

SACRED IDEALS:
THE INTERPRETATION OF CANADIAN
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORMS

by

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ABSTRACT:

**SACRED IDEALS:
THE INTERPRETATION OF CANADIAN
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORMS**

by **Brenda Anne Bauer, Department of Political Science at Simon Fraser University**

The expectations which Canadians have of public administration have changed dramatically since 1970, and in response major reforms have been introduced. At issue is the most basic and fundamental concept, definition of the limitations of what Canadians expect from, and will accept from, public administration.

This paper examines the importance of the philosophy and values of public administration with regard to management reform initiatives. Chapter One, "The spirits of change", presents a three-phased typology of management reforms. Phase one, "Cost-cutting and centralized control efforts," 1984 to 1992, represents the efforts of consecutive Conservative governments to force the public service to become more efficient through centralized pressure and control tactics. Phase two, "Efficiency and effectiveness," 1992 to the present, heralds a new philosophy of management and its associated tools among practitioners. In academic analysis this international trend in public administration become known as the new public management or managerialism. Phase three, "Cooperative change," 1995 to the present, represents a shift toward the managerial ideal on the part of the federal government.

Chapter two, "Visions of Accountability," examines traditional and managerial views of accountability. Examining the history of accountability, this chapter reviews its elements, including: relationships, process and timing. The influence of managerial administration is considered, and then contrasted with some alternative theories: postmodernism, public choice, and democracy. The conclusion within this chapter is that accountability functions as a result of both formal and informal mechanisms, and that the system of accountability must be flexible enough to incorporate the changing values of society. This said, it is imperative that the basic expectations which citizens have of public administration be clearly articulated.

Chapter Three, "The search for public administration's holy grail" looks at analysis of public administration, and concludes that, while different philosophies and theories can enhance our knowledge in general about public administration, the nature of the beast precludes the construction of an overarching theory of how public administration should or does work. In conclusion, the paper recommends that historical review of public administration is helpful, because it helps to it into context the claims of those heralding the birth of a new savior for public administration.

DEDICATION

The completion of a work of this magnitude is difficult under the best conditions. With the added challenge of two children under three years of age the prospect becomes even more daunting. This paper, and the completion of this degree would not have been possible without a great deal of support. As a full-time employee of the federal public service, I was drawn to Simon Fraser University because of the flexibility and openness of the Department of Political Science. The fact that I was able to attend as a part-time student for the duration of my course-work allowed me to undertake this Master's program. Although I took a period of time off to have two children, I was lucky to have a family which wholeheartedly supported my return to school on a full-time basis in order to facilitate the completion of this thesis. In addition, my friends should be thanked, as they have provided a constant source of input and debate for the ideas provided within this thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

The role of a democratic government is to broker the diverse values of society, creating a common framework of rules within which all citizens can live. In Canada the scope of government is broad, and the nature of its activities overwhelming. Public administration is constantly evolving, and these changes reflect the broader shifts of societal values. In many respects the activities of governance are considered sacrosanct, so deeply connected to a country's identity that it is difficult to criticize one without implicitly commenting on the other. As it so centrally reflects values and identity, it is not surprising that religious metaphors¹ have been utilized within academic analyses of public administration. In order to describe the evolution of public administration practice, the discipline has developed a tendency to create and contrast broad ideal types and stages. Although these models are generally informative, the changes occurring within public administration today beg for the development of schema which would explore in greater detail the characteristics of institutions, and provide a method to analyze the implications of change as it occurs.

In the last twenty years federal public administration in Canada has undergone tremendous change. Scholars and practitioners alike regard these changes as having the potential to fundamentally alter the public sector and the manner in which it has traditionally been managed. The structure and culture of public administration have both been affected, and the value of public administration has come to be measured in new and different ways. These changes have involved a fundamental shift in the management of federal public administration, affecting culture, process, structure, and technique.

¹ Including Pollitt's 1995 "Management techniques for the public sector: pulpit and practice" which was carried on by Savoie in his 1995 "Just another voice from the pulpit". Barzelay's 1992 book talks about "a new **vision** for managing in the public sector", and Osborne and Gaebler in their popular 1993 book speak about how the entrepreneurial **spirit** is changing the public sector(emphasis added).

