

Small Scale Statesmen:

A New Doctrine of Public Administration

I. Introduction

The central question facing public sector managers (and those who teach them) is a deceptively simple one: what should public managers do to improve the quality of governmental performance? The question has both normative and empirical aspects.

Although frequently avoided, the normative aspects of are the most fundamental. (Fleishman, et. al.) One cannot answer the question of how public managers "should" behave without some conception of the "proper" role of managers in the overall process of democratic governance. Nor can one measure improvements in the quality of governmental performance without some notion of what constitutes "quality performance." In short, without a conception of what constitutes "virtue" or "success" as a public manager, there can be no logical force behind the "should."

Much more familiar are the empirical issues. At a micro level, the key empirical issues are how specific, concrete actions taken by individuals called "managers" translate into consequences for something called "the performance of government"; for example, how an information system affects operations, or how a particular organizational structure affects agency development. This

sort of knowledge is built by testing propositions about how the "nuts and bolts" of managerial action affects concrete governmental action.

At a more macro level, one cannot reach a conclusion about how public managers should behave without knowing some facts about the larger context in which they are operating: what the prevailing political culture expects and demands from its public sector managers (Kaufman), the extent to which citizens and their representatives trust the public officials who do their administrative work (Ely, Mashaw), the current structural arrangements that define the relationships that will be crucially important in the management of government operations (Mosher, Salamon), and the particular substantive problems the government is addressing (Moore). In short, there may be no general answer to the normative question of how public managers should behave in a democracy. Much may depend on the macro conditions of governing: empirical facts concerning a particular government, embedded in a political culture, in a particular period, facing a particular set of substantive challenges.

In recent decades, the field of public administration has emphasized the empirical issues over the normative questions. This followed academic fashion (particularly in the social sciences) in its aspiration to free intellectual inquiry from ideology and found its conclusions on more objective methods.

Among the empirical issues, the field has focused more on the micro questions about how best to manage, and focused less on the macro issues concerning the fit among a society's political culture, its institutional arrangements for governing, and the substantive purposes it was pursuing through governmental activity. This trend is consistent with the field's desire to establish a science of administration - a set of rationally or empirically grounded findings about the kinds of managerial interventions that succeed in improving governmental performance. It also suits the aim of distinguishing public administration from political science, for political science has been primarily concerned with tracking and explaining the more macro-phenomena.

An important consequence of this particular intellectual focus has been that the field has lost its capability to criticize and adapt its doctrines of public administration to meet changing circumstances. By a doctrine of public administration, I mean a conception - shared by public managers, legislative overseers, the media, and citizens - that defines the proper role and functions of public sector managers. (Technique differs from doctrine in that the doctrine defines the functions to be performed, while techniques set out the particular ways to perform the function.) The doctrines have eluded effective scrutiny because the essential material for such inquiries consist precisely of the subjects that were being neglected - namely, normative conceptions of the role of public managers

in a democracy, and an empirical sense of how the institutions of the government and the managerial challenges were evolving.

One can also explain the neglect of doctrinal issues as the result of a widespread view among those studying public administration that these issues had already been decisively resolved. There was, after all, a powerful, existing doctrine of public administration. In that view, the proper role of a public manager was to find ways to accomplish politically mandated objectives in the most efficient and effective ways possible, and to do so through the refinement of administrative systems guiding budgeting and personnel practices designed to guarantee high levels of accountability, and reliably direct government operations.

What was specifically discouraged in the existing doctrines was any important role for public officials to engage in political discussions focusing on the value of the policies and programs. That was a prerogative reserved for legislators or elected chief executives who suffered the inconvenience of standing for election, and acquired thereby a hard-won right to speak for the collective interests of the citizenry.

Whatever the causes, my contention is that the neglect of these doctrinal issues has cost the society a great deal. Indeed, I believe that the current problems of public administration and governmental performance derive as much from the society's and the field's reluctance to

address the doctrinal questions about the role of public managers as they do from the difficulty of resolving questions about what particular managerial techniques are effective. Even more argumentatively, my contention is that the traditional doctrines of public administration (at least as now interpreted) have misguided rather than aided current efforts to improve governmental performance. They have done so in at least three important ways.

First, they have diverted the public's attention from a serious consideration of the central normative question of what role public managers should play in forming and executing government policy. For this reason, they have left unchallenged the current answer - which is that public managers should play only a sharply limited role in forming policy and become important only in execution. I believe that that view has significant adverse consequences for the current performance of the government.

Second, the current doctrines have given the wrong answer to the question of where the most important work of public managers lies, and therefore left much of the important work of the government undone. By emphasizing organizational implementation over the political work of forming coherent policy mandates, the current doctrines have left managers and their organizations exposed to the conflicting demands associated with unresolved political conflict over purposes. They have also made it less likely that the actual operating experience of agencies could be

used in policy deliberations to facilitate social learning not only about feasible means, but also proper objectives.

Third, they have taught public managers the wrong way to think about using administrative systems such as organizational structure, budgeting, and personnel management to produce high quality governmental performance. By emphasizing the use of these systems to produce accountability, control, and efficiency in the achievement of current objectives rather than to produce experimentation, innovation, and the re-positioning of organizations to achieve new purposes, they have made managers into the guarantors of institutional continuity rather than adaptiveness. This is singularly inappropriate in a world where the government's current agenda demands a high degree of innovation and responsiveness.

If it is true that current, unexamined doctrines of public administration are leading us astray in the pursuit of improved managerial and government performance, then it is important that the society and the field of public administration begin work now to establish a new doctrine of public administration. This paper essays this formidable task. It seeks a new doctrine of public administration appropriate to the American democracy at this particular stage of its history.

Needless to say, the doctrine will be powerfully influenced by the Kennedy School's efforts to train public sector executives. In an important sense, it represents an

effort to integrate the intellectual traditions associated with public administration, and the newer ideas associated with public policy and public management. It may also be important to say that these views represent my own conclusions - not necessarily those of the institution.

II. Who Are the Public Managers? .

At the outset, it is useful to fix conceptions about who is a public manager; or, more precisely, what positions in the organizational structure of government are viewed as positions filled by public managers. This turns out to be unexpectedly difficult.

When most people think of a manager or administrator, they think of someone in an office that has some or all of the following characteristics:

- 1) Direct, line accountability for the performance of a relatively large public organization or enterprise;
- 2) Direct supervisory authority over the resources contributed by the public to the organization or enterprise;
- 3) Some significant degree of officially recognized discretion in the deployment of resources for the accomplishment of agreed upon purposes.

Such officers generally hold titles such as Administrator, Commissioner, Director, or Chief. (Hargrove, forthcoming) They are also generally appointed by elected political executives such as Presidents, Governors, or Mayors through more or less elaborate procedures.

These, at least, must be considered public managers. But there are arguably others who might be considered public managers as well. If one included in one's definition of public managers all those who made discretionary decisions about the deployment of public resources for the accomplishment of public purposes, or influenced those who do, one could dramatically widen the set of positions considered managerial positions.

For example, it seems natural to many to include the senior career officials of the government in one's conception of public managers. Some career officials are themselves important public manager who have significant political accountability, operational control, and recognized substantive or managerial expertise. They, too, are called Directors or Chiefs, but their jurisdiction is smaller than that of the Chief Executive of their organization.

Other important career officials are those who oversee the administrative systems that assure the accountability of the organization, and guide its operations. These are generally called Assistants for Administration and Management.

Increasingly, one might also include the "policy staffs" attached to the principal managers, for these staffs often not only advise the senior manager about policy questions, but also assume responsibility for "co-ordinating" projects that are of special importance to the senior managers, that cut across organizational lines, that

represent key new investments being made by the organization, or that constitute new initiatives with which the senior manager wishes to be identified. Sometimes the managerial responsibilities of such people are signalled by titles such as Program Manager, or Program Co-ordinator.

Much farther afield are officials in positions to oversee an organization's activities. Some of these oversight agencies are parts of the executive branch. Most governments have central budget and personnel agencies that oversee the policies and operations of executive branch agencies. Most elected chief executives such as Presidents, Governors, and Mayors have staffs which have oversight responsibilities. Some governments have also created Offices of Inspectors General or other "watchdog commissions" to oversee government operations. And increasingly, legislatures and legislators have established powerful mechanisms of oversight.

These overseers are not, strictly speaking, managers for they lack direct accountability for and control over the mission dedicated resources of the government. But, they often make suggestions about how best to manage those resources. And, the suggestions are often powerful since the overseers are taken to have good judgment both about governmental purposes and means. Thus, in a world thirsting for accountability, in which legislative overseers are numerous, powerful and increasingly inclined to "micro-managment," it is no longer as clear as it once was that

such people should not be considered managers. Their influence is sufficiently great that perhaps they should begin to accept some of the accountability that attaches to managers.

[Note: there are managers of these particular functions. But their function is to produce reports and advice - not achieve directly the purposes of government. That distinction is what I mean to imply by the concept of "mission dedicated resources.]"

