

# The New Public Service: Serving Rather than Steering

*The New Public Management has championed a vision of public managers as the entrepreneurs of a new, leaner, and increasingly privatized government, emulating not only the practices but also the values of business. Proponents of the New Public Management have developed their arguments largely through contrasts with the old public administration. In this comparison, the New Public Management will, of course, always win. We argue here that the better contrast is with what we call the “New Public Service,” a movement built on work in democratic citizenship, community and civil society, and organizational humanism and discourse theory. We suggest seven principles of the New Public Service, most notably that the primary role of the public servant is to help citizens articulate and meet their shared interests rather than to attempt to control or steer society.*

Public management has undergone a revolution. Rather than focusing on controlling bureaucracies and delivering services, public administrators are responding to admonishments to “steer rather than row,” and to be the entrepreneurs of a new, leaner, and increasingly privatized government. As a result, a number of highly positive changes have been implemented in the public sector (Osborne and Gaebler 1992; Osborne and Plastrik 1997; Kettl 1993; Kettl and DiIulio 1995; Kettl and Milward 1996; Lynn 1996). But as the field of public administration has increasingly abandoned the idea of rowing and has accepted responsibility for steering, has it simply traded one “adminicentric” view for another? Osborne and Gaebler write, “those who steer the boat have far more power over its destination than those who row it” (1992, 32). If that is the case, the shift from rowing to steering not only may have left administrators in charge of the boat—choosing its goals and directions and charting a path to achieve them—it may have given them more power to do so.

In our rush to steer, are we forgetting who owns the boat? In their recent book, *Government Is Us* (1998), King and Stivers remind us of the obvious answer: The government belongs to its citizens (see also Box 1998; Cooper 1991; King, Feltey, and O’Neill 1998; Stivers 1994a,b; Thomas 1995). Accordingly, public administrators should

focus on their responsibility to *serve and empower citizens* as they manage public organizations and implement public policy. In other words, with citizens at the forefront, the emphasis should not be placed on either steering or rowing the governmental boat, but rather on building public institutions marked by integrity and responsiveness.

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## Background

As it is used here, the “New Public Management” refers to a cluster of ideas and practices (including reinvention and neomanagerialism) that seek, at their core, to use private-sector and business approaches in the public sector. While there have long been calls to “run government like a business,” the contemporary version of this debate in this country was sparked in the 1990s by President Clinton’s and Vice President Gore’s initiative to “make government work better and cost less.” Modeled after concepts and ideas promoted in Osborne and Gaebler’s 1992 book *Reinventing Government* (as well as managerialist efforts in a variety of other countries, especially Great Britain and New Zealand), the Clinton administration championed a variety of reforms and projects under the mantle of the National Performance Review. In part, what has distinguished these reforms and similar efforts at the state and local level, from older versions of the run-government-like-a-business movement is that they involve more than just using the techniques of business. 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.

Yet many scholars and practitioners have continued to express concerns about the New Public Management and the role for public managers this model suggests. For example, in a recent *Public Administration Review* symposium on leadership, democracy, and public management, a number of authors thoughtfully considered the opportunities and challenges presented by the New Public Management. Those challenging the New Public Management in the symposium and elsewhere ask questions about the inherent contradictions in the movement (Fox 1996), the values promoted by it (deLeon and Denhardt 2000; Frederickson 1996; Schachter 1997); the tensions between the emphasis on decentralization promoted in the market model and the need for coordination in the public sector (Peters and Savoie 1996); the implied roles and relationships of the executive and legislative branches (Carroll and Lynn 1996); and the implications of the privatization movement for democratic values and the public interest (McCabe and Vinzant 1999). Others have suggested that public entrepreneurship and what Terry (1993, 1998) has called “neomanagerialism” threaten to undermine democratic and constitutional values such as fairness, justice, representation, and participation.

We would like to suggest that, beyond these separate critiques, what is missing is a set of organizing principles for an alternative to the New Public Management. We reject the notion that the reinvented, market-oriented New Public Management should only be compared to the old

public administration, which, despite its many important contributions, has come to be seen as synonymous with bureaucracy, hierarchy, and control. If that is the comparison, the New Public Management will always win. We would like to suggest instead that the New Public Management should be contrasted with what we term the “New Public Service,” a set of ideas about the role of public administration in the governance system that places citizens at the center.

