL DUGGETT

## **PART II: THE PUBLIC SERVICE 95**

5 Between Ideals and Obedience: A Practical Basis for Public Service Ethics 99

J.I. GOW

- 6 In Kernaghan's Wake: Navigating the Choppier Seas of  
Commitment in Public Administration 127  
EVERT LINDQUIST
- 7 Inspiring Exemplary Practices in Canada: Ken Kernaghan's  
Contribution to Professionalism, Pride, and Recognition 152  
JACQUES BOURGAULT AND ESTHER PARENT

**PART III: SERVICE DELIVERY 175**

- 8 E-consultation: Technology at the Interface between Civil Society  
and Government 178  
SANDFORD BORINS AND DAVID BROWN
- 9 The Niagara Casinos Partnership: Game of Chance? 207  
JENNIFER BERARDI
- 10 Citizen-Centred Service in Canada: From Research to Results 236  
BRIAN MARSON

**PART IV: SPREADING THE WORD 263**

- 11 The Road to NGO: The Transformation of the Institute of Public  
Administration of Canada, 1985-95 266  
PATRICE DUTIL AND MICHAEL McCONKEY
- 12 Is There a Gulf between Theory and Practice in Public  
Administration Journals? Can It Be Overcome? 288  
BARBARA WAKE CARROLL
- 13 Case Studies and the Case Study Method in Canadian Public  
Administration 304  
CAROLYN JOHNS

*Short Biography and Selected Publications of Kenneth Kernaghan* 329

*Contributors* 339

# Foreword

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When we realized that Ken Kernaghan's retirement from teaching was imminent, we recognized that it was important to ensure that his career received the commemoration it deserved. He has been one of the brightest lights in the field of public administration for the past four decades. He has made a significant mark in the academic and practitioner communities. We thought it important to recognize such a significant career in a special manner.

We must draw attention to how the first sentence in the previous paragraph is worded. Ken retired from his position at Brock University as of 31 December 2007. However, he shows no signs of retiring in the broader sense. He remains highly active as a researcher and as an adviser to governments. It is always dangerous to assemble a *Festschrift* like this for someone who is still so active. However, we felt it important to recognize his contribution to the field, and the occasion of his retirement from his long-time university post was as good an occasion as any.

A great many people played a role in the development of this book. It says something about Ken that it was easy for us to assemble as authors virtually all the strongest scholars in the field of public administration. Ken's status is such that everyone was pleased and proud to be making a contribution. The contributors include peers, colleagues, former students, academics, and public servants, both Canadian and international. They are the best and brightest of their generation, and we thank them for the willing contribution they have made.

The production of the book went very smoothly. Patrice Dutil and the late Joe Galimberti of the Institute of Public Administration of Canada provided early encouragement and support. Wendy Feldman ably took up the work at the Institute at the time of publication. Virgil Duff pro-

vided expert support at University of Toronto Press. Matthew Kudelka did an excellent job of copy editing and bringing together a number of diverse writing styles. The editors are also grateful for the financial support of the Institute of Public Administration of Canada, Brock University, and the University of Regina.

Finally, the book is dedicated to Ken Kernaghan, one of the great scholars of his time.



# Abbreviations

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ADENAP	l'Association des diplômés de l'École nationale d'administration publique
CAB	Canadian Association of Broadcasters
CAPAM	Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management
CAPPA	Canadian Association of Programs in Public Administration
CCMD	Canadian Centre for Management Development
CIO	Chief Information Officer
CMT	Common Measurement Tool
CPO	Consultation Projects Office
CRA	Canada Revenue Agency
CRTC	Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission
CSPS	Canada School of Public Service
DFAIT	Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada
ENAP	École nationale d'administration publique
EROPA	Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration
FCM	Federation of Canadian Municipalities
FMC	Falls Management Corporation
GMP	gross maximum price
GOL	Government Online
IIAS	International Institute of Administrative Sciences
IMA	Innovative Management Award
IPAC	Institute of Public Administration of Canada
IQEA	Institut Québécois d'Ethique Appliquée

x Abbreviations

IT	information technology
IVR	interactive voice response
MMAH	Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
NGO	non-governmental organization
NPM	New Public Management
NSAIDs	non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs
OCC	Ontario Casino Corporation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OLGC	Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation
OPS	Ontario Public Service
PCO	Privy Council Office
PPBS	Planning Programming and Budgeting System
PSC	Public Service Commission
PSCIOC	Public Sector Chief Information Officer Councils
PSSDC	Public Sector Service Delivery Council
PWGSC	Public Works and Government Services Canada
RFP	request for proposal
SAPs	structural adjustment programs
SSHRC	Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
TQM	total quality management
VAC	Veteran Affairs Canada

# Introduction

## Kenneth Kernaghan: Values, Ethics, and Canadian Public Administration

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KEN RASMUSSEN AND DAVID SIEGEL

The discipline of public administration in Canada has made tremendous strides in a few generations, and like most disciplines it has its legacy of individual intellectual achievements that act as markers of this progress. Beginning with R. McGregor Dawson and then through to J.E. Hodgetts we witness Canadian public administration developing a distinctive intellectual tradition based on an ever more nuanced view of the role of the public service as a political institution in society.

Dawson was the first scholar to examine the public service in a systematic way. He noted its growing power as well as its need for greater independence from politicians if it was to help articulate a national interest in public policy formulation and implementation. But he also recognized that because of this new power and influence, the public service needed to be subjected to rigorous scholarly inquiry. To this end, he pried the study of public administration away from its traditional position – that is, subordinate to philosophy, history, classics, and law – making it clear through his scholarship that the study of government, and specifically the public service, must move beyond the study of its historical and legal position.

J.E. Hodgetts was the natural successor to Dawson and was himself the subject of a *Festschrift* by the public administration community in Canada.<sup>1</sup> He introduced a highly influential functionalism into the study of Canadian bureaucracy; he is equally notable for his perception that the public service is an organic and dynamic part of the Canadian government that evolved in tandem with political institutions and the broader social environment. Hodgetts, like Dawson, recognized the power of the public service; thus he placed accountability at the core of his scholarship. Both men saw and welcomed the growing influence

and power of the public service even while recognizing that it would need to develop new relationships to ensure that it remained accountable to rapidly evolving political institutions.

