



VALUE AND VIRTUE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

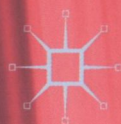
A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

EDITED BY
MICHIEL S. DE VRIES AND PAN SUK KIM



IIAS

International Institute
of Administrative Sciences



Value and Virtue in Public Administration

A Comparative Perspective

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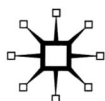
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Preface

We are living in a rapidly changing society and the field of public administration is no exception. Public administration is a field of study and analysis linked with law, political science, sociology, business management, economics, psychology, technology, and engineering. Although the historical development of public administration differs from one country to another, political science and the law have significantly affected the development of modern Public Administration. Historical landmarks in the discipline of Public Administration include the essay entitled “The Study of Administration” published by Woodrow Wilson, which argued that the scientific concept of administration needed to be removed from the strife of politics. Since then, several paradigms have been raised reflecting the state of public administration in a given period.

Common features of several paradigms that developed during the economic crises include efficiency and economy. For example, during the Great Depression in the United States and the rest of the world, a paradigm of “best ways” was introduced along with the development of business management. Similarly, with the economic and financial crises affecting many countries around the world since the late 1980s, new public management (NPM) was introduced in emphasizing managerialism and management techniques, contractualism and entrepreneurship, market-driven techniques, citizens as customers, deregulations and market transactions, and tighter performance management.

It is fine to say that democracy cannot function without efficient administration, but other arguments on dimensions such as values and virtues are perhaps even more relevant to the nature and dynamics of public administration. A strong emphasis on instrumental managerialism misplaces the meaning of public administration. The assumptions of efficiency and economy do not capture the complexity of a phenomenon that involves the public as well as public consequences. Business-like management alone cannot resolve all the problems in the public sector. NPM or post-NPM may work in a certain country, but it cannot be universally applied because each society is different. In that regard, critical analysis of the fundamental and instrumental ways of governing is necessary to go beyond NPM or post-NPM, which heavily relies on economic and management theories.

In a time of financial strife, there is the tendency to focus on efficiency and the economy at the expense of virtues and values. These two elements

remain at the core of public administration. Virtues are principles valued as the foundation of good moral being in the public sphere. It is a pattern of thought and behaviour based on high moral standards that can be placed into the broader context of values. Values can be defined as broad preferences concerning appropriate courses of action or outcomes. As such, values reflect a person's, organization's, or country's sense of right and wrong, what is good or bad, and help people in choosing solutions for common human problems as well as being crucial on a higher level for the survival and further development of caring and compassionate organizations and in this case, public administration, and on a still higher level to contribute to the development of the good life in a society showing—among other things—wisdom, courage, moderation, and justice. Virtues become especially important when such values collide and a personal choice has to be made, when different values have to be weighed off, and when one cannot rely on general prescriptions anymore. Values and virtue specifically require internal qualities which characterize an individual's behaviour and commitment. The discourse on virtues and values remains highly critical to the development of public affairs and public administration in particular. Since morality and ethics are now core factors of public affairs around the world, common virtues and values should be more widely discussed, taught, and promoted in the field of Public Administration. This book fills a need for more academic discourse on moral and ethical issues facing the field of public administration as well as for teaching and education for public service.

This book is the result of several years of work by the IIAS working group on virtues and values. It starts off with chapters on the special meaning of value and virtue in Public Administration, continues with several perspectives on creating and retaining values and virtues, and concludes with an overview of the problems and solutions for this in different areas in the world. We feel blessed to have outstanding colleagues who all contributed a chapter for this book. Many outstanding experts around the world participated in this book, among them, Charles Garofalo, Berry Tholen, Demetrios Argyriades, Iwona Sobis, Elinor and Vincent Ostrom, Shamsul Haque, Eelke de Jong, Jolanta Paliduskaite, Christina W. Andrews, Moses Sindane, Cynthia Lynch, Thomas Lynch, Hiroko Kudo Bruce Cutting, and Alexander Kouzmin.

We are very grateful to each and every one of the authors of the chapters. Without their contribution, this book could not be completed. In May 2011, we were notified of the demise of Alexander Kouzmin. His demise is a huge loss for the global Public Administration community. He was an active participant in various international seminars, dialogues, and publications. Alexander was delighted to be a part of this book and contributed a valuable chapter. His memory will live on in his work and we will miss him as a friend and colleague.

Last but not least, we would like to express deep gratitude to **Palgrave Macmillan** and its editorial team for their professionalism in making this book much more valuable and noticeable.