In fact, the more one thinks about it, the more difficult it seems to identify any particular structural position in government as being the position in which managerial functions are concentrated. It is probably true that the highest concentration of managerial responsibility and functions lie in the positions identified as the administrative heads of major government agencies and enterprises. But the constitutional arrangement of "separated institutions sharing powers" insures that effective influence over public sector enterprises is widely distributed among institutional positions. Indeed, in some notorious cases, even judges have taken over the management of public enterprises. Thus, the managerial functions in government are performed by a collection of people occupying distinct offices rather than by an single individual. That fact is of key importance in understanding the key functions and techniques of individual public sector managers.

While it is useful to think of the public managers, then, as Administrators, Commissioners, Directors and Bureau Chiefs, one must keep in mind that this is a gross simplification. There are many positions (and incumbents in positions) in government who have combinations of accountability, effective influence over resources, and substantial discretion that would qualify them as public managers. Some are above and alongside the principal line managers as overseers. Others are beneath them as key subordinates. A proper doctrine of public administration would have to offer useful guidance to the whole collection of people who share responsibility for shaping governmental policy rather than only those who are identified as administratively accountable.

III. Democratic Theory and Bureaucratic Power

The essential work of public managers is to guide public enterprises. In a free society, public enterprises are undertaken with resources and assets contributed by private citizens. This is obvious in enterprises which use tax revenues to produce goods and services such as educating children, producing a national defense, and protecting the aged or indigent from financial disasters associated with serious illness. There the funds necessary to supply the service and account for its operations appear in government taxation and expenditure decisions.

The role of private contributions to public purposes is less obvious but no less significant in government regulatory and enforcement programs such as those designed to clean the air and water, reduce racial discrimination, or maintain safety and civility among those who use the city's streets. In regulatory and enforcement agencies, public money is spent, of course. But the far more important fact is that governmental authority to circumscribe private conduct is being expended to accomplish public purposes. The contributions that citizens make come from their store of private liberty rather than personal income.

A. Public Enterprises and Public Value

The crucial questions of public policy, of course, are how much of these resources are to be made available to government and for what purposes. These questions are faced most clearly and explicitly by legislators at the moment that new policies and programs are written into laws, or old programs re-authorized or modified.

They are also addressed in somewhat less visible processes in executive branch agencies. Administrative rule-making procedures establish particular rules governing how government agencies will use their statutory powers to achieve specific purposes. Budgetary processes produce a

plan for spending tax dollars to achieve particular goals. Strategic planning processes calculate not only how currently available resources will be spent to achieve current purposes, but how investments must be made now to improve the organization's functioning in the future.

Most such decisions by executive branch agencies are reviewable by the legislature through oversight procedures. Many agency decisions and operations are also reviewable by courts. And everyone is accountable all the time to the press and its capacity to create public indignation (or enthusiasm) about large and small aspects of governmental operations.

While the differences among these processes are probably more evident than their similarities, they share the characteristic that they are, in fact, all policy-making (and policy-adapting) processes. (Lindblom) They shape the flow of public resources from the citizens, through a governmental agency, and out toward the fulfillment of some purpose conceived as a collective purpose. From a managerial perspective, then, the basic question that all such activities seek to answer is the question of whether the value that is now being produced by governmental activities is worth the costs, and if not, how the resources ought to be re-deployed.

Obviously, judging whether a particular public enterprise produces enough value for the society to justify its costs is a difficult business. Part of the problem lies in developing systems of measurement that can recognize and calibrate those effects of government programs that are most important in reckoning its value. The relatively simple part of this problem is measuring the direct costs of governmental production. The hard part is describing and measuring the aspects of value that are produced. (Havemann, Weiss)

Over the last several decades, some substantial improvements have been made in the techniques used to measure the cost and value of governmental enterprises. The techniques of program evaluation, cost effectiveness analysis, and cost benefit analyses have been refined and more widely applied. As a result, the government probably has better information now about the costs and consequences of its actions than ever before.

Despite these technical gains, the process of judging whether a particular governmental effort has sufficient value to be undertaken or continued remains fundamentally a political decision. As a practical matter this remains true simply because the constitutional arrangements of institutions guarantees that the big decisions to raise and deploy public resources will be made

by elected officials or their appointees. As a philosophical matter, the practical realities seem entirely appropriate, for judgments about the overall value of public programs must, by definition, be political. Ideally, such judgments express a collective preference that private resources (both money and liberty) should be marshalled and committed to some public enterprise that either promises to or already has changed the world in a way that the citizenry and its representatives judge to be more valuable than alternative uses of the same resources - including the alternative of turning the money and liberty back to private purposes.

Of course, not all political decisions authorizing public enterprises will be clear expressions of a collective preference for the effort. (Arrow) Many forms of corruption can lie behind the process and cast doubt on the legitimacy of the expressed collective demand. For example, an intensely interested minority, with its eye of private benefits, might succeed in bending a public decision to their narrow purposes by promising personal rewards to key political officials. Or, privately interested participants may form a coalition by promising to support another group's private interest if the second group will support the first group's initiative in the familiar process of log-rolling. (Fiorina)

For the outcome of a political process to be taken as a legitimate (i.e. normatively compelling) expression of a collective preference, then, it must have some special properties - some political and some technical. Those citizens who have an interest in the policy should have been represented in the deliberations. Evidence and reasoning about the likely effects of the policy (and their relative magnitudes) should have been generated and discussed. Under ideal circumstances, some creativity with respect to the design of the enterprise might have been stimulated among the deliberators. Arguments about the important values at stake in the decisions should have been made with the aim of changing others' views about what purposes should be taken seriously. And, in the resolution of the discussion, one might hope for a decision that reflected the high degree of responsibility for institutions and long run consequences that statesmen typically display. A process of deliberation that displayed these characteristics would have a greater claim to represent a collective preference than one that was corrupted, or technically incompetent, or inappropriately short-sighted. (Reich)

B. Public Managers and Public Deliberation

One aspect of the process warranting public enterprises that has been particularly important to both citizens and to scholars of public administration is that

the process not be dominated by the a political coalition organized by bureaucrats employed by the governmental enterprise, nor importantly influenced by either their immediate economic interests or their particular conceptions of appropriate public policy. Those who administer and produce the program are supposed to possess neutral competence - not a view of public purposes. Their interests in simply continuing some enterprise to which they are committed, if expressed powerfully in public deliberations, risks a systematic distortion in the assessing the value of a given enterprise. (Niskanen)

The difficulty, of course, is that as a practical matter the public officials who administer the government's programs do have power in the public deliberations. This is most obvious in the cases where they are in control of many of the details of the process - as for example, in their internal budgeting and strategic planning processes. (Lynn) But it is also true even in the legislative debates about their actions. Their influence in these deliberations is rooted in three special competencies which they inevitably acquire as a consequence of their operating responsibilities and experience.

First, public managers have significant operational knowledge of the areas for which they are responsible. They are experts. Legislators and political executives may have a

view of broad goals to be pursued, but they need the public managers to tell them how to proceed. When the legislators or political executives wish to innovate or experiment, public officials can often tell them a good place to start. When the legislators and political executives have a specific idea of how to proceed, the public managers and administrators can often tell them the weaknesses of the proposals, and the difficulties that appeared the last time the particular approach was tried.

The accumulation of expertise among public sector managers has, of course, long been obvious, and is a point of pride among career public officials. It is also a source of power and influence, for their opinions about practicality and feasibility have standing in deliberations about public sector enterprises. Their views are often solicited by political superiors not only because they want the advice, but also because the superior hope to lend the weight and value of their expertise to the cause that they are championing. If they leak information to the press about the inadequacy of a given policy, that can often seal the fate of that policy. Thus, their expertise is an important source of power.

Second, public managers and administrators often become extremely knowledgeable about the political interests that cut across their and stakes that are contending for

dominance in their areas of responsibility. A legislative decision to establish a public enterprise never ends the discussion about the value of the effort. It simply moves the discussion out of the abstract legislative arena, and into the more concrete administrative arena. There the discussion about how to proceed occurs among different people, and in different terms. Political interests that lost in the original deliberations will find new opportunities to renew the battle. Particular interests that could not be acknowledged in the wider, more public debate will find channels to express their interests.

Because public managers will be at the center of these discussions and the focus of these pressures, they will be in a position to learn who among their political overseers are interested in their operations, and what features interest them. Indeed, their understanding of the political fault lines that run through public enterprises is likely to be more encyclopedic than anyone else's, for they will experience the full range of political demands: the narrow as well as the broad; the private as well as the public. This, too, translates into effective power and influence, for anyone with this kind of political intelligence is in a powerful position to alert (or fail to alert) others where political problems and opportunities arise, or to use the information themselves to build a political coalition whose interests will push the public enterprise in a particular direction.

Third, public managers have a great deal of influence over the on-going operations of government, and therefore the implementation of particular policies. Public purposes are not achieved, and public value is not created when a program is authorized. The results occur only when the government carries out concrete activities that use the resources, and produce the effects. The form that the activities take depends a great deal on those who design the detailed administrative control systems that direct government operations. These are largely public managers - not legislators or chief political executives.