Kenneth Kernaghan is the obvious successor to these scholars. He is staunchly 'Canadian' in the sense that he views our public administration as distinctive because of the particular institutional dynamics associated with the Government of Canada. Like Dawson and Hodgetts before him, he sees the public service as a powerful actor within the government that needs to be examined not as an appendage to political institutions but rather as an independent organization, one that is made responsible to government in a myriad of relationships and not simply through hierarchy.<sup>2</sup> But he has moved beyond the study of political/bureaucratic structures – a study that for many years was at the heart of scholarship – in order to look much more closely at issues associated with what has come to be referred to as public management. Political concerns regarding power, responsibility, and accountability informed his earlier work; more recently he has explored questions surrounding the management of the Canadian public service.

Kernaghan is somewhat unique in that he has focused on the importance of values and ethics in reconciling the political with the managerial. He argues that values and ethics are key for the development of a professional public service as well as crucial to most administrative reforms, which, to succeed, must delegate authority to public servants. He has argued that the 'choice made now to pay continuous and systematic attention to public service ethics is likely to make a long-term difference to public servants' trust in one another and to public confidence in government.'<sup>3</sup> In the wake of the sponsorship scandal (among others), Kernaghan has continued to argue that simply applying more rules will never bring an end to such events. To achieve successful and ethical public management, the normative foundations of public service must be recognized and strengthened.

It follows that values and ethics are at the heart of public administration's approach to balancing its relationship with legitimate political authority while responding to the needs of Canadians. This balance requires a public service that is committed to ethical and values-based leadership. But for Kernaghan, this is never a case of one set of values trumping another; rather, it involves the coexistence of various values, including ethical values, democratic values, and professional values. An awareness of competing values and of the compromises they require is much more likely to produce positive administrative results, increased

trust in government, and better service to Canadians, especially when compared to simply writing up detailed sets of guidelines.<sup>4</sup>

This tendency to seek out the complexities within emerging issues surrounding public administration is a hallmark of Kernaghan's scholarship. It has allowed him to navigate between the positive and the negative in administrative reform processes, and to do so without becoming a partisan for any particular academic camp. He often expresses his desire to balance these tensions and paradoxes in the subtitles of his articles. Some key examples: 'Conceptual and Practical Considerations,' 'Ethical, Political, and Managerial Considerations,' 'Finding the Balance Point,' 'Revolutionary Advance or Passing Fancy,' and 'Road to Renewal or Impractical Vision?' His attitude towards debate in the discipline of public administration is always to 'keep the pot boiling.' And no one is better at doing that than Ken Kernaghan.

A clear example of this attitude relates to the issue of public service reform in the 1990s based on the New Public Management (NPM) model. Kernaghan agreed with many of his colleagues that this reform model had been framed using an inappropriate market metaphor; yet he was reluctant to dismiss NPM out of hand. Rather, he wanted to learn what was useful from various experiences with this model – both its failures and its successes – and thereby find ways to incrementally improve the operations of governments. Indeed, throughout his career he has remained open to the idea of examining and improving the performance of public organizations by examining the private sector literature on organizational behavior and organizational theory, and he has done much to alert public administration scholars to the valuable work being done in associated disciplines.

In examining the subjects that Kernaghan has chosen to write about during his career, it is clear that he is aware of the legacy, traditions, and institutions surrounding Canadian public administration and that he also has his eye out for the 'next big thing' in his discipline that might be of real benefit to public servants, scholars, and Canadians more generally. Though he is always sensitive to the importance of key conventions such as ministerial responsibility and civil service neutrality – indeed, he gave these conventions their most rigorous modern articulation – he never overlooks the importance of management innovations, whether it is the arrival of electronic government or the use of public-private partnerships. His scholarship never focuses on determining which institutional arrangement is superior or which new practice threatens existing institutions and practices. Rather, he insists that we

must remain open to the possibility of innovation and that we can learn much that is useful from various experiments with reform without doing harm to the important values and traditions associated with the existing public sector.

With his interest in how organizations actually work and in the possibilities associated with reform, Ken Kernaghan has long been a champion of the middle level of the public bureaucracy. He feels that the wisdom, restlessness, and intelligence of this group has been underutilized and must be tapped into by governments if they hope to overcome some of the problems inherent in large-scale organizations. Thus he has always encouraged public servants to develop and implement new approaches to public management and not worry about the scholarly debates swirling around NPM and other controversial issues. He also considers it important for scholars to involve themselves directly with individual reformers, for this can 'assist and encourage their efforts by a rigorous analysis of the political and managerial implications and the purposes, benefits and limitations of these new approaches.'<sup>5</sup> He hopes that academics and career public servants will find ways to develop bonds of mutual support and trust that in the end will improve the quality of service delivery and governance more generally. This is not just a useful suggestion for others, but something he has taken to heart, most recently as chair of the Federal Task Force on the Disclosure of Wrongdoing. He views the public service as much more than an organizational appendage of government; he has come to regard it as an organic entity that thrives on its connections with the world beyond government departments and institutions.

His interest in public management and the role of middle managers in public organizations is genuine, yet he has never overlooked the key role retained by politicians in successful reforms. Only politicians can launch major public administration reforms. However, Kernaghan reminds them that they have to defend those reforms in public and in Parliament if they are to have any chance of succeeding. He has been quick to urge politicians to support new initiatives such as empowerment and the Quality Service Initiative, not because they are going to lead by themselves to improved public service, but because they represent a genuine effort by many individuals to bring new ideas to the attention of decision makers – ideas with the potential to improve the quality of public administration in Canada.