While there have been many challenges to the New Public Management and many alternative ideas prominently advanced by scholars and practitioners, there have been no attempts to organize these efforts and underscore their common themes. This article is an effort to do so. First, it briefly summarizes the foundations and major arguments of the new public management as it contrasts with the old public administration. It then describes an alternative normative model we call the “New Public Service.” This new model further clarifies the debate by suggesting new ways of thinking about the strengths and weaknesses of all three approaches. We conclude by considering the implications of placing citizens, citizenship, and the public interest at the forefront of a New Public Service.

## The New Public Management and the Old Public Administration

Over the past decade and a half, the New Public Management (again, including the reinvention movement and the new managerialism) has literally swept the nation and the world. The common theme in the myriad applications of these ideas has been the use of market mechanisms and terminology, in which the relationship between public agencies and their customers is understood as based on self-interest, involving transactions similar to those occurring in the marketplace. Public managers are urged to “steer, not row” their organizations, and they are challenged to find new and innovative ways to achieve results or to privatize functions previously provided by government.

In the past two decades, many public jurisdictions and agencies have initiated efforts to increase productivity and to find alternative service-delivery mechanisms based on public-choice assumptions and perspectives. Public managers have concentrated on accountability and high performance and have sought to restructure bureaucratic agencies, redefine organizational missions, streamline agency processes, and decentralize decision making. In many cases, governments and government agencies have succeeded in privatizing previously public functions, holding top executives accountable for performance goals, establishing new processes for measuring productivity and effectiveness, and reengineering departmental systems to reflect a strengthened commitment to account-

ability (Aristigueta 1999; Barzelay 1992; Boston et al. 1996; Kearns 1996). The effectiveness of this reform agenda in the United States, as well as in a number of other countries, has put governments around the world on notice that new standards are being sought and new roles established.

These ideas were crystallized and popularized by Osborne and Gaebler's book, *Reinventing Government* (1992; see also Osborne and Plastrik 1997). Osborne and Gaebler provided a number of now-familiar principles through which "public entrepreneurs" might bring about massive governmental reform—ideas that remain at the core of the New Public Management. Osborne and Gaebler intended these principles to serve as a new conceptual or normative framework for public administration, an analytical checklist to transform the actions of government: "What we are describing is nothing less than a shift in the basic model of governance used in America. This shift is under way all around us, but because we are not looking for it, because we assume that all governments have to be big, centralized, and bureaucratic, we seldom see it. We are blind to the new realities, because they do not fit our preconceptions" (1992, 321).

Other intellectual justifications for the New Public Management evolved as well. These justifications, as Lynn (1996) notes, largely came from the "public policy" schools that developed in the 1970s and from the "managerialist" movement around the world (Pollitt 1990). Kaboolian notes that the New Public Management relies on "market-like arrangements such as competition within units of government and across government boundaries to the non-profit and for-profit sectors, performance bonuses, and penalties (to) loosen the inefficient monopoly franchise of public agencies and public employees" (1998, 190). Elaborating this point, Hood 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).

As such, the New Public Management is clearly linked to the public choice perspective in public administration. In its simplest form, public choice views the government from the standpoint of markets and customers. Public choice not only affords an elegant and, to some, compelling model of government, it also serves as a kind of intellectual road map for practical efforts to reduce government and make it less costly. And it does so unabashedly. John Kamensky, one of the architects of the National Performance Review, comments that the New Public Management is clearly related to the public choice movement, the central tenet of which is that "all human behavior is dominated by self-interest" (1996, 251).

The New Public Management is not just the implementation of new *techniques*, it carries with it a new set of *values*, specifically a set of values largely drawn from the private sector. As we have already noted, there is a long-standing tradition in public administration supporting the idea that "government should be run like a business." For the most part, this recommendation has meant that government agencies should adopt practices, ranging from "scientific management" to "total quality management," that have been found useful in the private sector. The New Public Management takes this idea one step further, arguing that government should not only adopt the *techniques* of business administration, but should adopt certain business *values* as well. The New Public Management thus becomes a normative model for public administration and public management.