Of course, this power over the implementation of policies is far from absolute. Political overseers can always review and reverse implementing decisions taken by lower level officials. In this sense, power over implementation is held at the sufferance of political officials. It is likely that that fact will condition the implementing actions of those appointed to office or in career positions. It is also true, however, that if the political overseers try to manage everything, they will not be able to do so. What the public managers really determine, then, is how much of price in terms of surveillance, control and acrimony the political officials will have to pay to see their values and preferences expressed in operating programs.

The power that accrues to public managers as a result of possessing substantive expertise, being at the center of political networks, and exercising significant influence over implementing actions is a reality of our governmental system. It cannot be made to disappear by willing it to do so.

The worry, of course, is that this power will be abused by the officials who possess it. Legislators worry that the agencies will run amok, or fail to do their bidding. Elected chief executives worry that "their" agencies will not be responsive to their political program, and that their appointed executives will go native. Citizens worry that the bureaucrats will use their powers to advance their own selfish interests, or to pursue their own idiosyncratic and dangerous views of the public interest. In short, all the principals worry that their agents will use the assets entrusted to them to pursue their own interests rather than the purposes that the principals had in mind.

Given these risks, many judge that it would be far better if the governmental system did not have to rely on bureaucracies to do its work. That is the idea that lies behind much of the enthusiasm for privatizing or contracting out the work of the government to private agencies. (Savas) That may be a good idea. But if it is, it is a good idea for

some reason other than that privatization will protect the governmental process from contamination by the selfish interests of those who do the government's work. For, even if the government's work is privatized, the private producers will develop the same kinds of political power described above, and will be able to use it for the same selfish purposes. In this sense, bureaucratic power - understood as the power of agents and producers vis-a-vis principals and owners - is always a problem no matter whether the producers are public or private.

IV. Traditional Doctrines of Public Administration

From a constitutional perspective, the crucial value that must be protected in dealing with bureaucratic power is the dominance of elected representatives in the legislative and executive branch in establishing the public purposes to be pursued with the resources contributed by citizens. The problem is how to develop and use bureaucracies to do the work of the government without letting them exercise undue influence over the political processes that authorize their activities.

A. The Wilsonian Solution: Policy v. Administration

The traditional doctrines of public administration sought to solve this problem by making an important distinction between policy and administration.

Policy is concerned with the broad purposes to be achieved by government programs, and the powers and resources provided to public managers to achieve the desired results. Administration is concerned with organizational frameworks and operating procedures to deploy the available resources more particularly to produce the intended effects.

Policy is the prerogative of elected representatives in legislatures and at the heads of executive branch agencies. Administration is in the expert hands of dutiful career officials harnessed to political purposes through oversight by legislative committees, and direct supervision by the appointees of elected political executives.

The ordinary tasks of policy-making are to scan the environment for various threats to be warded off, rights to be vindicated, problems to be ameliorated, and opportunities to be seized; to debate the wisdom of committing scarce public resources to one enterprise rather than another; and to evaluate alternative policies addressing the same problem. The ordinary tasks of administration are to develop organizational capabilities to produce the desired results, and assure overseers that the resources granted to the

agency are being used in authorized procedures, efficiently and effectively, to achieve authorized ends.

Effective democratic governance emerges from the harmonious interplay of these largely separate spheres.

A. Crucial Underlying Assumptions

In order for this happy result to occur, however, several important assumptions must be true. Some of these concern activities within the policy sphere. Others focus more on the administrative sphere.

The crucial assumption in the policy sphere is that the policies defining the general purposes which public managers must pursue and the more particular means they must use in pursuit of the goals are the hard won results of detailed political negotiations. If this were true, the policy mandates would be strong enough to insure a continuing flow of money, authority and political support to public administrators as they work to achieve the purposes. They would also be steady enough to make administrative investments made today with payoffs several years off worth undertaking. And they would be coherent enough to insure that success in achieving some part of the policy's purposes would not inevitably expose the enterprise to criticism for failing dismally with respect to other important purposes of the policy.

If these conditions obtained, one could say that the hard political work of defining a plausible conception of public value has been accomplished in a way that honored democracy and expertise. As a result, public administrators would not have to assume any responsibility for shaping the policies that guide them. Like executives in the private sector, they could take their general mandate for granted, assume a rather broad delegation of operating authority within the terms of their mandate, and concentrate on the problem of deploying their resources effectively over the long run to accomplish their mandated goals.

The crucial assumptions in the administrative sphere are: 1) that the public administrators have direct operating control over the resources that will be utilized in furthering a governmental enterprise or accomplishing a specific purpose; 2) that an effective administrative and substantive technology for managing the enterprise or achieving the purposes is already known; and 3) that there are few important values at stake in the choice of administrative or operational measures for achieving the ultimate results.

These assumptions make the tasks of administration seem relatively unimportant and technical rather than laden with important questions about purpose and value that would

require political deliberation and authorization. These are also the assumptions that make it tolerable and wise for the society to delegate operating decisions to experts who know the detailed facts that generalist representatives of the people cannot possibly know. Finally, these are the assumptions that allow the political overseers in legislatures and executive branches to hold political appointees and senior civil servants accountable for the performance of government programs.

B. Problematic Realities

To state these assumptions is to suggest why the traditional conception of public administration is in trouble. While there may be many parts of the government where these assumptions hold, the parts of the government that are most visible, most innovative, and most consequential in shaping the images of public management operate under much different conditions.

1. Unstable Mandates

The single most important difference is that most public enterprises are not carried out under the umbrella of durable political agreements whose terms change only slightly as the result of deliberate re-considerations. Instead, they operate in conditions of continuing, sharp

political conflict in which the basic terms of the mandate are constantly vulnerable. Often the threat to the basic mandate is more apparent than real with the swirling political debate masking a more fundamental stability arising from stalemated political forces. But to those administrators who assume responsibility for managing their agencies towards particular goals, continuing political controversy creates fundamental uncertainties about the purposes for which they should be managing the enterprise.

No doubt, sharp political controversy has surrounded government programs throughout our history. But the intensity, the pervasiveness, and the scope of disagreement about public programs all seem to have increased in recent decades. Some might attribute this to the amplifying effects of the media now entranced by the possibilities of investigative journalism. But the causes of the constant political challenges to existing policies seem deeper than this.

At the core of the political conflict is the constitutional framework itself. As every schoolchild knows, the American constitutional framework is designed to prevent the exercise of arbitrary power through the establishment of separated institutions that share responsibility for guiding governmental operations. To a degree, the separate institutions represent different principles that could legitimate governmental action.

Legislatures stand for the legitimacy that comes from winning popular elections and representing local interests. Elected chief executives also acquire the aura that comes from winning elections, but their luster is generally a bit brighter because their constituency is broader than that of legislators, and the scope of their jurisdiction over government agencies substantially wider. The courts stand for the legitimacy that comes from recognizing and protecting the fundamental rights of individuals even (or perhaps especially) against the actions of executive branch agencies backed by legislative majorities. The establishment of different levels of government in a federal system seems to stand for the idea that political values and material circumstances might vary across the country in ways that would be important to recognize in the formulation and execution of public policy. In short, each institution represents a quite different legitimating principle, or procedural value that must be protected in the design and operations of governmental programs.

Moreover, Richard Neustadt has pointed out that what is important about this arrangement is not that the distinctive qualities of these separate institutions perfect the weaknesses of the others in an elegant harmony, but that each institution, and each representative of each

institution, can and often does claim a right to speak for the whole of the society's interests in guiding governmental action. Indeed, each institution and its representative are inclined to regard the inevitably conflicting views and controlling interventions of the other institutions as irrelevant, misguided, inappropriate or evil. Thus, the institutions and their representatives are joined not in an elegant harmony, but instead in a messy clinch in which few holds are barred in their individual efforts to protect the whole public interest as they see it.

This structure could generate conflict about governmental programs even if the substantive agenda of the government were relatively non-controversial. In recent decades, however, the government's agenda has become broader, more controversial, and substantively more challenging. It has assumed responsibility for such controversial and difficult tasks as managing the economy, promoting racial equality, keeping the natural environment safe, creating excellence in schools, and protecting the health of the elderly against killing diseases such as cancer and heart disease. When this substantive agenda is brought to the institutional framework of the American government, sharp conflicts and incessant challenges about what specific purposes to pursue, and how best to achieve them are the inevitable result.

This wide substantive agenda creates "interests" in governmental actions. Many citizens turn out to have views about what the government proposes to do, or is now doing. Sometimes the interests are galvanized by the broadest aspects of the overall agenda. Usually these are ideological concerns about the proper role of government in a free society. Other times, the interests are quite narrow and minor - a chance to advance a particular economic interest through the wording of a statute or regulation, or to win a small symbolic victory as a prelude to a future policy initiative that is significant to some particular group. (Lynn)

Whether the interests are broad or narrow, public-spirited or selfish, symbolic or material, attached to the overall agenda or to particular programs, the institutional framework of the American system guarantees that interested constituencies can find an important principle on which to base their claim, and a powerful institutional salient from which to press their demands. The combination of an open institutional structure and a controversial and complex substantive agenda assures that, in the policy sphere, the moments of harmony and strong political consensus will be rare and short-lived, and the periods of conflict and struggle over government policies by far the more common experience.