Pan Suk Kim and Michiel S. de Vries
Seoul (South Korea) and
Nijmegen (The Netherlands)

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1

Introduction to Value and Virtue in Public Administration

Michiel S. de Vries and Pan Suk Kim

1.1 Introduction

Public values are defined as those values that provide normative consensus about: (1) the rights, benefits, and prerogatives to which citizens should (and should not) be entitled; (2) the obligations of citizens to society, the state, and one another; and (3) the principles upon which governments and policies must be based (Bozeman, 2007: 13). Public values have been central to public administration over the years and the key public values are equity, impartiality, justice, honesty, fairness, probity, continuity, secrecy, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and so on. However, the significance of public values is said to have declined in recent years. Barry Bozeman (2002) warns us about the emerging problem of ‘public-value failure’ because public-value failure occurs when: (1) mechanisms for the articulation and aggregation of values have broken down; (2) ‘imperfect monopolies’ occur; (3) benefit hoarding occurs; (4) there is a scarcity of providers of public value; (5) a short time horizon threatens public value; (6) a focus on substitutability of assets threatens conservation of public resources; and (7) market transactions threaten fundamental human subsistence. Based on the following works concerning: what exactly public values are and which specific values are the most important (Beck Jørgensen and Bozeman, 2007; Feeney and Bozeman, 2007), what constitutes the ‘publicness’ of specific values (van de Wal et al., 2008), and how public values can be safeguarded and reconciled (de Bruijn and Dicke, 2006; Kernaghan, 2000), van de Wal (2009) also asserts that public values are often not met enough by certain public policies because of an overemphasis on economic individualism.

Consequently, a question of how to promote public values and virtues in government becomes the common interest of many practitioners and academia in the field of Public Administration and public policy around the world. Because local and international economies have become stagnant, the value of economic efficiency has been highly valued, and values such

as public interests or publicness have been seriously challenged by overall environmental changes and transformations in the direction of New Public Management (NPM) and/or economic liberalism.

Whether the problem is a recent one remains to be seen. Some scholars in Public Administration have depicted the term 'administrative ethics', as such, as an oxymoron, and the criticism on administrative ethics was known even before anyone had heard about NPM. When we mentioned to our colleagues that we were planning to write a book on value and virtue in public administration, one of them commented that it would certainly be a slim book, the suggestion being that there is not much attention for values and virtues in the public sector and that the situation is very bad in the practice of public administration.

The question is whether this is a valid observation and the only scholarly answer is, of course, that in theory and practice the level of administrative ethics varies. Some people in public administration show more virtue and have acquired decent ethical values, and others possess less of these character traits. In some organizations extensive measures are undertaken to enhance administrative ethics, while others have done significantly less.

Another observation is that many remarks about administrative ethics are rather outdated, that is, based on information from 20 years or more, ago. They are based on hearsay, prejudice, and an attitude towards the public sector as if nothing has changed for a very long time. As this book will argue, many things have changed in the last two decades. The attention in the discipline of Public Administration for administrative ethics has increased enormously. The theoretical base for measures to improve the practice of administrative ethics has developed. Last but not least, new practices to deal with administrative ethics, virtue, and integrity are seen all over the world. The significance of ethics and ethical leadership has recently become one of the most critical credentials for politico-administrative leadership positions not only in advanced countries but also in many developing countries around the world.

1.2 Plan of this book

The aim of this book is to clarify the ground on which we stand as public service scholars, practitioners, and advisers. What are our assumptions, the unspoken and unexamined things that we take for granted in the field of serving the public good? Since we often speak and think from the position of a custodian of public money or public trust and since often it is not clear that political players (political appointees, members of legislatures, or local elected officials) regard themselves as involved in a moral process, or a process where ethical rules apply, we may need uniquely to address these issues.

Accordingly, this book gives an account of the recent development and progress of public sector management and public service. It describes the progress made in the discipline of Public Administration (Part 1); in theories related to Public Administration (Part 2); and in the practice of public administration in tackling the questions surrounding values and virtues (Part 3). Those trends, descriptions, theories, and comparisons make it possible to answer the question of how administrative ethics vary and what this variance depends upon. The literature about values and virtues in public administration and related fields is already huge and plentiful. However, the purpose of previous works differs from the purpose of this book. Many of the available books on the normative concepts of values and virtues are also normative in their aims and analysis. They argue that values are of crucial importance for public administrators, that such values are inherent to their daily job and in all their decisions. Those books answer questions regarding why it is important to have public integrity, why a public administrator should show virtue, and which values should be central in public administration. Some of these books are more philosophical in nature (Bozeman, 2007), others are of a more pragmatic nature (Cooper, 2000, 2006; Garofalo and Geuras, 2006) asking and telling the reader what they could and should do in specific situations. In many of these books a distinction is made between different dimensions of value and virtue, such as duties, rules, and consequences, instrumental and fundamental dimensions of values.