In making their case, proponents of New Public Management have often used the old public administration as a foil, against which the principles of entrepreneurship can be seen as clearly superior. For example, Osborne and Gaebler contrast their principles with an alternative of formal bureaucracies plagued with excessive rules, bound by rigid budgeting and personnel systems, and preoccupied with control. These traditional bureaucracies are described as ignoring citizens, shunning innovation, and serving their own needs. According to Osborne and Gaebler, "The kind of governments that developed during the industrial era, with their sluggish, centralized bureaucracies, their preoccupation with rules and regulations, and their hierarchical chains of command, no longer work very well" (1992, 11–12). In fact, while they served their earlier purposes, "bureaucratic institutions ... increasingly fail us" (15).

What are the tenets of this bureaucratic old public administration, and is it reasonable to characterize any contemporary thinking which falls outside New Public Management as evidence of the old public administration? Certainly there is not a single set of ideas agreed to by all those who contributed over the decades to the old public administration (just as there is not a single set of ideas that all associated with the New Public Management would agree to). But there are elements of public administration theory and practice that seem to constitute a guiding set of ideas or a normative model that we now generally associate with the old public administration. We suggest this model includes the following tenets:

- Public administration is politically neutral, valuing the idea of neutral competence.
- The focus of government is the direct delivery of services. The best organizational structure is a centralized bureaucracy.
- Programs are implemented through top-down control mechanisms, limiting discretion as much as possible.

- Bureaucracies seek to be closed systems to the extent possible, thus limiting citizen involvement.
- Efficiency and rationality are the most important values in public organizations.
- Public administrators do not play a central role in policy making and governance; rather, they are charged with the efficient implementation of public objectives.
- The job of public administrators is described by Gulick's POSDCORB (1937, 13).

If we compare the principles of New Public Management with these principles, the New Public Management clearly looks like a preferred alternative. But even a cursory examination of the literature of public administration demonstrates that these traditional ideas do not fully embrace contemporary government theory or practice (Box 1998; Bryson and Crosby 1992; Carnavale 1995; Cook 1996; Cooper 1991; deLeon 1997; Denhardt 1993; Farmer 1995; Fox and Miller 1995; Frederickson 1997; Gawthrop 1998; Goodsell 1994; Harmon 1995; Hummel 1994; Ingraham et al. 1994; Light 1997; Luke 1998; McSwite 1997; Miller and Fox 1997; Perry 1996; Rabin, Hildreth, and Miller 1998; Rohr 1998; Stivers 1993; Terry 1995, 1998; Thomas 1995; Vinzant and Crothers 1998; Wamsley et al. 1990; Wamsley and Wolf 1996). The field of public administration, of course, has not been stuck in progressive reform rhetoric for the last 100 years. Instead, there has been a rich and vibrant evolution in thought and practice, with important and substantial developments that cannot be subsumed under the title "the New Public Management." So there are more than two choices. We will now explore a third alternative based on recent intellectual and practical developments in public administration, one that we call the New Public Service.

## Roots of the New Public Service

Like the New Public Management and the old public administration, the New Public Service consists of many diverse elements, and many different scholars and practitioners have contributed, often in disagreement with one another. Yet certain general ideas seem to characterize this approach as a normative model and to distinguish it from others. While the New Public Service has emerged both in theory and in the innovative and advanced practices of many exemplary public managers (Denhardt 1993; Denhardt and Denhardt 1999), in this section we will examine the conceptual foundations of the New Public Service. Certainly the New Public Service can lay claim to an impressive intellectual heritage, including, in public administration, the work of Dwight Waldo (1948), and in political theory, the work of Sheldon Wolin (1960). However, here we will focus on more contemporary precursors of the New Public Service, including (1) theories of demo-

cratic citizenship; (2) models of community and civil society; and (3) organizational humanism and discourse theory. We will then outline what we see as the main tenets of the New Public Service.

### Theories of Democratic Citizenship

Concerns about citizenship and democracy are particularly important and visible in recent political and social theory, both of which call for a reinvigorated and more active and involved citizenship (Barber 1984; Mansbridge 1990; Mansbridge 1992; Pateman 1970; Sandel 1996). Of particular relevance to our discussion is Sandel's suggestion that the prevailing model of the relationship between state and citizens is based on the idea that government exists to ensure citizens can make choices consistent with their self-interest by guaranteeing certain procedures (such as voting) and individual rights. Obviously, this perspective is consistent with public choice economics and the New Public Management (see Kamensky 1996). But Sandel offers an alternative view of democratic citizenship, one in which individuals are much more actively engaged in governance. In this view, citizens look beyond self-interest to the larger public interest, adopting a broader and longer-term perspective that requires a knowledge of public affairs and also a sense of belonging, a concern for the whole, and a moral bond with the community whose fate is at stake (Sandel 1996, 5–6; see also Schubert 1957).