Despite all the positive efforts from public servants, Kernaghan has observed with alarm a decline in the stature of the public service in the

eyes of Canadians and, more crucially, a decline in morale among public servants. In his view, this dilemma can be resolved by developing a more values-based public service, one that operates with respect for Parliament and citizens but that remains aware of its own special role in democracy. Other groups in society need to play their part in halting this erosion of public service as an honourable profession; but the public service itself must further this effort to make public service again 'an honour to be coveted.'<sup>6</sup>

The key to reviving public service as a desirable career for the most talented Canadians is to focus on values. Kernaghan is well aware that without a meaningful regime of values and ethics, only bureaucratic regulations are left. An excessive reliance on rules leads to frustrated citizens, inertia in the public service, and politicians who rely on yet more rules and who are uninterested in or unaware of the negative consequences of a rules-based regime for the long-term prospects for the public service. Kernaghan makes a telling argument that ethical conduct by public officials is essential if the public's trust in government is to be enhanced. At a minimum this requires a written code of ethics, because only by establishing such a code can the debate move beyond arguing about the existence of various values. For Kernaghan, the lack of a written code of ethics signals a lack of commitment to values in general and sends all the wrong signals, both internally and externally.<sup>7</sup>

Written codes provide some certainty, and they narrow the scope for personal discretion, but they do not eliminate the importance of ethical choices. To ensure that personal ethical standards are harmonized with organizational ethics, and to improve ethical sensitivity and understanding, public servants must receive ethics training from the organization's leadership. In this sense, ethical leadership is, for Kernaghan, the single most important determinant of ethical behavior. He notes that 'public servants are more effectively motivated by concrete examples of values-based leadership than by lofty declarations of values.'<sup>8</sup> Of course, leadership is not the exclusive preserve of deputy ministers; it is also found in the middle ranks: 'While values-based leadership is especially important at the senior levels of public organizations, it can be found – and encouraged – at all levels.'<sup>9</sup>

Kernaghan is concerned about ethics because, like Dawson and Hodgetts, he recognizes that public servants exercise power in the Canadian political system. Indeed, this recognition is central to his scholarship. He realizes that public servants can be a negative or positive influence on policy making, and he has worked to ensure that they

remain a positive influence. Again, he is committed to the idea of values as a means to ensure this. In the end, he believes that the cause of popular distrust of government is never the *expansion* of administrative power; rather, the cause is the irresponsible *exercise* of this power by public servants and politicians.

The question of how to address the growing power of the public service is never easy to answer, and Kernaghan has never been swayed by simple arguments. For example, when discussing representative bureaucracy, he acknowledges that this has great symbolic value but is adamant that it will not lead to a more responsive bureaucracy. Simply adding individuals from designated groups will not bring this about because these individuals, if they are to do their jobs effectively, will need to remain responsible in a hierarchical manner. The value of representative bureaucracy is that it signals powerfully that there are no barriers to individual success in society.

Ken Kernaghan has long contended that bureaucratic power can be controlled most effectively by subjective responsibility supported by a strong ethics regime informed by ethical leadership. He has consistently rejected calls for a more objective type of responsibility based on rules and procedures. He has been expanding on the notion of subjective responsibility for much of his career, especially with his idea that administrative power can be checked by rigorously examining public servants' values.

Kernaghan has always struck a delicate balance between the subjective and the objective, recognizing that both values and rules are needed in order to create and support change in the behaviour of public servants. He never promotes an unhealthy dogmatism. Public administration is never a place for absolutes; rather, it requires thoughtful examination and principled compromises. It can never function on the basis of strict legislative constraints, but neither can it function on the basis of appeals only to the conscience and morality of public servants.

Ken Kernaghan unequivocally supports the view that values are the key to an effective public service, but he also realizes that value conflicts are possible. Thus he notes that a value such as accountability naturally conflicts with responsiveness. Still, he has always felt that 'the way in which public servants use their power will be shaped by a mix of these values and the relative importance of the values will vary over time.'<sup>10</sup> For a democratic society to be healthy, it *must* create a regime of firm but flexible values.

Ken Kernaghan is, above all, a very precise scholar who is concerned



about making certain that definitions and words were used correctly, especially in the world of public management, which is often influenced by fads. Much of his scholarship focuses on defining concepts such as political neutrality, whistleblowing, and ethics; as a consequence he has influenced the very terms used for discussing the discipline. Likewise, he has long made a point of treating with respect and understanding the ideas with which he engages. Unlike a number of public administration scholars, he never dismisses out of hand ideas such as empowerment and total quality management (TQM). Rather, he seriously examines those ideas in an attempt to uncover what is useful and familiar in them and how they can be made to work in the context of public administration. He is equally adamant about the need for government organizations to accommodate themselves to new trends if the public service is to cope with change while still attracting highly qualified employees who will serve the public interest. Finally, it is hardly a surprise to note that more often than not, his conclusions have been correct.

The essays in this book reflect Ken Kernaghan's enduring concerns. As editors, we have attempted to include an essay representing every field in which he has made a contribution. Not surprisingly, this has turned out to cover practically every aspect of Canadian public administration. It is our good fortune that we have succeeded in attracting some of the best minds in the field to this project; as a result we have been able to produce a book that covers all of the current and enduring issues in public administration and public management.

We have asked each contributor to write an essay that discusses how his or her area of the discipline has evolved in recent years and the role that Ken Kernaghan has played in that evolution. We have also asked each contributor to speculate on future developments in the field.

Part One focuses on how some of the traditional public service institutions have evolved. This is an appropriate first topic because Ken Kernaghan has been one of the main chroniclers of this evolution – and sometimes its leader.

In chapter 1, Peter Aucoin traces the development of NPM, which, as he points out, is no longer so new. He then identifies some tensions that he sees developing between traditional NPM and elements of empowerment and what he calls the New Public Governance.

In chapter 2, Paul Thomas wonders whether there is a need for yet another discussion of accountability, and then goes on to answer his own question in a brilliant fashion by summarizing the various uses

(and misuses) of the term, analysing the current accountability regime (or lack thereof), and speculating on some interesting potential future developments in this field.

In chapter 3, on political neutrality, David Good draws on his many years of experience as a senior public servant. To illustrate the unworkability of the ideal model of political neutrality, he begins with a hypothetical discussion between a minister and a deputy minister. He goes on to review some of the working principles developed by Ken; then he fashions three new principles of his own that he feels can serve as practical guides to action in this dangerous minefield.