From the public manager's point of view, the result of all this is exposure to a torrent of unco-ordinated demands from different parts of the policy-making world that authorizes him to take action. Individual legislators will take him to task in public hearings or letters leaked to the media. Political superiors may suddenly undercut a policy initiative through an ill-considered deal, or a rhetorical flourish in a speech. An outside expert may suddenly speak out in a legislative or professional forum against the policies he is pursuing. And even his own subordinates may join the fray to comment publicly on the substantive demerits of proposed policies, the thoroughness and objectivity of the decision-making processes within the agency, or even his own managerial capabilities. With so many people nipping at his heels, the public manager learns a cruel truth about public sector management: in a democracy, the authority to manage a public enterprise is never wholly given away; it is only grudgingly leant by jealous masters.

One might liken this situation to the uncertainty private sector executives confront as they judge whether customers will continue to buy their current products, or will accept new products. But a closer analogy in the private sector might be managing a company in a situation where the company is constantly vulnerable to takeover bids by investors or share-holders who think that their ideas

about how to manage the assets of the firm are superior to those of the current management. Uncertainty about purposes, resources, and even the continued delegation of the authority to manage make life difficult for most public managers.

The same conditions that create difficulties in the policy sphere create problems in the administrative sphere as well. Predictably, the principal difficulties in the administrative spheres arise from the nature of the substantive agenda the government is now pursuing. But even in this sphere the fragmented institutional structure also creates difficulties for those trained in conventional doctrines of public administration.

2. The Permeable Policy/Administration Boundary

The most obvious administrative problem facing government managers is the impossibility of making a clear distinction between policy and administration. The distinction is hard to make conceptually, and impossible to enforce practically.

Initially, everyone is eager to make this distinction so that the attention of the policy spheres can turn to other matters and leave the "technical" problems of implementation to the administrative and substantive experts

in the agencies. In making such a delegation, those in both the policy and administrative spheres want to think that no important matters of public purpose or value are being decided in these "technical" areas, and that the society is receiving the full benefit of specialized expertise. That is what makes the division between policy and administration valuable: at least some decisions can be made with less concern for democracy and more concern for operating efficiency.

The fact of the matter is, however, that the "technical" decisions about how to organize and operate public enterprises are hopelessly entangled with the question of what important public values will be pursued and expressed through the operations of the program. The balance of values that will ultimately be produced by a public enterprise is not determined once and for all in major policy decisions, but on a daily basis as a program operates. And the operations of the programs are guided by substantive and administrative experts.

For example, when a welfare department decides to require new forms of documentation to verify eligibility for the program and to compute benefit levels more accurately in an "administrative" effort to reduce errors, the department is, in fact, taking a step which alters the complex balance of values being produced by the welfare program. Errors of

inappropriate inclusion in the program and over-payments of benefits are the obvious targets of such a step, and both kinds of errors may well be reduced. Further, that may be valuable to those overseers of the program who are principally concerned about the total costs of the program and the potentially corrupting influence of a loosely administered program on the clients.

But the administrative step has consequences that register in other dimensions as well. This step may increase errors of exclusion and under-payment of benefits if genuinely eligible clients cannot produce the appropriate documentation. The closer scrutiny may also increase the administrative costs of the programs, and communicate a distrust of the clients that is potentially as corrupting to their morale as the temptations of a loosely administered program. To those overseers who want to maximize the value of the program to the clients by drawing in all those clients who are eligible, by maximizing the fraction of the total costs that are paid out in benefits to clients rather than salaries to public employees, and by treating the clients with decent respect for their privacy and good intentions, the simple decision to require additional documentation actually reduces the value of the program.

Since this administrative step produces changes in the balance of values being pursued in the welfare program,

since both overseers and clients are interested in exactly what balance of values is being struck in the operations of the program, and since they have the opportunity to define the administrative step as an important policy decisions that requires a wider discussion of values, it is likely that this administrative step will become "politicized." That is, it will be debated in the policy spheres as well as administrative circles, and it will be discussed in terms of the purposes and values of the welfare program as well as in terms of efficient means.

Similarly, when an environmental protection agency examines a particular toxic waste site to determine the magnitude of the threat it represents, considers what sort of clean-up is required, and devises a plan to apportion the costs more or less fairly across those whose negligence has created the problem, one might think it is solving an operational problem. To a degree it is. A great many technical judgments must be made. The site will either be cleaned up or not as the cumulative result of these decisions. And many such decisions will be made over the course of the year.

But from the vantage point of the neighborhoods and companies whose health, economic welfare, and reputations might be affected by the particular solution chosen, the design of the solution looks more like a unique policy

problem laden with issues of value and fairness as well as technique and efficiency. For this reason, they are reluctant to leave the matter to technicians, and they generally have recourse through elected representatives, courts, or outside experts to have the matter given a fuller review. Inevitably, then, this "technical" problem is invaded by "politics" with important and obvious consequences for the speed and precision with which the site can be cleaned.

These different vantage points also become different evaluative frames when examining the administration of the toxic waste program. What may seem like a brisk, competent and decisive handling of a particular case within a larger program from the perspective of overseers who are interested in the efficiency of the administration of the toxic waste program, may look like a hasty, insensitive and incompetent handling of an important policy matter by those who disagreed with the particular solution to the problem. Conversely, what may seem like a judicious and careful handling of a complex policy problem from the point of view of those concerned about a particular toxic waste site, may seem like a hopelessly slow and incompetent handling of a strictly operational problem from the vantage point of those reviewing the performance of the toxic waste program as a whole.

The point of these examples is the boundary between policy and administration, between ends and means, and between values and techniques cannot be rigorously maintained. Since the values being pursued by government programs are actually produced in the context of operations, it is always possible to see the issues of value that are at stake in particular operating decisions. If important matters of value can be linked to specific operating decisions, an argument can be made what looked like an administrative or operating decision that could be safely delegated to experts to decide on their own is really a policy decision that ought to be debated among those who have a stake in the values being produced by a governmental enterprise. Thus, administrative decisions are "politicized" conceptually by attaching important matters of value to them, and practically through the intervention of overseers whose attention has been captured by the issues of value now seen in the operating decision.

Of course, this does not happen with all decisions. But the important point is that the potential is nearly always there. And it is this fact that all but eliminates the real boundary between the policy spheres and the administrative spheres.

Moreover, this would be less true if the substantive agenda of government were less complicated and consequential

than it is. But the sheer scale and significance of the government's agenda implies either that more (and more complicated) matters must be deliberated in the policy sphere, or that more consequential decisions must be delegated to lesser officials. In short, the scale, significance and complexity of the government's agenda means either that the policy sphere must be burdened with more technical discussions of operations than it can handle, or that the administrative sphere must accept responsibility for with important questions of value without any obvious qualifications for such responsibilities.

3. The Necessity of Innovation

A second characteristic of the government's current agenda that challenges conventional assumptions about public administration is the fact that the agenda requires an enormous amount of governmental innovation and invention. Sometimes the innovations come in the form of changes in the basic technologies for producing a government service, or in the institutional arrangements through which a product is created or a service delivered. Thus, cars and radios replaced foot beats and call boxes within police departments, computers replaced bulky manual files in welfare departments and registries of motor vehicles, and health maintenance organizations have begun to replace the traditional financial and personal relationships between patients and physicians.

Other times, the innovation seems more like the creation of new products within old industries rather than a whole new industry. Thus, new weapons systems to meet new foreign threats, new forms of job training or other kinds of economic interventions to reduce problems of structural unemployment, or new ways to deliver health care services to chronically ill patients represent product innovations in government.

Still other times, the innovation takes the form of the addition of new functions such as environmental protection, or stimulating local economic development, or waging a war on poverty through community organization. At these times it is as though the government were creating a whole new industry.

Necessary concomitants of innovation are uncertainty about the results, frequent adjustments and adaptations, and not infrequently, failure. Such features are not tolerated well in the political and administrative culture of the public sector. Indeed, this culture -dominated by concerns for strict accountability - tends to treat such events as the result of incompetence or badly motivated deception rather than the inevitable price of trying something new. If some uncertainty about whether a particular enterprise could be successful existed, it should never have been undertaken.

The government shouldn't gamble with the tax-payers' money. If it was known how the government would proceed to accomplish its purpose, then that should be written down in plain rules so that the bureaucrats who carry out the policies will do as they are told, and those who are affected by the policies can know in advance what will happen to them, and be reassured that others in similar positions will be treated the same as they are.

Public managers are thus caught in a trap: they must either pursue the potential benefits of innovation at the risk of being exposed in administrative reviews as a reckless failure; or they must abandon the potential benefits of innovation to be perceived as tidy, efficient and accountable in their operations. Since the pressures in recent decades have tended to force government to innovate in terms of new industries, products, technologies and administrative arrangements, many public managers find themselves exposed not only to the risk that they will substantively fail, but that even if they succeeded over the long run in making an innovation successful, administrative reviews of their programs would reveal them to be apparently careless while they were learning how to do the job they had been asked to do.