Consistent with this perspective, King and Stivers (1998) assert that administrators should see citizens *as* citizens (rather than merely as voters, clients, or customers); they should share authority and reduce control, and they should trust in the efficacy of collaboration. Moreover, in contrast to managerialist calls for greater efficiency, King and Stivers suggest that public managers seek greater responsiveness and a corresponding increase in citizen trust. This perspective directly undergirds the New Public Service.

### Models of Community and Civil Society

Recently, there has been a rebirth of interest in the idea of community and civility in America. Political leaders of both major political parties, scholars of different camps, best-selling writers and popular commentators not only agree that community in America has deteriorated, but acknowledge that we desperately need a renewed sense of community. Despite increasing diversity in America, or perhaps because of it, community is seen as a way of bringing about unity and synthesis (Bellah et al. 1985, 1991; Etzioni 1988, 1995; Gardner 1991; Selznick 1992). In public administration, the quest for community has been reflected in the view that the role of government, especially local government, is indeed to help create and support "community."

In part, this effort depends on building a healthy and active set of "mediating institutions" that simultaneously

give focus to the desires and interests of citizens and provide experiences that will better prepare those citizens for action in the larger political system. As Putnam (1995) argues, America's democratic tradition depends on the existence of engaged citizens, active in all sorts of groups, associations, and governmental units. Collectively, these small groups constitute a "civil society" in which people need to work out their personal interests in the context of community concerns. Only here can citizens engage one another in the kind of personal dialogue and deliberation that is the essence of community building and of democracy itself. Again, as King and Stivers (1998) point out, government can play an important and critical role in creating, facilitating, and supporting these connections between citizens and their communities.

### **Organizational Humanism and Discourse Theory**

Over the past 25 years, public administration theorists, including those associated with the radical public administrationists of the late 1960s and early 1970s (Marini 1971), have joined colleagues in other disciplines in suggesting that traditional hierarchical approaches to social organization and positivist approaches to social science are mutually reinforcing. Consequently, they have joined in a critique of bureaucracy and positivism, leading, in turn, to a search for alternative approaches to management and organization and an exploration of new approaches to knowledge acquisition—including interpretive theory (for example, Harmon 1981), critical theory (Denhardt 1981), and postmodernism (Farmer 1995; Fox and Miller 1995; McSwite 1997; Miller and Fox 1997). Collectively, these approaches have sought to fashion public organizations less dominated by issues of authority and control and more attentive to the needs and concerns of employees inside public organizations as well as those outside, especially clients and citizens.

These trends have been central to interpretive and critical analyses of bureaucracy and society, but they have been even further extended in recent efforts to employ the perspectives of postmodern thinking, especially discourse theory, in understanding public organizations. While there are significant differences among the various postmodern theorists, they seem to arrive at a similar conclusion—because we depend on one another in the postmodern world, governance must be based on sincere and open discourse among all parties, including citizens and administrators. And while postmodern public administration theorists are skeptical of traditional approaches to public participation, there seems to be considerable agreement that enhanced public dialogue is required to reinvigorate the public bureaucracy and restore a sense of legitimacy to the field of public administration. In other words, there is a need to reconceptualize the field and, both practically and intellectually, so as to build a New Public Service.

## **The New Public Service**

Theorists of citizenship, community and civil society, organizational humanists, and postmodernist public administrationists have helped to establish a climate in which it makes sense today to talk about a New Public Service. Though we acknowledge that differences exist in these viewpoints, we suggest there are also similarities that distinguish the cluster of ideas we call the New Public Service from those associated with the New Public Management and the old public administration. Moreover, there are a number of practical lessons that the New Public Service suggests for those in public administration. These lessons are not mutually exclusive, rather they are mutually reinforcing. Among these, we find the following most compelling.