In chapter 4, Michael Duggett, the Executive Director of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences at the time of writing, reflects on Ken's fifteen years as editor of the *International Review of Administrative Sciences* by tracing how the journal, during his tenure, treated the important issue of privatization. This provides some significant insights into the ways in which the views of the academic community on an important issue changed over time.

Part Two focuses on the public service as an institution. This reflects Ken's respect for the quality of the public service. His concern that its position be protected and improved is well known.

Chapter 5, the first in this section, is Iain Gow's aptly titled 'Between Ideals and Obedience.' As this suggests, Gow grapples with the age-old but still highly topical issue of the extent to which public servants can allow their own ethical values to direct their activities – that is, instead of following the directions of their political masters.

In chapter 6, Evert Lindquist offers an overview of some of the shocks that have hit the public service in the past few years and discusses the extent to which the injection of more 'soul' or 'spirituality' into the public service might help mitigate some of the problems he identifies.

In chapter 7, Jacques Bourgault and Esther Parent discuss an old question: Is the public service a profession? They tie their discussion to the evolving role of pride and recognition as instruments for improving the quality of the public service. They then report on an interesting survey of how governments are using incentive systems to foster recognition and develop pride among public servants.

Part Three focuses on recent innovations in service delivery – the focus of Ken's current research. It says something about Ken that he could have rested on his laurels and stayed in comfortable territory; instead he developed an interest in these recent innovations. He always seems to be on the cutting edge.

Sandford Borins and David Brown are currently working on a major project with Ken relating to electronic means of delivering government services. In chapter 8 they present eight case studies illustrating the use of electronic consultation in the federal and Ontario governments. They then draw some conclusions and provide some advice about best practices.

In chapter 9, on public-private partnerships, Jennifer Berardi builds on Ken's widely used typology of partnerships to analyse the development of the Niagara Fallsview Casino. She concludes that partnerships can produce desirable results, but she also raises some questions about how the partnership form was implemented in this particular case.

In chapter 10, Brian Marson discusses Canada's position as a leader in the provision of citizen-centred services. First he tracks how Canadian governments have measured levels of citizen satisfaction and have identified the drivers of that satisfaction. Then he discusses how governments have used this basic information to improve quality of services.

Part Four focuses on an area that has long interested Ken. He has never been the sort of passive academic who writes for the sake of writing. He has always been active in disseminating new information, and he has directed his research and writing with the goal of developing the current and next generations of public servants. This is evident in his involvement in professional associations and his concern about education.

One of the groups in which Ken has long been active is the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC). In chapter 11, Patrice Dutil and Michael McConkey write about how IPAC has transformed itself from a membership-based learned organization into a strong non-governmental organization drawing significant amounts of funding from international contracts. This has been vital to the health of the organization and has had a highly beneficial impact on the state of public administration in Canada. This transformation has given Canada a window on the world and allowed many Canadians to obtain valuable experience working in international settings.

In chapter 12, Barbara Wake Carroll, the current editor of *Canadian Public Administration*, writes about the difficulties inherent in editing a journal that must span academic and practitioner interests. Ken was able to walk this tightrope with two different journals over a period of almost twenty-five years. Carroll praises him for the work that he did to bridge this gap but also suggests that there are still significant obstacles to be overcome in getting practitioners and academics to talk together.

Finally, in chapter 13, Carolyn Johns, editor of the Case Program in Canadian Public Administration at the time of writing, discusses the importance of case studies as tools for training and development. She also discusses the important role the Case Program has played in advancing the use of cases in university as well as public service settings. She then recounts the importance of Ken's pioneering role as the founding director of the Case Program.

As editors, we owe a debt of gratitude to the scholars who agreed to contribute to this book. Given Ken's status in the field, it did not surprise us that we were able to line up such an exceptionally strong group. Together they comprise a virtual Who's Who of public administration academics at the turn of the new century. All gave willingly of their limited time to contribute to this tribute to Ken.

The final word must be about the person to whom this book is dedicated. It is often said that all academics stand on the shoulders of those who came before them. This is certainly true about the debt of gratitude that future generations will owe to Ken Kernaghan. However, what is significant in Ken's case is how remarkably broad and supportive those shoulders are. Most academics would be happy if they were remembered for one or two truly great works that had a significant impact beyond their own generation. Ken's broad interest in all aspects of public administration and his ability to discern important issues as they emerge guarantee that his works will serve as an indispensable foundation for future generations of scholars across the entire discipline. This book is one small way of repaying the debt that so many of us and our successors will owe him.

## NOTES

- 1 O.P. Dwivedi, *The Administrative State in Canada: Essays in Honour of J.E. Hodgetts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982).
- 2 Kenneth Kernaghan, 'Changing Concepts of Power and Responsibility in the Canadian Public Service,' *Canadian Public Administration* 21 (1978): 389–406.
- 3 Kenneth Kernaghan, 'Toward a Public Service Code of Conduct – and Beyond,' *Canadian Public Administration* 40 (1997): 40–5, 54.
- 4 Kenneth Kernaghan, 'The Post-Bureaucratic Organization and Public Service Values,' *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 66 (2000): 91–104, 102.

- 5 Kenneth Kernaghan. 'Keeping the New Public Management Pot Boiling,' *Canadian Public Administration* 38 (1995): 481–4.
- 6 Kenneth Kernaghan, 'An Honour to Be Coveted: Pride, Recognition, and Public Service,' *Canadian Public Administration* 44 (2001): 67–83.
- 7 Kenneth Kernaghan, 'Integrating Values into Public Service: The Values Statement as Centerpiece,' *Public Administration Review* 63, no. 6 (2003): 711–19.
- 8 Kernaghan, 'The Post-Bureaucratic Organization.'
- 9 Kernaghan, 'Integrating Values into Public Service,' 718.
- 10 Ibid., 712.