Indeed, given that the administrative and substantive feasibility of programs are important

considerations in the policy debates that determine the fate of policies and programs, and given the sharp political controversies surrounding many innovative activities of government, there will be strong incentives to discover evidence of uncertainty or improvisation in the conduct of programs, and use that evidence as arguments against continuing the program. Such dynamics are characteristic not only when the right attacks the left by exposing administrative or substantive weaknesses in social programs, but also when the left attacks the right about the administrative and substantive competence of defense initiatives or new methods of crime control.

4. The Challenge of Indirect Management

The third administrative problem that emerges from the government's substantive agenda is the difficulty of accommodating differences in local values and material conditions within the structure of programs that must be administered through general rules. One interesting example occurred in the administration of the Medicare and Medicaid programs. Both programs authorize payments to nursing homes to provide extended care to elderly or poor patients. At some point, the Congress became concerned about the threat of fires in nursing homes, and passed a law requiring all nursing homes receiving payments under these programs to meet the stringent and detailed standards of a "life safety

code" designed to prevent fires in buildings such as hospitals, schools, and nursing homes. The specific terms placed great emphasis on the structural characteristics of the buildings including the materials from which they were constructed, and the number of stories. One story brick buildings required little more to be safe, but multi-story wood frame buildings failed to meet the standards even with the addition of elaborate systems of sprinklers and fire escapes.

Such rules made perfect sense from the point of view of modern methods of preventing fires, but they fell rather unevenly across the nursing home industry in the U.S. In the West where the code matched the prevailing architectural styles and materials, little effect occurred. In Massachusetts, however, where the cheaper parts of the cities consisted almost entirely of multi-story wood frame structures, the situation was quite different. More than half of the total nursing homes were out of compliance with the standards. Moreover, it was not clear whether they could meet the standards even if very costly changes were made.

Thus, federal officials were faced with the choice of maintaining the administrative integrity of their program by forcing compliance with the standards and closing down half of the nursing home industry in Massachusetts, or of sacrificing the integrity of their program by granting

waivers to the Massachusetts nursing homes in the interests of continuing to supply nursing home care in Massachusetts. In making this decision, they were under conflicting pressures from the Governor of Massachusetts working through the Massachusetts delegation to Congress on one side, and pressure from the Select Committee on Aging and the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare who was determined to see that the life safety code program was carried out.

The example might suggest that this problem of accommodating local differences is principally a problem for the federal government. But any close examination of state and local governments will reveal that they, too, have difficulty accommodating differences in the values and capabilities of the diverse communities over which they preside. The conflict over the principles that should guide state aid for education to local communities shows that the problem exists at the state level. And the debate about the decentralization of municipal services and the establishment of neighborhood advisory councils to influence the local character of policing and public education reveals that the dilemma also exists at the city level.

The central tension here is once again between the desire to insure accountability and control through the establishment of general rules which will guide the

activities of public officials throughout the relevant jurisdiction on the one hand, and the desire to reflect differences in local values and capabilities on the other. To insure the efficiency that comes from economies of scale, and the fairness that comes from the uniform application of general rules, it often seems desirable to impose generally established rules on all geographic areas. On the other hand, it is often inefficient to impose a general method for achieving a given result when local conditions might exist that would make it easier to achieve the result in a different way, and it seems unfair and undemocratic for one level of government to impose its views of what should be done, and to reallocate resources from one neighborhood to another in the name of some overarching social purpose.

Once again, then, public administrators are caught in a bind when they pursue the government's current agenda. At one moment they are accountable to one level of government which insists that its rules be administered uniformly across the jurisdictions to which they apply, and define both efficiency and accountability in these terms. And at the next moment they are being soundly criticized by other levels of government for their failure to be sufficiently responsive to their local concerns and conditions. From the point of view of the manager there are obvious reasons to want to make exceptions in the general rules to accommodate local circumstances. But whenever he

does so, it appears that he has abused his discretion by making policy rather than executing it.

The problem of accomodating local interests and conditions in more general policies is importantly related to the major administrative problems created by the institutional structure of the public sector rather than its substantive agenda. The institutional structure of the government is honey-combed by devices designed to recognize and accommodate local interests. It is also shot through with institutional divides that distinguish private from public institutions. From an administrative point of view, the net result of all these divisions is that the achievement of mandated purposes can hardly ever be accomplished with the resources that are under the direct control of a single agency. Typically, the purposes can be achieved only by exercising influence and control across constitutional barriers that divide one level of government from another, and the public sector and its purposes from the private sector and its purposes.

This difficulty is perhaps the most obvious in the case of intergovernmental programs. For example, to return to the case of welfare programs, the federal government has sought to strengthen the administration of these programs within states by pressuring them to reduce error rates. To accomplish this goal, the federal government has developed a

definition of error rates, established methods for validating the measurements, provided technical advice to states about administrative procedures that have proven successful in reducing error rates, and tried to impose sanctions against states whose error rates did not show adequate improvement.

In the end, however, the actual administrative performance of the programs has been determined not by the federal bureaucracy, but by the interests and capabilities of the state bureaucracies. The federal bureaucracy does not command these agencies. As a philosophical matter, they are administrative units of sovereign governments. As a practical matter they are powerful because their interests and views will be championed in policy councils by their congressional delegations, and because they have the ultimate control over the implementation of government programs. (Champion)

At best, then, the federal government influences these programs. But the mechanics of exercising such influence have relatively little to do with utilizing ordinary instruments of administrative influence such as budgeting or personnel systems. They seem to have a great deal to do with using political measures to bring indirect pressures to bear on the performance of the local agencies. (Golden)

The structural relationship between government managers and the achievement of their authorized purposes is quite similar in regulatory programs. Here the government managers are trying to influence private agencies to shift their activities in directions designed to achieve a public purpose as well as their private purposes: for example, to shift their production processes to technologies that are safer for workers, or cleaner for the environment; or to change their hiring practices to help overcome the cumulative consequences of past racial discrimination. As in the case of intergovernmental programs, there will be a structure of supervision established that includes definitions of the harms to be avoided, procedures for monitoring the practices of the regulated agencies, and even some sanctions to be imposed in the case of infractions.

But, again, the governmental agencies are not directly producing the results for which they are held accountable. They must operate through the auspices of other agencies that think of themselves as legitimately independent, and have both the political and legal power to resist anything but the most determined and precise governmental interventions. Since regulatory agencies rarely have the resources to mount determined and precise interventions across their broad jurisdiction, they can only gain administrative leverage through the creation of

political pressures that promote "voluntary compliance" with their goals. They are successful when their aims become part of a general social norm. Without that, they will generally fail. And the usual methods of administration have relatively little to do with creating powerful social norms that influence the behavior of people outside one's own organization.

D. Summary

The current reality of public administration thus looks much different than the idealized conception. The policy sphere is much more chaotic and less disciplined than in the ideal images. It does not necessarily reach harmonious conclusions. It does not stay within the agreements it makes. So the mandates for public officials are rarely strong, durable, or coherent.

Moreover, the boundary between the policy sphere and the administration sphere is not well maintained. At a conceptual level, the distinction is probably not sustainable. But more importantly, at a practical level the distinction is not honored. Those within the policy spheres invade the sphere of administration with little restraint. When establishing new mandates, they establish detailed operating procedures as devices for maintaining close accountability. In reviewing governmental operations, they

are again quite willing to intervene in individual cases, and to make detailed operating recommendations.

On the other hand, those within the administrative sphere are often pulled or push themselves into the policy sphere. They are pulled by political overseers who need their administrative and substantive expertise to establish detailed policy mandates, or who would like to bolster the legitimacy of their decisions by buttressing them with the support of the experts. They push themselves into policy spheres to help organize and inform the policy-making process, to advance their own conceptions of what the public interest requires, or to protect the institutions to which they have devoted their careers and tied their futures.

The terms of the discussions between these spheres and those who represent them are equally undisciplined. The discussions between those in the policy sphere and those in the administrative sphere concern means as often as ends. Sometimes they are carried on at high levels of abstraction involving the broadest political aspirations, purposes and values. Other times they are much more concrete. They focus on the substantive outcomes that are likely to occur as a result of policy decisions, the particular evaluative measures to be used in deciding whether a policy has done well or badly, the specific administrative procedures being used to pursue a specific goal, or individual cases that have become notorious.

The intense engagement between the policy sphere and the administrative sphere is animated and justified by the aim of increasing the accountability of the administrative sphere. That is what drives the policy sphere to construct ever more detailed mandates, and to constantly review the actions of administrative agencies. The problem is that the pursuit of accountability through ever more exacting general rules creates important problems with respect to the performance of public agencies. It makes it risky for public managers to innovate with new policies and procedures. And it makes it difficult for them to recognize and accommodate important differences in local conditions or particular situations that were unforeseen when the rules were initially established.