Although we often agree – but sometimes not – with the recommendations provided by the authors of the books that have recently appeared, this book is different. This book addresses the same issue of values and virtues, but its goal is not primarily to tell the reader how to behave, how to make decisions, or how to act. Rather it tries to go beyond this normative approach and asks: ‘when you want to accomplish integer behaviour, based on value and virtue, if you want public administrators to behave decently, to take the proper values into account and to show virtue, what do theories tell you that you can do and what does practice all over the world tell you about which is effective and which is not?’

The theories are not restricted to Public Administration theories. Only in the first part of this book the focus is on the development within the discipline of Public Administration. As well as these theories, there are theories from social psychology, institutionalism, sociology, and organization theory, which address the issues at stake and often come to very different causal relations and subsequent recommendations. Part 2 is devoted to the answers the theories from these disciplines provide and whether these answers make sense. This open attitude is reflected in our ideas about values and virtues in public administration. Part 3 addresses what is going on in practice in different parts of the world. What actions and policies are undertaken and

are they effective? Before these descriptions, trends, and practices are presented, it is first necessary to circumscribe the two concepts central in this book, that is, values and virtues.

1.3 Values and human rights

Values are circumscribed in the literature in varying ways, but a good working definition seems to be that values are shared and enduring beliefs or ideals of importance about what is desirable and good and what is not. As such they act as standards, principles, or yardsticks for guiding and judging (organizational and social) behaviour and policies. The most basic values for the public sector are given in the 'Declaration of Human Rights' as adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948, which are – according to the general assembly – a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations. Its first sentence reads that the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family, is to be recognized as the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world. This is immediately followed by emphasizing the importance of freedom of speech and belief, and freedom from fear and want, and protection by the rule of law.

The 30 articles in the Declaration of Human Rights specify the values which everyone is entitled to without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political, or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status. The values include the right to life, liberty, and security of person; that no one shall be held in slavery or servitude; that there should be equality before the law, and entitlement without any discrimination to equal protection of the law; and the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence. No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home, or correspondence, nor subjected to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks; the right to asylum in case of persecution; the right to a nationality; the right to marry and found a family; to own property; freedom of thought, conscience and religion – this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief; the right to freedom of opinion and expression; to take part in the government; equal access to the public service in the country; regular elections; the right to social security; the right to work; to equal pay for equal work; to form trade unions; to leisure time; to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing, medical care, and necessary social services; the right to security in the event

of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age, or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control; and the right to education and to participation in the cultural life of the community.

Such basic values are also found in many constitutions and they describe what it is that a society should strive for, and what are the basic yardsticks for judging public policies and the building of appropriate institutions, because it is first and foremost the governments that are responsible for upholding these values. Such values are also given in the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (the MDGs are eight goals to be achieved by 2015 that respond to the world's main development challenges and the MDGs are drawn from the actions and targets contained in the Millennium Declaration that was adopted during the United Nations (UN) Millennium Summit in September 2000): eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability, and develop global partnership for development. As such these values exert a major influence on the behaviour of governments. Violating the basic human rights invokes harsh criticism; not achieving the MDGs is as despicable. The above values prescribe *what it is* that governments should achieve, and distinguish the nature of the work of public administrators from employees in the private sector. Public administration has as its declared aim such public good (cf. pp. 248).

Values are also important in giving yardsticks and prescribing *how* these goals should be achieved, that is, good governance, and how public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources in order to guarantee the realization of human rights (UN-ESCAP, 2009). It is about how governments shape their relation with their citizens, societal groups, the market, the private and voluntary institutions, etc. In this case, basic values involve being consensus-oriented, participatory, following the rule of law, being effective and efficient, being accountable, transparent, responsive, equitable, and inclusive (UNESCAP, 2009), or as the World Bank describes it in six dimensions: citizens should be able to participate in selecting their government; there should be freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media; there should be political stability and absence of violence/terrorism; the quality of public services should show effectiveness, that is, governments should be able to formulate and implement sound policies and regulations that permit and promote private sector development; there should be a rule of law that enables contract enforcement by the police and the courts, and which reduces the likelihood of crime and violence; and there should be control of corruption to minimize the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as 'capture' of the state by elites and private interests (<http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/faq.htm#2>).