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# PART I

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## The Evolution of Traditional Institutions

Other disciplines have sometimes questioned the value of studying institutions and structures rather than values or the ultimate outcomes of public policies. Yet it is clear that the study of institutions and structural arrangements has always been one of the cornerstones of public administration studies. The four chapters in Part One of this book make it clear why those structures and institutions are important. In different ways, they all demonstrate how the changing nature of governance and the role of the state reflect the way in which organizations have been changing. In particular, all of the chapters examine the impact of various aspects of NPM on government organizations. They remind us that organizations are not static; they change – sometimes quite rapidly – to reflect changes in their environment, such as the latest trends in management. They even change to reflect crises such as the sponsorship scandal (which will be mentioned several times in this section).

Peter Aucoin is one of the most prolific and insightful commentators on NPM. In chapter 1, he begins by placing NPM in its historical context by focusing on its antecedents, which include the Glassco Commission and the general expansion of government in the 1960s and 1970s. Aucoin also helps us understand the Canadian approach to NPM by setting it in an international context. Clearly, a phenomenon like NPM can mean different things in different milieux.

Aucoin reminds us that NPM focuses on public servants as managers and not simply administrators. He cautions, however, that public servants are managing the public's business; thus there are constraints on their ability to make autonomous decisions. His concern is that NPM has emphasized efficient management but not necessarily political control over public servants. He argues that a reaction to this has led to

what he calls New Public Governance (NPG), which emphasizes strong – Aucoin suggests excessive – political control of the bureaucracy. This has resulted in a bureaucracy that is too close to politicians and too willing to do their bidding. His example is the sponsorship scandal. In his prescription, he references Kernaghan's work to argue for greater empowerment of public servants so that they are properly subservient to their political masters without, however, being politicized.

In chapter 2, Paul Thomas tackles the important but elusive concept of accountability. He concedes that much has already been written about it, but he adds that the concept is continuing to change, as suggested by the use of the word 'swirling' in the chapter title. He addresses the paradox that governments have added more and more accountability mechanisms in the face of concerns by the opposition parties, the media, and the general public; yet whatever mechanisms are introduced, they are never enough to satisfy the growing demand for more accountability.

Thomas points out that accountability in Westminster systems of government has traditionally been based on ministerial responsibility; yet one of the responses to demands for more accountability has been to focus on the kind of managerial accountability that is a part of NPM. He suggests that managerial accountability is a good complement to ministerial accountability but cannot be a substitute for it.

He takes us back to basics to discuss what accountability means and what its main components are. He then raises the concern that governments keep responding to calls from the public and the media to introduce more accountability by adding more accountability mechanisms, but not necessarily in a thoughtful or systematic way. The result is certainly more accountability mechanisms, but not necessarily a better system of accountability (with the emphasis on 'system'). He laments what he calls 'multiple accountability disorder' (MAD).

In chapter 3, to illustrate the practical difficulty of separating policy and administration, David Good draws on his extensive experience as a senior public servant to construct a hypothetical discussion between a minister and a deputy minister.

He uses this to frame a discussion of the evolving nature of ministerial responsibility, public service anonymity, and political neutrality. He discusses how many of the changes discussed in the first two chapters have had a strong impact on these concepts. NPM has introduced greater transparency in the operations of government – transparency that now requires public servants to be more visible in public consulta-



tions, by appearing before Parliamentary committees, among other highly visible tasks. Furthermore, the emphasis on partnerships, citizen-centred service delivery, and horizontal coordination of policy making and delivery across several departments presents challenges to traditional ideas of ministerial responsibility.

These continual changes have required a constant rethinking of the concepts of ministerial responsibility, public service anonymity, and political neutrality. However, Good argues that it is important to reaffirm the following three tenets:

- 1 It is ministers, not public servants, who answer to Parliament for policy decisions and politically contentious matters, and they do so in a manner that safeguards the political neutrality and anonymity of public servants.
- 2 Public servants avoid activities (e.g., criticizing their minister in public) that harm or seem to harm their impartiality or the impartiality of the public service.
- 3 Public servants provide advice to ministers in confidence and avoid activities that involve them in public debate or political controversy.

The final chapter in this section is Michael Duggett's review of how one aspect of NPM has been implemented in a number of different countries. Drawing on articles that appeared in the *International Review of Administrative Sciences* while Ken Kernaghan was editor, he demonstrates that privatization is a global trend that has gone beyond any one ideology or the specific needs of any one government. He argues that privatization went from being a mere technical issue to a politically charged one and then back to a more technical one.

However, the wide adoption of privatization has not limited the controversy associated with it. It has sometimes been seen as positive, the belief being that emulating the private sector is bound to improve efficiency. Other times it has been seen as a method of 'human degradation via contractual employment, lower wages, harder and less permanent work; and in a society with ever more police and security machineries; a culture only of individual consumer-pursuit, public sector debt, and a decaying infrastructure.' In the end, Duggett concludes that privatization has clearly had an impact, though it has not resulted in the huge changes that were envisaged by some.

# 1 New Public Management and New Public Governance: Finding the Balance

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PETER AUCOIN

The New Public Management (NPM) that emerged over the past twenty-five years in the Anglo-American systems, but especially in the four major Westminster systems of Australia, Britain, Canada, and New Zealand, was new in several respects, especially in the extent to which it emphasized the 'management' of resources and operations over the 'administration' of processes and procedures. Management was regarded as an active, even proactive, endeavour in the pursuit of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness; administration was seen as passive compliance with established and standardized procedures. The new was pitted against the old, the innovative against the traditional.

The rhetoric associated with NPM called into question the classic bureaucratic paradigm of a professional, non-partisan, and career public service. This classic paradigm assumed a public service that both advised ministers on matters of public policy and implemented the government's public policies through departments they directly administered. The links between ministers and their departmental public servants were thus close, even though the public service was neutral in terms of partisan politics. Public servants possessed great influence because they advised their political masters. But they were restrained in exercising personal discretion in the management and delivery of public services by centrally prescribed and monitored administrative rules and regulations that governed the deployment of financial and human resources. Public servants in this model administered systems, processes, and procedures; they did not manage much – at least, not on their own individual accord. They were administrators, not managers.