**1. *Serve, rather than steer.* An increasingly important role of the public servant is to help citizens articulate and meet their shared interests, rather than to attempt to control or steer society in new directions.**

While in the past, government played a central role in what has been called the "steering of society" (Nelissen et al. 1999), the complexity of modern life sometimes makes such a role not only inappropriate, but impossible. Those policies and programs that give structure and direction to social and political life today are the result of the interaction of many different groups and organizations, the mixture of many different opinions and interests. In many areas, it no longer makes sense to think of public policies as the result of governmental decision-making processes. Government is indeed a player—and in most cases a very substantial player. But public policies today, the policies that guide society, are the outcome of a complex set of interactions involving multiple groups and multiple interests ultimately combining in fascinating and unpredictable ways. Government is no longer in charge.

In this new world, the primary role of government is not merely to direct the actions of the public through regulation and decree (though that may sometimes be appropriate), nor is it to simply establish a set of rules and incentives (sticks or carrots) through which people will be guided in the "proper" direction. Rather, government becomes another player, albeit an important player in the process of moving society in one direction or another. Government acts, in concert with private and nonprofit groups and organizations, to seek solutions to the problems that communities face. In this process, the role of government is transformed from one of controlling to one of agenda setting, bringing the proper players to the table and facilitating, negotiating, or brokering solutions to public problems (often through coalitions of public, private, and nonprofit agencies). Where traditionally government has responded to needs by saying "yes, we can provide that

**Table 1 Comparing Perspectives: Old Public Administration, New Public Management, and New Public Service**

|                                                                  | Old Public Administration                                                                                    | New Public Management                                                                                                       | New Public Service                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Primary theoretical and epistemological foundations              | Political theory, social and political commentary augmented by naive social science                          | Economic theory, more sophisticated dialogue based on positivist social science                                             | Democratic theory, varied approaches to knowledge including positive, interpretive, critical, and postmodern                      |
| Prevailing rationality and associated models of human behavior   | Synoptic rationality, "administrative man"                                                                   | Technical and economic rationality, "economic man," or the self-interested decision maker                                   | Strategic rationality, multiple tests of rationality (political, economic, organizational)                                        |
| Conception of the public interest                                | Politically defined and expressed in law                                                                     | Represents the aggregation of individual interests                                                                          | Result of a dialogue about shared values                                                                                          |
| To whom are public servants responsive?                          | Clients and constituents                                                                                     | Customers                                                                                                                   | Citizens                                                                                                                          |
| Role of government                                               | Rowing (designing and implementing policies focusing on a single, politically defined objective)             | Steering (acting as a catalyst to unleash market forces)                                                                    | Serving (negotiating and brokering interests among citizens and community groups, creating shared values)                         |
| Mechanisms for achieving policy objectives                       | Administering programs through existing government agencies                                                  | Creating mechanisms and incentive structures to achieve policy objectives through private and nonprofit agencies            | Building coalitions of public, nonprofit, and private agencies to meet mutually agreed upon needs                                 |
| Approach to accountability                                       | Hierarchical—administrators are responsible to democratically elected political leaders                      | Market-driven—the accumulation of self-interests will result in outcomes desired by broad groups of citizens (or customers) | Multifaceted—public servants must attend to law, community values, political norms, professional standards, and citizen interests |
| Administrative discretion                                        | Limited discretion allowed administrative officials                                                          | Wide latitude to meet entrepreneurial goals                                                                                 | Discretion needed but constrained and accountable                                                                                 |
| Assumed organizational structure                                 | Bureaucratic organizations marked by top-down authority within agencies and control or regulation of clients | Decentralized public organizations with primary control remaining within the agency                                         | Collaborative structures with leadership shared internally and externally                                                         |
| Assumed motivational basis of public servants and administrators | Pay and benefits, civil-service protections                                                                  | Entrepreneurial spirit, ideological desire to reduce size of government                                                     | Public service, desire to contribute to society.                                                                                  |

service," or "no, we can't," the New Public Service suggests that elected officials and public managers should respond to the requests of citizens not just by saying yes or no, but by saying, "let's work together to figure out what we're going to do, then make it happen." In a world of active citizenship, public officials will increasingly play more than a service delivery role—they will play a conciliating, a mediating, or even an adjudicating role. (Incidentally, these new roles will require new skills—not the old skills of management control, but new skills of brokering, negotiating, and conflict resolution.)

