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Value and Virtue in Public Administration

A Comparative Perspective

Edited by

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Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	vii
<i>List of Tables</i>	viii
<i>Preface</i>	ix
1 Introduction to Value and Virtue in Public Administration <i>Michiel S. de Vries and Pan Suk Kim</i>	1
2 Governance and Values in Contemporary Public Service <i>Charles Garofalo</i>	17
3 Public Virtue Approaches <i>Berry Tholen</i>	33
4 Ethics and Globalization in Historical Perspective: The Relevance of Socrates in Our Days <i>Demetrios Argyriades</i>	47
5 The Cultural-Economic Perspective on Values and Virtues <i>Eelke de Jong</i>	84
6 The Social Psychology Perspective on Values and Virtues <i>Iwona Sobis and Michiel S. de Vries</i>	98
7 The Institutional Perspective on Values and Virtues <i>Elinor Ostrom and Vincent Ostrom</i>	115
8 Public Administration as a Menetype B: Re-discovering Trichotomies <i>Bruce Cutting and Alexander Kouzmin</i>	135
9 Contemporary Trends and Dilemmas of Administrative Ethics in the Developing World <i>M. Shamsul Haque</i>	169
10 The Value Profile of Civil Servants in New European Democracies through the Lens of Embedded Ethics <i>Jolanta Palidauskaite</i>	186

11	The Evil and Its Cure: Clientelism, Corruption, and Their Institutional Remedies in Latin America <i>Christina W. Andrews</i>	208
12	Perils and Prospects in Four African Countries <i>Moses Sindane</i>	228
13	Public Sector Value and Virtue and the OECD <i>Cynthia E. Lynch and Thomas D. Lynch</i>	241
14	Values and Virtues in the Japanese Public Sector <i>Hiroko Kudo</i>	256
15	Conclusions <i>Michiel S. de Vries and Pan Suk Kim</i>	275
	<i>References</i>	285
	<i>Notes on the Contributors</i>	312
	<i>Author Index</i>	317
	<i>Subject Index</i>	322

List of Figures

5.1	A framework for culture and economics	88
6.1	Ernst & Young's implied psychological contract	111
7.1	A framework for institutional analysis	120
8.1	The trinitarian hierarchy of society	137
8.2	The trinity of political powers	138
8.3	The trinity of jurisdictional power	141
8.4	The sub-trinity of executive power	145
8.5	The principal trinity of the intellect	150
8.6	The trinity of society interests	151
8.7	Essential nature of the public interest	153
8.8	PA's authority on the public interest	156
8.9	The governance trichotomy	157
8.10	The trinity of political studies	158
8.11	The trinity of government in action	159
8.12	The trinity of policy decision making	166
8.13	The trinity of policy implementation	167
10.1	Transformation of civil service system in new democracies	205
11.1	Ranking according to the Corruption Perception Index	210
11.2	Ranking accordingly to the average in each country in reply to the question: "Imagine that the total of public servants in your country was 100 and that you should say how many of among these 100 are corrupt. How many would you say are corrupt?"	211
11.3	Ranking accordingly in percentage of replies for "more" to the questions: "Do you think that there is more, the same, or less corruption among politicians than in the rest of society?"	212

List of Tables

10.1	Constitutional values	189
10.2	Citizens' rights in relationship to public authorities	190
10.3	Constitutional provisions in regard to civil service	191
10.4	General principles of civil service	194
10.5	Civil servants' duties prescribed by Civil Service Act	198
10.6	Frequency of values identified in codes of ethics/codes of conduct	200
10.7	An inventory of principles for civil servants emphasized in different legislation	202
10.8	Differences between nomenclatura's ethos and European Union ethical standards	205

Preface

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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