NPM promised to change all this.<sup>1</sup> A new paradigm of management would replace traditional public administration.<sup>2</sup>

NPM is hardly new any longer, but there has not emerged another ascendant paradigm in public administration.<sup>3</sup> In several respects, there are new iterations of public management reform, given that reform remains on the agenda as governments and their public services continue to pursue improvements in management performance, policy and program implementation, and outcomes or results. There is now, for instance, a greater recognition of the need to provide better service delivery to citizens, and not merely to secure greater economy and efficiency in government operations. Canada has emerged as a leader on this front. In Britain and New Zealand, where at the outset of NPM the focus was essentially on efforts to combat budgetary deficits and debt by streamlining the state, its programs, and the cost of their delivery, there is a new concern for achieving better services and outcomes that citizens demand. At the same time, NPM's agenda remains relevant because everywhere the effectiveness of the administration of the public's business constitutes a significant factor in a country's achievement of economic prosperity and social well-being. But in addition to NPM, there has emerged what I call a 'new public governance' (NPG) that has brought forth a new architecture for public administration that, in several respects, challenges NPM.

Ken Kernaghan has been a leading figure in what Don Kettl<sup>4</sup> has called the 'global public management revolution,' a revolution that encompasses NPM. Kernaghan is one of those few scholars in public administration who recognized long ago that public administration requires that public servants, as administrators, be able to manage. His early work prefigured NPM; his later work centred on the most critical management components of NPM. At the same time, he always acknowledged that public managers manage not just any kind of business but rather the *public's* business. As such, reforms that seek to improve the management dimension of public administration must always be balanced by attention to the values and ethics of the public service dimension of public administration. Not surprisingly, Kernaghan has never been an apostle of simply 'letting the managers manage'; he has always cautioned against an 'entrepreneurial' managerial style that ignores or runs roughshod over the fundamental public service character of public administration. And given his inclination to link theory to practice, he has been a leading figure in articu-

lating the public service values and ethics that define what the public service character of public administration should mean in practice.

### **Before the New Public Management**

More than four decades ago, in the early 1960s, just before Ken Ker-naghan began his professorial career, the Canadian Royal Commission on Government Organization – the Glassco Commission – delivered a report that proposed a major reform agenda for public administration predicated on this fundamental prescription: ‘Let the managers manage.’ The private sector’s influence in this prescription was obvious. In the private sector there are boards of directors and managers, each with different roles and responsibilities. The realm of management belongs to the latter. The Glassco Commission recognized that the public and private sectors are different; but when it came to management in the public service, it wanted the public sector to emulate the private sector as much as possible. Recall that by the 1960s, ‘management’ in the private sector had fully come into its own. The modern corporation, with its division of roles and responsibilities between a board of directors and managers, had become the dominant organizational form of private sector business. The MBA was the new academic credential for management in the modern corporation (notwithstanding the retention of the term ‘administration’ in the degree’s title). And management consulting firms, as well as the accounting profession, were entering a new era of prosperity with increased status and influence as well as increased revenues.

The Glassco Commission had a strong impact on Canadian public administration, and a good deal of administrative deregulation and decentralization followed. Numerous modern management techniques were introduced by the central corporate-management agencies of government, especially by the newly established Treasury Board Secretariat (itself the creation of the Glassco Commission) and the greatly expanded (albeit independent) Public Service Commission. Many if not most of these techniques were drawn from private sector management experience. Similar developments occurred in the United States. Indeed, Canada and the United States moved to the forefront of public administration reforms internationally.

At the same time, the managerial prescriptions of the Glassco Commission did not always fit well with the Westminster system of public

administration, characterized as it was by collective cabinet executive authority, responsibility, and accountability for the whole of government, on the one hand, and by individual ministerial authority, responsibility, and accountability for the separate departments of government, on the other. Public servants – even deputy ministers as the administrative heads of departments – had no recognized status separate from that of their political masters. There was no acceptance of a politics/administration dichotomy, as had long been a feature of American public administration. Furthermore, the government had a collective interest in applying standardized management rules, processes, and procedures across the entire government. For their part, ministers relied on these government-wide standards of management, established and policed by central corporate-management agencies, to ensure that their departmental public servants complied with established management practices and to relieve ministers of the need to pay ongoing attention to management issues.

Within this management context, even senior public administrators had not been called on to exercise much discretion (if any) in managing their financial and human resources, in leading their staff, or in delivering public services. While it cannot be said that the government operated on automatic pilot, the government-wide and standardized system of rules, processes, and procedures meant that managers were first and foremost administrators of ‘systems.’ As Hodgetts expressed it, deputy ministers had responsibilities without authority.<sup>5</sup> Most of these systems were designed at the centre of government and were meant to control for maladministration by departmental officials as much as they were meant to advance good management. Hence the notion of a ‘command and control’ structure and culture.

The growth and complexity of Western government bureaucracies after the Second World War had, paradoxically, both stimulated interest in government-wide standards to constrain public servants’ discretion and diminished the likelihood that these standards would secure economy and efficiency. The drawback to a highly centralized and tightly controlled system – even assuming that it could reduce the incidence of maladministration and corrupt behaviour – was that it prevented managers from making the most economical and efficient use of resources. This was because it restricted the authority, and thus reduced the range of options, for managers to take decisions that could achieve economies and efficiencies in their particular operational settings. It also relieved

managers of responsibility and accountability for managing in ways that pursued economy and efficiency. In short, it impoverished the theory and practice of management in the public service.

### **Emergence of the New Public Management**

It is important to remember that NPM arose in the 1960s and 1970s, a time when postwar ambitions coincided with postwar affluence and when the Westminster model of impoverished management (as described above) confronted an expanding number and range of public services as state intervention in the socio-economic order increased significantly. The result was an increasing number of diversified public services, provided by an ever expanding public service bureaucracy and accompanied by growing annual government deficits and mounting national debt. By the late 1970s something had to give, and it did, with the election of several governments intent on 'rolling back the state.' Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government in Britain led the way.<sup>6</sup> Rolling back the state meant

- 1 privatizing state enterprises,
- 2 contracting out to the private sector the task of delivering those public services that had not been privatized,
- 3 eliminating some public services, and
- 4 reducing government spending (or at least slowing down the rate of its growth) through greater economies and efficiencies.