**2. The public interest is the aim, not the by-product. Public administrators must contribute to building a collective, shared notion of the public interest. The goal is not to find quick solutions driven by individual choices. Rather, it is the creation of shared interests and shared responsibility.**

The New Public Service demands that the process of establishing a vision for society is not something merely left to elected political leaders or appointed public administrators. Instead, the activity of establishing a vision or direction is something in which widespread public dialogue and deliberation are central (Bryson and Crosby 1992; Luke 1998; Stone 1988). The role of government will increasingly be to bring people together in settings that allow for

unconstrained and authentic discourse concerning the direction society should take. Based on these deliberations, a broad-based vision for the community, the state, or the nation can be established and provide a guiding set of ideas (or ideals) for the future. It is less important for this process to result in a single set of goals than it is for it to engage administrators, politicians, and citizens in a process of thinking about a desired future for their community and their nation.

In addition to its facilitating role, government also has a moral obligation to assure solutions that are generated through such processes are fully consistent with norms of justice and fairness. Government will act to facilitate the solutions to public problems, but it will also be responsible for assuring those solutions are consistent with the public interest—both in substance and in process. In other words, the role of government will become one of assuring that the public interest predominates, that both the solutions themselves and the process by which solutions to public problems are developed are consistent with democratic norms of justice, fairness, and equity (Ingraham and Ban 1988; Ingraham and Rosenbloom 1989).

In short, the public servant will take an active role in creating arenas in which citizens, through discourse, can articulate shared values and develop a collective sense of

the public interest. Rather than simply responding to disparate voices by forming a compromise, public administrators will engage citizens with one another so that they come to understand each other's interests and adopt a longer range and broader sense of community and societal interests.

**3. Think strategically, act democratically. Policies and programs meeting public needs can be most effectively and responsibly achieved through collective efforts and collaborative processes.**

To realize a collective vision, the next step is establishing roles and responsibilities and developing specific action steps to move toward the desired goals. Again, the idea is not merely to establish a vision and then leave the implementation to those in government; rather, it is to join all parties together in the process of carrying out programs that will move in the desired direction. Through involvement in programs of civic education and by developing a broad range of civic leaders, government can stimulate a renewed sense of civic pride and civic responsibility. We expect such a sense of pride and responsibility to evolve into a greater willingness to be involved at many levels, as all parties work together to create opportunities for participation, collaboration, and community.

How might this be done? To begin with, there is an obvious and important role for political leadership—to articulate and encourage a strengthening of citizen responsibility and, in turn, to support groups and individuals involved in building the bonds of community. Government can't create community. But government and, more specifically, political leadership, can lay the groundwork for effective and responsible citizen action. People must come to recognize that government is open and accessible—and that won't happen unless government is open and accessible. People must come to recognize that government is responsive—and that won't happen unless government is responsive. People must come to recognize that government exists to meet their needs—and that won't happen unless it does. The aim, then, is to make sure that government is open and accessible, that it is responsive, and that it operates to serve citizens and create opportunities for citizenship.

**4. Serve citizens, not customers. The public interest results from a dialogue about shared values, rather than the aggregation of individual self-interests. Therefore, public servants do not merely respond to the demands of "customers," but focus on building relationships of trust and collaboration with and among citizens.**

The New Public Service recognizes that the relationship between government and its citizens is not the same as that between a business and its customers. In the public sector, it is problematic to even determine who the customer is, because government serves more than just the

immediate client. Government also serves those who may be waiting for service, those who may need the service even though they are not actively seeking it, future generations of service recipients, relatives and friends of the immediate recipient, and on and on. There may even be customers who don't want to be customers—such as those receiving a speeding ticket.

Moreover, some customers of government have greater resources and greater skill in bringing their demands forward than others. Does this justify, as it would in the private sector, that they be treated better? Of course not. In government, considerations of fairness and equity play an important role in service delivery; indeed, in many cases, these are much more important considerations than the desires of the immediate customer.

Despite the obvious importance of constantly improving the quality of public-sector service delivery, the New Public Service suggests that government should not first or exclusively respond to the selfish, short-term interests of "customers." Instead, it suggests that people acting as citizens must demonstrate their concern for the larger community, their commitment to matters that go beyond short-term interests, and their willingness to assume personal responsibility for what happens in their neighborhoods and the community. After all, these are among the defining elements of effective and responsible citizenship. In turn, government must respond to the needs and interests of citizens. Moreover, government must respond to citizens defined broadly rather than simply in a legalistic sense. Individuals who are not legal citizens not only are often served by government programs, they can also be encouraged to participate and engage with their communities. In any case, the New Public Service seeks to encourage more and more people to fulfill their responsibilities as citizens and for government to be especially sensitive to the voices of citizens.