Since the government's current agenda includes many areas in which successful performance requires innovation, experimentation and learning, and frequent adjustments to local circumstance, conscientious efforts by public administrators to remain accountable by operating within the general rules established in advance may hurt the overall performance of government programs, and sacrifice a different notion of accountability that would make them responsible not only for following rules, but also improving the performance of government over the long run and remaining sensitive to local conditions and individual cases.

Finally, the content of the administrative sphere itself has changed. In traditional conceptions, the common administrative task was to deploy resources entrusted to the agency efficiently to achieve the intended results. It was assumed that most of the resources necessary for the achievement of the goal were within the agency itself and therefore under the direct control of the administrator. Increasingly, however, the tasks of administration involve working through third parties to achieve purposes - an enterprise where knowledge of the scientific methods of administration may not be particularly helpful, and the art of politics, negotiation and legal maneuvering of crucial importance. Both the tasks and tools of administration have been transformed from the direct to the indirect achievement of public goals.

V. From Public Administration to Public Management

If conditions of managing in the public sector have changed in the directions indicated above, then it is clear that the field needs to go beyond the Wilsonian solution. Actual operating conditions in modern government have laid waste to the comfortable assumptions that made the separation of policy from administration the right answer to the question of how best to maintain political control over

governmental bureaucracies. Indeed, the crucial task in public management is not to find better ways to separate policy from administration, but to find new ways to integrate them.

That sounds like a relatively straightforward task. To achieve it, however, one must revise common understandings about:

- 1) the extent to which public managers must be involved in political discussions about governmental purposes;

- 2) the relationship between continuing political controversy and operating efficiency;

- 3) the structural location of the key functions of public sector management;

- 4) the proper way to structure accountability relationships in the public sector; and

- 5) images of success for public sector executives.

Only then can we see more clearly what functions we really need our public managers to be able to perform, and what techniques would be appropriate.

A. Political Management and Policy Development

A key point in the description presented above is that the most pressing and difficult work facing those who would manage the public's business well is not the direct deployment of resources entrusted to his or her agency to achieve authorized purposes. Instead it lies in the far more grueling task of forging more stable and coherent policy mandates. Indeed, this political work is normatively and practically essential to successful public management.

This conclusion is based on two key observations. First, public sector managers are dependent on the political world for stable and coherent mandates within which organizations can learn to perform their functions, and make suitable investments in future capabilities. Without reasonable degrees of stability and coherence in mandated policies, organizations cannot make investments that will pay off in terms of increased efficiency and productivity, and cannot operate without being vulnerable to crippling charges of failure. Second, public sector organizations and managers can only overcome the difficulties of indirect management by having continuing, powerful political support to give them effective influence over the agencies they do not directly control, but who must act in particular ways for them to achieve their mandated purposes. In short,

without continuing support for a coherent set of objectives - that is, without a proper mandate - public managers cannot achieve important objectives. (Heymann)

Their dependence on political support for achieving their purposes makes the fact of on-going political controversy about their purposes a major concern. They must find some way to produce some degree of resolution to the on-going debate. Moreover, the debate must be resolved in reasonably coherent terms. It is not necessary, of course, for everyone in the authorizing environment to agree to the policy. Nor is it necessary for the policy to be spelled out in detail. That, of course, would demand far too much from a democratic political system. What is necessary, however, is that there be an agreement that is durable enough and coherent enough to justify action, investments, and evaluation over a period of several years. If policy issues are left more unresolved than this, the government cannot take action, and cannot be held accountable.

The principal way to accomplish that objective is for public managers to enter into a dialogue with their authorizing environment about their goals and objectives. As noted above, the public managers bring to that dialogue enormously valuable information not only about operational feasibility of particular ideas, but also political intelligence and actual operating experience. That

information is invaluable in working out a sustainable deal among those who are interested in and oversee the work of a given agency.

If they do their jobs well, public managers can also bring to those deliberations solid information about performance. The new techniques of program evaluation, cost effectiveness analysis, and benefit cost analysis give them the tools to measure and keep track of what has worked and what has not. Deployment of these tools positions public managers to initiate and contribute usefully to the reconsideration of policy as well as its initial setting. That, in turn, can give them some control over the pace of change and direction of change. Rather than be vulnerable to arbitrary changes in opinion about the value of specific governmental programs, the managers can discipline the conversation with real facts about performance.

Thus, the new doctrine of public administration must leave room for public managers to participate in the process of policy development, political negotiation, and political mobilization. It must also encourage them to gather proper information about performance - including information about outcomes as well as compliance with previously announced policies.

Note that a public manager can approach the process of developing and marketing a policy governing one's own activities in quite different ways. One can have thought through what one wants, and then seek to persuade others (through more or less manipulative methods) that that is what is desirable. That could be called entrepreneurial advocacy. Or, one could view the problem as a problem of negotiation in which one is trying to find a sustainable agreement among people authorized to oversee a governmental enterprise, or influential with those who do. Or, one could view the problem as an exercise in learning in which a process is designed that encourages those with interests and knowledge can learn from one another and reach an agreement. Or, one could view the process as an even broader exercise in which the opportunities for participation and learning are not so structured and are far more open.

The different techniques for performing the function of political management may be assessed in different ways. They can be evaluated in terms of the likelihood that they deliver to public managers what they desired as the outcome. Or, they can be evaluated in terms of the likelihood that they will discover key problems and develop novel solutions to public problems. Or they could be evaluated in terms of their success in mobilizing people who are not directly controlled by the manager, but who are important to the achievement of the manager's public purposes to act.

Moreover, the policy that is agreed to - the terms in which the manager will be held accountable in the future - could have quite different forms. On one hand, the policy could be expressed in very abstract language. Such language has the advantages of harmonizing political conflict and inspiring public commitments. It has the disadvantage of making it very difficult to evaluate whether a public manager had in fact achieved his goals. Alternatively, the policy could be described in quite concrete, quantitative detail. Such terms could insure accountability, but might also limit the imagination and flexibility of the manager. Similarly, the policy could be focused on objectives far off in the future, and incorporate a great deal of uncertainty about future developments. Or, it could be focused on quite near term objectives and say little about the future. Ideally, a public manager might need to be able to propose a policy that included a hierarchy of objectives as a proposed contract - one that included the broad, abstract, and long range, and that also included specific operational objectives that were easily observed.

Exactly how public managers should engage the political process, and what form policies (understood as negotiated contracts, and the terms in which managers will be held accountable) might ideally take are important questions of technique that must be resolved in the future.

For now, the important point is simply that one must add political management and policy development to one's view of the key functions that public managers must perform.

Moreover, lest one think one can wait a long time to address the question of how the function of political management should be performed, it is worth noting that public sector managers and the agencies they lead are already explicitly recognizing and performing this function. Reviews of the administrative behavior of public sector executives reveal that they spend far more than half their time managing relations with the external political world. (Kaufman) Most public sector agencies now have specialized offices for dealing with the legislature, the press, and, often, key interest groups. Thus, the managers are developing techniques to perform this function, although there is no doctrine to guide them about what is appropriate or effective. Indeed, the current doctrine suggests that they should not be engaged in any of this activity.

B. Politics and Operating Efficiency

One of the principal reasons that public sector managers now covertly involve themselves extensively in the political work of forging sustainable agreements about their purposes and the terms on which they will be held accountable is that they feel exceedingly vulnerable. The

political forces surrounding them threaten to re-define their work - exaggerating small problems to undermine the credibility of the entire enterprise, re-interpreting past successes as failures, forcing them to incorporate new values and interests that initially seem illegitimate into the operations of their organizations.

This would not be so bad if the politics could be seen as important expressions of the public will. The problem is, however, that public sector managers tend to view politics as capricious and venal rather than a source of useful guidance about the public interest. The caprice is associated with the politicians' (and the media's) continuing hunger for novelty and freshness in policy ideas. These dynamics tend to make policy-making quite vulnerable to intellectual fads. The substantive expertise of the bureaucracy is cast aside in favor of a politician's or outside experts new, untested approach to a problem. The venality is associated with the politician's desires to pander to their constituencies' narrow short run interests in hopes of assuring future election. Because these characteristics of the political process threaten values that many experts in the bureaucracies hold dear, public managers often feel justified in resisting political influence.

Although such views are manifestly anti-democratic, the managers hold them in good conscience. To a certain extent, their views about politics are based on hard personal experience. Their encounters with the political world have not been happy. But they are also encouraged to think this way by the traditional doctrines of public administration. After all, the Wilsonian conception encouraged them to think in terms of a sharp division between politics and administration, and encouraged them to find their virtue in administration. Moreover, while some of the time they understood politics to mean the good kind of politics that allows elected representatives of the people to retain effective control over government agencies, the lingering influence of Progressive Era encouraged them to see politics as a malevolent influence - an important source of corruption and inefficiency.

The image of bad politics encouraged them to think of efficient administration as an important check against the potential corruption of the public sector. Since efficient administration was based on general rules, first rate administration might be able to prevent partisan or parochial objectives from intruding too deeply into government operations. Since efficient administration required stability in goals and objectives, and the orderly development of organizational capabilities, excellent administration would guard against political caprice and

faddishness which would otherwise threaten to destroy the cumulative knowledge and expertise that had developed within the bureaucracy.