Privatization and contracting out were justified on two grounds: first, it would reduce budgetary requirements; and second, it would improve national economic productivity. Privatization transformed what had been public services provided by state bureaucracies into private services under private ownership and provided in the marketplace. Contracting out placed public services under private sector management.

Privatizations, of course, were one-off exercises. Once privatized, a service was no longer a public service.<sup>7</sup> Contracting out, on the other hand, did more than bring the private sector into public service delivery. It also introduced the idea that the 'market' – that is, competition between competing potential providers (public sector and/or private sector providers) over contracts to deliver public services – would secure greater economy and efficiency in the management of these ser-

vices as opposed to having them provided by the public service as a monopoly provider. In Britain this idea constituted the foundation of a policy that went beyond the case of contracting out to the private sector whenever it was clear that increased efficiencies could be obtained. This new policy regime imposed 'compulsory market testing' that required public service managers to subject some portion of their services to market competition on an annual basis. At the same time, in the spirit of open competition, the government allowed its public service units that had formerly provided these services to compete against potential private sector providers for the contracts under tender.<sup>8</sup> This approach acknowledges that *competition* between potential providers is what spurs improvements in economy and efficiency; it is not the public or private status of the providers. So long as the public service provider does not have monopoly control over a service, and thus must compete periodically against private sector providers to maintain a 'contract,' it should have every incentive to achieve all possible economies and efficiencies. In this respect, it is no different from a private sector provider; its vested interest is in winning contracts to stay in business.

It did not take long, though, for public management reformers to realize that there would still be a lot left to manage once the bulk of privatization was accomplished and the contracting-out policy was in full effect.<sup>9</sup> NPM, in other words, also had to involve improving the management of those services which the public service would continue to provide directly – that is, those not privatized or contracted out.

The British approach to reform initially stressed achieving greater economies and efficiencies by conducting wide-ranging 'efficiency scrutinies' to search out those areas where efficiencies could be achieved and then by taking the necessary decisions to realize them. This was coupled with some streamlining of central corporate-management regulations and some decentralization of financial and human resources administrative authorities. By the end of the first decade of reform the British had also adopted a more contractual approach to public management by separating ministerial departments from what came to be called 'executive agencies.' The former retained responsibilities for setting policy and monitoring its implementation; the latter were given responsibilities for policy implementation through the delivery of public services. These executive agencies had at one time been the divisions or branches of ministerial departments that managed and delivered public services. This decoupling of 'policy' from 'operations' (often referred to as the 'Next Steps' program, because it

followed on from the initial efforts to improve performance simply by devolving management authority), allowed for a full-blown, contractually based performance management structure and regime.

In New Zealand the major theoretical influence on reformers was agency theory. This resulted in a restructuring of the relationship between ministers and their chief executives so that it was grounded on a contractual basis, rather than merely a hierarchical basis. The aim was to make it much clearer what the ministers expected of their chief executives. Performance measures were established to ensure that these executives were subject to rigorous evaluation of their performance in meeting ministers' expectations. Also, a vigorous management accountability regime was put in place to keep chief executives on track and in check by their ministers. But there was more to agency theory: chief executives were now regarded as professional managers, and as such they were expected to act as the professional 'agents' of their ministers, who were their 'principals.' In this context, the managers had the authority, discretion, and flexibility to deploy and manage the resources that were provided to them by their ministers for the production ('output') of public services in the most economical and efficient manner. Ministers, in other words, would not intervene in management; that would be the realm of professional managers as agents under contract. Performance awards provided managers with incentives to be economical and efficient in their use of resources, including financial and human resources. In addition, New Zealand redesigned its departmental structures so that some advised ministers on policy while others delivered the services that ministers wanted delivered. The British terminology of 'executive agencies' was not used; but the organizational design was similar.<sup>10</sup>

Australia was an interesting case of NPM reform because it did not accept the policy/operations dichotomy as the basis for organizing governance and public management, as occurred in Britain and New Zealand, even though it was willing to use it in limited circumstances when there was little need for ongoing policy direction from ministers and their senior advisers. Moreover, a major reorganization of ministerial portfolios in 1987 streamlined the number of ministerial departments and made the capacity for ministerial direction even more important in the context of reform. At the same time, the government was willing to devolve management authority to senior departmental managers, in part by substantially deregulating administrative controls and redesigning the central corporate-management agencies, espe-



cially those involved in human resources. Finally, the Australian approach was interesting because the government succeeded in achieving its budgetary objectives, ending deficits, and substantially reducing its debt.<sup>11</sup>

Equally important, however, was that the Australian government, throughout this first decade of reform, did not lose sight of the requirement that the government achieve its agenda of intended policy 'outcomes.' In its view, managing 'inputs' (especially money and people) to produce 'outputs' (services, programs, operations) as economically and efficiently as possible was important. But so, too, was achieving effective outcomes – in other words, outputs had to have the intended effect or impact so that the desired changes in the socio-economic order actually occurred. This meant managing to outcomes. It also meant that policy design was critical: no matter how good the management of programs, if the policy design was faulty then the intended effects would not be realized. Australian reformers regarded themselves as having an approach to public management reform different from that of the British and New Zealanders, whom they saw as focused first and foremost on economy and efficiency, with too little attention paid to effectiveness.

In Canada the emergence of NPM was slow and cautious.<sup>12</sup> There was precious little ministerial interest until the Conservatives came to power in 1984 with a campaign platform that promised many things, including public management reform. The Mulroney government sought to emulate both Reagan and Thatcher in rolling back the state by way of a major 'program review,' headed by the deputy prime minister and assisted by teams with equal numbers of public servants and private sector managers. The result was supposed to be a major streamlining of government services and operations. This effort was a failure (as was the American effort), in contrast to the more realistic and more professional (and, ironically, more public service) conduct of efficiency scrutinies in Britain. The consequence in Canada was a decade of successive rounds of what were essentially across-the-board percentage cuts to government administrative budgets, but no major program reductions.