**5. Accountability isn't simple. Public servants should be attentive to more than the market; they should also attend to statutory and constitutional law, community values, political norms, professional standards, and citizen interests.**

The matter of accountability is extremely complex. Yet both the old public administration and the New Public Management tend to oversimplify the issue. For instance, in the classic version of the old public administration, public administrators were simply and directly responsible to political officials. As Wilson wrote, "[P]olicy will have no taint of officialism about it. It will not be the creation of permanent officials, but of statesmen whose responsibility to public opinion will be direct and inevitable" (1887, 22). Beyond this, accountability was not really an issue; politicians were expected to make decisions while bureaucrats carried them out. Obviously, over time, public administra-

tors assumed great capacities for influencing the policy process. So, at the other end of the spectrum, in the vernacular of the New Public Management, the focus is on giving administrators great latitude to act as entrepreneurs. In their entrepreneurial role, the new public managers are called to account primarily in terms of efficiency, cost effectiveness, and responsiveness to market forces.

In our view, such models do not reflect the demands and realities of public service today. Rather, public administrators are and should be influenced by and held accountable to complex constellations of institutions and standards, including the public interest, statutory and constitutional law, other agencies, other levels of government, the media, professional standards, community values and standards, situational factors, democratic norms, and of course, citizens. Further, the institutions and standards which influence public servants and to which they are held accountable interact in complex ways. For example, citizen needs and expectations influence public servants, but the actions of public servants also influence citizen expectations. Laws create the parameters for public administrators' actions, but the manner in which public servants apply the law influences not only its actual implementation, but also may influence lawmakers to modify the law. In other words, public administrators influence and are influenced by all of the competing norms, values, and preferences of our complex governance system. These variables not only influence and are influenced by public administrators, they also represent points of accountability.

The New Public Service recognizes the reality and complexity of these responsibilities. It recognizes that public administrators are involved in complex value conflicts in situations of conflicting and overlapping norms. It accepts these realities and speaks to how public administrators can and should serve citizens and the public interest in this context. First and foremost, the New Public Service demands that public administrators not make these decisions alone. It is through the process of dialogue, brokerage, citizen empowerment, and broad-based citizen engagement that these issues must be resolved. While public servants remain responsible for assuring that solutions to public problems are consistent with laws, democratic norms, and other constraints, it is not a matter of their simply judging the appropriateness of community-generated ideas and proposals after the fact. Rather, it is the role of public administrators to make these conflicts and parameters known to citizens, so that these realities become a part of the process of discourse. Doing so not only makes for realistic solutions, it builds citizenship and accountability.

**6. Value people, not just productivity. Public organizations and the networks in which they participate are more likely to succeed in the long run if they are oper-**

**ated through processes of collaboration and shared leadership based on respect for all people.**

In its approach to management and organization, the New Public Service emphasizes the importance of "managing through people." Systems of productivity improvement, process reengineering, and performance measurement are seen as important tools in designing management systems. But the New Public Service suggests that such rational attempts to control human behavior are likely to fail in the long term if, at the same time, insufficient attention is paid to the values and interests of individual members of an organization. Moreover, while these approaches may get results, they do not build responsible, engaged, and civic-minded employees or citizens.

If public servants are expected to treat citizens with respect, they must be treated with respect by those who manage public agencies. In the New Public Service, the enormous challenges and complexities of the work of public administrators are recognized. They are viewed not just as employees who crave the security and structure of a bureaucratic job (old public administration), nor as participants in a market (New Public Management); rather, public servants are people whose motivations and rewards are more than simply a matter of pay or security. They want to make a difference in the lives of others (Denhardt 1993; Perry and Wise 1990; Vinzant 1998).

The notion of shared leadership is critical in providing opportunities for employees and citizens to affirm and act on their public service motives and values. In the New Public Service, shared leadership, collaboration, and empowerment become the norm both inside and outside the organization. Shared leadership focuses on the goals, values, and ideals that the organization and community want to advance; it must be characterized by mutual respect, accommodation, and support. As Burns (1978) would say, leadership exercised by working through and with people transforms the participants and shifts their focus to higher level values. In the process, the public service motives of citizens and employees alike can be recognized, supported, and rewarded.