For these reasons, it is natural for professional public administrators them to think in terms of political management as a device for warding off unwanted and inappropriate political interference. In their common view, politics, and particularly on-going, unresolved political controversy, is seen as a threat to efficient and effective government management.

There are other views of the relationship between politics and administration that see politics in a more attractive light, of course. In one of these views, politics is seen as a necessary evil. The political process is one of the devices the society uses to contain social and political conflict. Its irresolution in facing up to policy questions is a virtue in systems terms because it allows the society to hold together despite its disagreements about welfare policy, the most effective way to manage the economy, and the right balance to strike between defense and social spending. Although it may create problems for the efficiency of public administration, its value in producing regime stability more than make up for any small losses in the efficiency of public administration.

In another view, politics is seen as much more important to public administration since politics is the only way that a democratic society has of establishing purposes and values to be pursued in public administration. Without politics, there can be no definition of public purposes. Without a definition of purposes and values to be produced through governmental operations, there can be no definition of efficiency or effectiveness. Thus, the concepts of efficiency and effectiveness are not separate from and opposed to politics. In a democracy, it is political processes that define effectiveness and efficiency.

Neither of these views is likely to be of much help to a besieged public administrator who feels frustrated by his inability to wring a coherent mandate from the political process, and who feels vulnerable if he acts without clear authorization. The public manager is still left with the problem of how to manage an operation efficiently and effectively in a world in which policy issues are not necessarily cleanly resolved. For that manager, we need a third view.

The usual assumption is that in this case the manager is paralyzed from acting. But that is not really the case. What usually happens is that the manager proceeds along a course that seeks to reflect the conflict and the

uncertainty about how to proceed. He or she feels their way along a path - taking actions and then waiting for a response. If the response is approval or simply silence, the manager continues. If the response is criticism, the manager seeks to accommodate it. In effect, the manager carries on a dialogue about his purposes and means with a divided society not simply by talking to the society in processes of policy development, but also by taking actions to which people can respond.

This tends to produce governmental operations that are more tentative and experimental, and that are designed to achieve a little of many competing objectives. In that sense, the actions look neither efficient nor effective, because they are hedged and tentative rather than determined, and because they are trying to produce a complex blend of values not optimized against one. That makes these governmental operations seem quite different than a streamlined, efficient operation.

That common perception would be appropriate if it was true that the society knew exactly what it wanted to do. But, in a world in which the society is still arguing about what it wants to do, and the best ways of proceeding, the kinds of operations described above have the enormous advantage of reflecting the society's uncertainty about both goals and means, and of remaining flexible in the face of

uncertainty. The right way to think about government programs is whether they represent an interesting portfolio of approaches to a problem, not whether they are the single most efficient way of achieving a well-defined objective. Governmental programs are means for exploring techniques - even objectives - as well as for achieving agreed upon purposes. In this sense, irresolution is not inconsistent with efficiency; it simply demands a different kind of efficiency. It requires a dynamic efficiency that encourages learning about means and ends over time.

In sum, in traditional doctrines of public administration, politics is seen as hostile to efficient and effective administration since it disrupts and distorts operations in the administrative sphere. In the alternative view being advanced here, politics is seen as crucial to effective public administration - not as a threat. It is important not simply because politics helps to enhance regime stability by containing conflict. It is crucial because, in a democracy, politics alone can define what the goals of government should be, and therefore what constitutes efficient and effective administration.

Moreover, the fact that politics rarely reaches durable agreements that give clear operational guidance to public agencies does not mean that it is an enemy of governmental efficiency. The continuing conflict and

irresolution keeps the government flexible and open to change. Since political aspirations do change, and since innovative methods for achieving purposes also change, it is important that government agencies remain flexible enough to deal with these changes. That is helped by vigorous debate, not undermined by it. And it is helped by government agencies that are going in several different directions reflecting the conflict and uncertainty in the political sphere about its proper mission.

C. The Locus of Public Management

The need to establish a closer integration of politics with management requires to see the management of government programs as being carried out not by any particular individual, but instead by a group of people who together have the essential responsibilities and capabilities for defining and accomplishing public purposes. At the center of this group are the political appointees who have responsibilities for given agencies, policies or programs and the senior career officials who report to them and have longer experience with the substance, politics, and administration of the agency.

Also near the center are the higher level political executives to whom the appointee reports; the key legislators, committees, or staff who take an interest in

the agency or policy, and who can make their influence felt through changes in authorizing or appropriations statutes, or politically demanding oversight; and the representatives of the interest groups who have important stakes in the policy area, and important roles to play in implementing given policies.

A little bit more at the periphery are the media personnel that cover a particular policy area, and the outside experts whose views are relied on in formulating or evaluating a given policy.

More peripheral still, but nonetheless important are the oversight agencies for administration, finance and personnel within the manager's own department, at higher levels in the executive branch, and in the legislatures; and the offices that are concerned with policy planning or evaluation.

These different institutions and their representatives are important because each can affect the character of the mandate guiding governmental operations, or the specific methods used to implement the mandate. If the goal of public administration were to construct relatively clear mandates, and over time achieve them, the task of public administration would be to concert the actions of this motley group.

In order for this group to operate in a relatively coherent way, some leadership will have to be exercised. In principle, that leadership could come from any of the participants. In practice it often does. But if one were to nominate one or two of these institutional representatives to take the primary responsibility for leadership, it seems that the political appointee aided by the senior civil servant would be the best candidates for the job. They have essentially three qualifications for assuming initiative.

First, they are the ones who have the greatest personal interests in helping the government to perform effectively in their area. This is true because they are the ones who are held most accountable for performance.

Second, they are also at the center of the substantive discussions, the political pressures, and the administrative difficulties, operating within their area. Thus, they are in the best position to assess the possibilities for useful government action, and to formulate these at varied levels of abstraction and precision suitable both for political dialogue and administrative control.

Third, they tend to embody the two principal values that the society seeks to integrate in managing a governmental program - political responsiveness and

substantive and administrative expertise. Thus, while the political appointee and the senior career official cannot do the entire job of managing by themselves, they might be the ones that we should generally rely on to exercise leadership within the group of institutional representatives who together have the capacity to manage.

D. Accountability Relations in the Public Sector

To integrate politics and administration more effectively, and to take advantage of the leadership that could come from the political appointees and career officials who are at the center of managing public enterprises, it is particularly important that we revise our understandings of the proper relationships between political representatives in legislatures and at the top of executive branches on the one hand, and the political appointees and career officials who run the programs on the other. As noted above, there is resistance to encouraging such leadership from administrative officials lest the political process be dominated by their parochial interests or idiosyncratic conceptions of the public interest. Yet, this sort of conduct seems essential in meeting the current challenges before the government. In developing a new concept of these relationships, it might be helpful to look at the analogous problem in the private sector.

1. Fiduciary Relations in the Private Sector

In principle, executives in the private sector are also held in a tight fiduciary relationship to a diverse group of principals - in this case, the stockholders of the firm. They are supposed to execute the shareholders purposes just as public administrators are supposed to execute the purposes of the citizens and their elected representatives. They are vulnerable to the same temptations to enrich themselves at the expense of shareholders, to pursue their own idiosyncratic notions of how best to use the assets of the firm to increase its value in the future, and to ignore significant interests of minority shareholders in the firm.

Yet, with a few exceptions, the shareholders do not seem as concerned about controlling the conduct of private executives as elected representatives are about controlling the conduct of public administrators. They do not challenge their policies and judgments as often. They do not impose rigid requirements on the use of the firm's assets. They do not even establish detailed performance standards, though everyone seems to understand that the basic task is to make money, and that as long as management continues to accomplish this they will be continued in office.

The fiduciary relationship between shareholders and private executives thus seems quite different from the one between citizens in a democracy and the public administrators who manage their affairs. The terms of the policy mandates from the shareholders that guide private executives are broad and implicit rather than narrow and

explicit. To the extent that specific terms of accountability are established, the private executives play central roles in establishing them by telling the shareholders what their plans are and what is reasonable to expect in terms that matter to the shareholders. If management's track record has been good in the past, and if their story about the future seems plausible, then the shareholders generally seem willing to continue to delegate to management the authority to manage the assets of the firm on behalf of the shareholders.

No doubt the analogy is overdrawn and perhaps misleading. There are some important differences between the governance of private and public enterprises that would reasonably lead to broader grants of authority to private executives than to public executives and have not been mentioned. For example, in the private sector dissatisfied share-holders can always take the "exit" option and sell their stock, while in the public sector dissatisfied shareholders are more often restricted to a choice between "voicing" their dissatisfaction or remaining "loyal" to the enterprise even though they don't like all its features.

Perhaps even more importantly, shareholders in the private sector might be assumed to have more common interests than citizens in a democracy, and those interests can be fairly accurately captured in reliable systems of measurement. If everyone agrees that the goal is to maximize the value of shareholder equity, and performance with

respect to that objective can be measured accurately through financial balance sheets, then the shareholders can safely delegate operating authority to management without risking a loss in accountability.