There was a modest effort at streamlining management regulations and delegating authority to departmental managers, but no significant restructuring to produce anything like the policy/operations organizational separations found in Britain and New Zealand. A handful of 'special operating agencies' were established, but these paled in com-

parison to the British and New Zealand organizational designs. They employed less than 5 per cent of the public service; equally important, they were subordinate to the deputy ministers of their 'parent' departments instead of having direct contractual relationships with ministers. Their administrative authority made them 'special' in comparison to departments, but these were modest delegations of power compared to what was happening elsewhere. As in Australia, the integrated policy and implementation ministerial department remained the norm.

In 1989, however, the federal public service, with the backing but not the enthusiastic interest of ministers, unveiled a Public Service 2000 reform program that, at least in its rhetoric and scope, sought to match developments elsewhere. It was not a success. As a public service-led reform, this program could not and did not achieve a sufficient degree of coherence. It tried to maintain traditions while promoting reforms, some of which contradicted one another. The result could not be other than a good deal of inconsistency between rhetoric and reality as well as a tendency for the various reform components to ride off in different directions.

By the mid-1990s, however, NPM had begun to give ground to reforms or initiatives that were not inspired primarily, or at all, by the theoretical or ideological underpinnings of NPM. In Australia the new conservative government aggressively pursued an NPM agenda of competition and contracting; in Britain the New Labour government did not give up on performance measurement and competition, but neither did it add anything new to the NPM paradigm. At the same time, several initiatives that drew inspiration from traditional public service ideals – or at least a mix of the new and traditional – began to make their mark in the late 1990s and into the first decade of the twenty-first century. For instance, efficient management gave ground as a priority to better service delivery, with the focus on 'citizen centred' as opposed to 'customer centred' service delivery. For its part, performance management turned away from a focus on management performance for economy and efficiency towards the effective achievement of the results or outcomes of government policies, programs, and services. And the managerial pursuit of producing an organization's contracted outputs gave way to the ideal of interorganizational (horizontal, joined up, or whole of government) collaboration in the pursuit of integrated or shared objectives. These three general initiatives – citizen-centred service delivery, results-based management, and horizontal collabora-

tion – emerged in a period of significant public management reform. These initiatives did not contradict NPM reforms; indeed, in several respects they assumed that public service managers had sufficient authority to realize these new initiatives.

### **New Public Governance: Tensions with New Public Management**

NPM encompassed an understanding that the relations between ministers and their public servants needed to be altered. Economies had to be achieved in order to reduce budgetary outlays, and ministers had to ensure that they controlled any budget-maximizing behaviour on the part of their bureaucrats. Ministers had to insist on better public service management in order to achieve efficiencies as a second means to reduce costs. What they wanted from NPM was improved management of resources and better delivery of public services.

At the same time, political leaders such as Thatcher, Reagan, and Mulroney were not the least bit enamoured by what they perceived to be their self-serving bureaucracies.<sup>13</sup> They had to ensure that they were not captured by their bureaucrats' policy preferences. Thus they had to end the bureaucracy's monopoly position in giving advice to ministers by bringing in political staff as alternative or competing sources of advice. In public choice theory, these political leaders found an academically respectable and increasingly popular theoretical justification for their position in addition to useful rhetoric with which to bash their bureaucracies.<sup>14</sup> The theory provided the rationale for extensive political interventions in the staffing of their respective senior public services well beyond what these two systems had previously experienced, even in the American case.<sup>15</sup>

In Australia, political interventions increased as well. The approach was influenced by the American experience, though the new Labor government in 1983, which was originally expected to politicize the upper echelons of the public service in the American style, on the assumption of office decided instead to significantly expand the number and roles of political staff (also an American influence). It did so in part because it was able to appoint a host of former public servants to political staff positions. Ministers continued to head departments. However, they were now advised not only by their departmental public servants but also by their political staff. This introduced a new dynamic of competition between policy advisers. As managed by successive Labor governments, nonetheless, this new style worked excep-

tionally well, in large part because ministers engaged their public servants instead of overriding them.<sup>16</sup> This style ended with the election of John Howard's Liberal-National government in 1996, when the new government decided to rely primarily on its political advisers and to appoint politically friendly public servants to senior posts in the public service.<sup>17</sup>

In New Zealand, a new regime for staffing the senior cadre of the public service was adopted in order to give ministers a greater say in the appointment and management of their 'chief executives' (as the former permanent heads of departments were now to be called). Given what ministers and reformers were hoping to accomplish in New Zealand by restructuring minister-chief executive relationships, the reformed regime for staffing the chief executive cadre turned out to be the most independent among the four Westminster systems.<sup>18</sup> Chief executives are appointed by Cabinet on the recommendation of the State Services Commissioner following an open competition for vacant positions. The Cabinet can reject a recommendation but must disclose any appointment that it makes without a recommendation from the commissioner. Not surprisingly, this has not happened. Indeed, only one recommendation has ever been rejected (which required another recommended candidate), and that was early on after the adoption of the process. Though the commissioner consults with ministers before competitions are held, ministers – including the prime minister – have little room to intervene in favour of particular candidates relative to the other Westminster systems. As a consequence, there has been less bureaucracy bashing in New Zealand than in the other Anglo-American systems now that the new chief executive staffing regime has been fully implemented.<sup>19</sup>

In Canada, Brian Mulroney, while on the election campaign trail in 1984, had issued a clear warning to deputy ministers that bureaucratic intransigence and obstruction would not be tolerated under a Conservative government.<sup>20</sup> His party had expressed interest (the same interest as had been expressed a year earlier in Australia) in the American style of political appointments to the upper echelons of the public service. As in Australia, however, the Mulroney Conservatives, once in office, opted to increase the number and strengthen the role of political staff in the prime minister's and ministers' offices.

In each of these cases, developments were emerging that could not but introduce tensions with NPM. These developments constituted what I will call the New Public Governance (NPG). This new dynamic