**7. Value citizenship and public service above entrepreneurship. The public interest is better advanced by public servants and citizens committed to making meaningful contributions to society rather than by entrepreneurial managers acting as if public money were their own.**

The New Public Management encourages public administrators to act and think as entrepreneurs of a business enterprise. This creates a rather narrow view of the objectives to be sought—to maximize productivity and satisfy customers, and to accept risks and to take advantage of opportunities as they arise. In the New Public Service, there is an explicit recognition that public administrators are not

the business owners of their agencies and programs. Again, as King and Stivers (1998) remind us, government is owned by the citizens.

Accordingly, in the New Public Service, the mindset of public administrators is that public programs and resources do not belong to them. Rather, public administrators have accepted the responsibility to serve citizens by acting as stewards of public resources (Kass 1990), conservators of public organizations (Terry 1995), facilitators of citizenship and democratic dialogue (Chapin and Denhardt 1995; King and Stivers 1998; Box 1998), catalysts for community engagement (Denhardt and Gray 1998; Lappé and Du Bois 1994), and street-level leaders (Vinzant and Crothers 1998). This is a very different perspective than that of a business owner focused on profit and efficiency. Accordingly, the New Public Service suggests that public administrators must not only share power, work through people, and broker solutions, they must reconceptualize their role in the governance process as responsible participant, not entrepreneur.

This change in the public administrator's role has profound implications for the types of challenges and responsibilities faced by public servants. First, public administrators must know and manage more than the requirements and resources of their programs. This sort of narrow view is not very helpful to a citizen whose world is not conveniently divided up by programmatic departments and offices. The problems that citizens face are often, if not usually, multifaceted, fluid, and dynamic—they do not easily fall within the confines of a particular office or a narrow job description of an individual. To serve citizens, public administrators not only must know and manage their own agency's resources, they must also be aware of and connected to other sources of support and assistance, engaging citizens and the community in the process.

Second, when public administrators take risks, they are not entrepreneurs of their own businesses who can make such decisions knowing the consequences of failure will fall largely on their own shoulders. Risk in the public sector is different. In the New Public Service, risks and opportunities reside within the larger framework of democratic citizenship and shared responsibility. Because the consequences of success and failure are not limited to a single private business, public administrators do not single-handedly decide what is best for a community. This need not mean that all short-term opportunities are lost. If dialogue and citizen engagement is ongoing, opportunities and potential risks can be explored in a timely manner. The important factor to consider is whether the benefits of a public administrator taking immediate and risky action in response to an opportunity outweighs the costs to trust, collaboration, and the sense of shared responsibility.

## Implications and Conclusions

From a theoretical perspective, the New Public Service offers an important and viable alternative to both the traditional and the now-dominant managerialist models. It is an alternative that has been built on the basis of theoretical explorations and practical innovations. The result is a normative model, comparable to other such models. While debates among theorists will continue, and administrative practitioners will test and explore new possibilities, the commitments that emerge will have significant implications for practice. The actions that public administrators take will differ markedly depending on the types of assumptions and principles upon which those actions are based. If we assume the responsibility of government is to facilitate individual self-interest, we will take one set of actions. If, on the other hand, we assume the responsibility of government is to promote citizenship, public discourse, and the public interest, we will take an entirely different set of actions.

Decades ago, Herbert Kaufman (1956) suggested that while administrative institutions are organized and operated in pursuit of different values at different times, during the period in which one idea is dominant, others are never totally neglected. Building on this idea, it makes sense to think of one normative model as prevailing at any point in time, with the other (or others) playing a somewhat lesser role *within* the context of the prevailing view. Currently, the New Public Management and its surrogates have been established as the dominant paradigm in the field of governance and public administration. Certainly a concern for democratic citizenship and the public interest has not been fully lost, but rather has been subordinated.

We argue, however, that in a democratic society, a concern for democratic values should be paramount in the way we think about systems of governance. Values such as efficiency and productivity should not be lost, but should be placed in the larger context of democracy, community, and the public interest. In terms of the normative models we examine here, the New Public Service clearly seems most consistent with the basic foundations of democracy in this country and, therefore, provides a framework *within which* other valuable techniques and values, such as the best ideas of the old public administration or the New Public Management, might be played out. While this debate will surely continue for many years, for the time being, the New Public Service provides a rallying point around which we might envision a public service based on and fully integrated with citizen discourse and the public interest.

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