Finally, it is also often true that the management of private sector firms are often equity holders as well as managers, and so their interests are often the same as the equity holders. This, too would allow the shareholders to relax a little bit in terms of their anxieties about whether management was stealing from the firm, or using its assets unwisely.

On the other hand, it is interesting that challenges to management in the private sector are becoming more common. Differences among shareholders in terms of their preferences for financial returns now as opposed to later, their willingness to bear risks in hopes of achieving even larger financial returns, their substantive judgments about what constitutes wise investments of the firms assets for the future, and even their overall conception of the firm's basic purposes and responsibilities with respect to employees, local communities and the broader society are becoming apparent. And increasingly these differences are being voiced in political struggles to gain influence over the operational policies of the companies. So the analogy may be less far-fetched than it first appears.

2. Implications for the Public Sector

The main reason for introducing the analogy is not to insist that public executives should be granted the same degree of discretion in their fiduciary relationship with the public as private executives seem to have in their fiduciary relationship to their stockholders. That would press the analogy way too far and lead to a conclusion that is almost certainly wrong. It is simply to point out that there may be many different kinds of particular relationships that exist within a basic structure of fiduciary responsibility. (Moore)

If the purposes and means are set out in broad, abstract language about ends, one kind of relationship will be established - one that leaves far more discretion to the executive. If the terms are particular and exacting about means, a different sort of relationship is established - one that substantially reduces discretion.

If reporting against the established terms of accountability is intermittent, and close review by the principals even rarer, then executives will feel that they have more initiative and responsibility. If the mandated reporting were more frequent and the oversight more constant, initiative would be blunted, and would pass to the overseers.

The issue in accountability, then, is often not whether there will be a relationship of accountability, but in what terms that relationship will be structured, and through what process of initiation and negotiation those terms will be established.

That was the question that was answered by current doctrines of public administration. The answer given is that the terms of accountability should be quite narrow and precise, and that the public administrators should play a relatively insignificant role in establishing the terms.

The obvious alternative is to move a little closer to the sort of fiduciary relationship that executives in the private sector enjoy with their shareholders - one in which:

- 1) the terms of accountability are somewhat broader; 2) where the officials negotiate with elected representatives about what the terms should be; 3) where that discussion is carried out in terms of the interests and purposes of the elected representatives tempered by the officials sense of what is administratively feasible and substantively valuable; and 4) where the agreement is backed up by a system of measurement that will allow both the political representatives and the public officials to determine whether their agreements have been met.

This sort of relationship would have the apparent disadvantage of dissolving the clear separation of those responsible for policy and those responsible for administration, and giving over some of the initiative in defining public purposes to the administrative sphere. In the current world, however, this disadvantage is really an advantage for the crucial failures of government have resulted from the inability to use experienced public administrators in the task of integrating the world of

policy with the world of administration. It is that problem that would be solved by establishing this different kind of fiduciary relationship.

E. Images of Success for Public Manager

The new relationships proposed here have implications for how managers and those who oversee them should think about what constitutes success and virtue in the conduct of their office. In the past, managers have been somewhat schizophrenic about this issue.

On the one hand, there was the image that emerged from the official doctrine of public administration. The official image of success was that of the neutral, technically competent bureaucrat - an official who made himself the willing servant of whatever political party held executive office. His function was to put his knowledge and expertise at the service of elected political masters and their appointees. His virtues were discretion and neutrality. That was the stance adopted by any career official who was on the defensive.

While this was the official image of success, there were other images of success that were more subterranean and more powerful in guiding conduct. Those other images included the image of a policy entrepreneur who was skilled in getting his policy views adopted by others, and the image of a bureaucratic empire builder who succeeded in building a powerful, unassailable, growing institutions. These were the images that counted in the minds of the managers themselves,

and were taken as indicators of their prowess as managers. They could not be acknowledged, however, for they violated the official doctrine about how public sector managers were supposed to behave.

To a great degree, the existence of these different images is the strongest evidence available of the limitations of the traditional doctrines of public administration. The wide gulf between the formal and tacit norms of conduct testify to the failure of the traditional doctrine to give guidance to officials about how they were to use their own initiative, energy and creativity in serving the public. By neutering them, and leaving them exposed to constant political criticism, the official doctrine invited them to engage in covert efforts to produce successes, and to define successes in terms of advancing their interests, or making their positions impregnable.

The emerging doctrine of public management would not view any of these images as success. The official doctrine of public administration would seem to require too little of public officials. It does not leave enough room, nor demand enough of the official in terms of leadership and statesmanship. As a result it risks blunting his enthusiasm and initiative. The images of policy entrepreneur and empire builder, on the other hand, err because they are not sufficiently open to instruction from others who share the responsibility for managing in a democracy. The policy entrepreneur cannot be sure that the views he champions are

accurate views of the public interest rather than his own idiosyncratic conception. The empire builder confuses the creation of a large and strong organization with the creation of value for the community. In short, neither of the covert views about public administration give politics its due in establishing the purposes which public managers are responsible for achieving. They are too individualistic, and too impervious to instruction and learning.

What the emerging view of public management would view as success would be a manager who was skilled in taking instruction from the political world, and realizing its often unformed and confused aspirations in the productive work of the organization or enterprise for which he is responsible. That would make capacities for diagnosing, listening and learning some of the most important managerial skills. Techniques of control and manipulation would be less important since they would be resistant to learning and to the influence of politics. Success would be a manager who could help to define and create value as defined by the politics surrounding the area for which he was responsible. He would not be entirely neutral in this process, for he would bring some special perspectives - including especially the distinctive way he chose to integrate the conflicting forces surrounding him. But at the same time, he would not be dominant or astride events. The political forces would be viewed as important pressures to be acknowledged and sifted for information about where the public interest plausibly lay.

V. Implications for the Training of Public Managers

The new doctrine of public administration differs from the old in several crucial respects. It locates managerial responsibility for public enterprises in a wider set of offices than are ordinarily considered managerial or administrative offices. It seeks to integrate politics, policy, and administration far more closely rather than separate them into different spheres. It makes public managers responsible for the quality of debate and review that occurs in the policy sphere as well as their effective control over resources granted to them. It makes them responsible for discussions about policies and performance - about the desirable ends and actual outcomes - of governmental enterprises as well as discussions of means. It encourages them to take the initiative in proposing solutions to unresolved policy debates by acting on problems in ways that seem to reflect the society's uncertainties as well as its convictions, and to use action as a way of strengthening the dialogue about purpose. It encourages them to design organizations for flexibility, adaptation and innovation as well as for accountability and efficiency.

If this new doctrine is accepted, then it should be clear that the techniques of public management will change. It also follows that the training of public sector managers should change. Although the implications are far from clear, a few tentative suggestions can be made.

First, it is probably important that schools of public policy, public management and public administration throw open their doors to a wider variety of people in the public sector than they now tend to do. They should be open to senior officials in executive programs as well as less senior officials in degree programs. They should be opened to political executives as well as career bureaucrats. They should include officials from the non-profit sector who do much of the government's work either on their own or under contract as well as government employees. They should include legislative overseers and politicians as well as executive branch officials. It is also important that they include people from the media since the media plays such an important role in constructing images of government, in shaping the agenda of government, and in holding managers accountable for performance. In short, if it is true that many people are managers and administrators in government, the schools that train such people should have room for them.

Second, it is crucially important that these schools consider and teach about the normative question of exactly how public sector executives should engage citizens and their representatives in an on-going dialogue about their purposes, means and accomplishments. We need a much more effective political performance from our public managers at least as much as we need a much more effective administrative performance.

Third, it is also important that the schools teach the improving techniques that allow public sector managers and their overseers to assess the outcomes of governmental enterprises. Political aspiration is always an important part of defining governmental purposes. But government could be improved if that aspiration were effectively informed of what operational experience has taught about the performance of governmental enterprises. No private sector firm could long survive without measurements of financial performance. No public sector firm should be allowed to long survive without evaluations of their effectiveness and value.

Fourth, it is important that the schools teach about the use of administrative systems such as organizational structure, accounting systems, personnel, and management information not simply to present an image of control and accountability, but also to actually enhance performance of the organizations over time. Specifically, it is important that these systems be seen as devices for positioning organizations for improved future performance against dimly perceived future demands.

Fifth, it is important that schools take the responsibility for preparing students to face up to the normative and psychological challenges of managing in the public sector as well as the technical ones. It is no easy task to find the paths of virtue in managing in the public sector, for there are many pitfalls. Moreover, it is often hard to find the courage to exercise leadership in a world

in which leadership is both desperately needed, but also jealously attacked. In short, it is important to think about how to develop the appropriate character to exercise public leadership as well as to fill the student's kitbag.

These implications are quite daunting to those who accept the responsibility of preparing people to manage the public's business. If we are to take this charge seriously, however, I don't see that we have any choice but to face up to these challenges. It is these functions that American government now seems to depend on its public managers to perform.