During this period the environment in which public administration functions has also changed significantly, and as a result the orientation of the public service has changed. New relationships and responsibilities have been thrust upon federal public service managers, often with little explanation or direction. This paper provides an overview of many of these reforms and their implications for the future of public administration in Canada. Chapter One: The Spirits of Change, provides an overview of the major trends and reforms, and offers a typology of the new management techniques embraced by Canadian public administration. Chapter Two: Visions of Accountability provides an overview of the foundations of accountability relating to traditional and new concepts of public administration. Chapter Three: The Search for Public Administration's Holy Grail assesses the potential of current public administration reforms from the perspective of recent academic literature.

Public administration may be unique in the number of approaches or disciplines utilized to examine this area of inquiry. Depending on the perspective, different elements of public administration become more or less relevant. A political scientist is oriented toward the political environment within which government functions, a public choice economist focuses on the decision-making patterns of individual public servants with relation to perceived personal gain. This thesis takes an interdisciplinary approach to the subject of change within public administration. In addition to a historical overview of management techniques utilized within the last fifteen years, the concept of accountability is highlighted.

Accountability, within Canadian public administration, serves as a barometer or indicator of value changes in the political environment. A review of literature on this subject, however, yields remarkably little in terms of theoretical frameworks and models based on detailed analysis of this, or other key indicators. The goal of this paper is to provide insight into the reasons why the management of the federal public service in Canada has changed so dramatically over a relatively short period of time, to make

predictions about the effect of these changes, and to suggest the development of new methodologies which would yield even greater insight into these areas of study in the future.

CHAPTER ONE: THE SPIRITS OF CHANGE

Public administration functions as a part of society, and therefore reflects environmental uncertainty and turbulence.² Over the last twenty years a myriad of changes have influenced the way that politicians, the public, and public servants view the role of public administration. The perception that there may be problems with the management of public administration is not a new issue. What has changed, however, is the level and type of involvement of central government in the quest for "better" public administration. This involvement has ranged from command and control coordinator to facilitator, in an effort to create a workable operational environment for government and public administration.

Canadian history is rife with reports containing prescriptions for future of public administration, and even Prime Minister Trudeau, who was viewed by many as being "sympathetic" to public administration, grappled throughout the 1970s and early 1980s with a system of rational management designed to maintain strong central control over the public service. By the mid 1980s a number of factors came together to push the issue of public administration management onto the government's agenda.

Throughout the 1970s there was a growing perception of public administration as inefficient and ineffective (Imundo: 1975). In the 1980s national and international economic crises focused government attention onto fiscal issues (Aucoin: 1995), a key element of which was the need to control and reduce government expenditures. The problem of overspending by governments seemed to have become common to all

² The addition of culture as an important component in the consideration of public administration was formally made by sociologists and members of the human relations school, becoming popularized in the 1960s. It may be argued, however, that even Weber considered the importance of a bureaucratic culture, as evidenced by his comments both on authority and life-long service and their importance to bureaucracy. The behavioralist school of thought goes as far as to say that it is the determining factor in the success or failure of an organization. Organizational humanism and contingency theory (Morse & Lorsch: 1970) look at the interrelationships between organization, tasks, and people.

developed countries (Savoie: 1992). In addition, new management techniques and technologies in the private sector had created an emphasis on customer service which had a significant impact on the expectations which were placed on service delivery in the public sector.

The general environment at this time served to place parliamentarians "under stress" (Campbell: 1983), and necessitated a re-examination of the scope, function, and structure of government activities. Due to the short term nature of elected government's goal horizon, it is not surprising that initially governments focused on those opportunities that could be implemented quickly to show tangible results. In order to reduce its expenditure and yearly debt without dramatically cutting programs and services, government's first response was to reduce the amount of money it was spending on bureaucracy.

Government can look at cost savings with relation to the management of public administration in a number of ways. Government can: 1) minimize bureaucracy in general, without specific consideration of outputs; 2) minimize the amount of bureaucracy used per individual unit of output; or 3) determine a general acceptable level of output and then find a minimum level of bureaucracy necessary to achieve these goals (Hood: 1983:p. 198). Through these subtle shifts in emphasis government can vary the message behind cost-cutting measures, that may serve to address public concerns about: excessive spending and inefficiency; poor service and ineffectiveness, and concern about unnecessary levels of intervention and intrusiveness.

Decisions about cost-cutting may, in reality, be even more complex than this typology, as the messages given by different parts of the government contradict each other when the same actions are translated for different audiences. As an example, in 1995 the Canadian federal government announced a plan to rationalize the Canada Employment Centre (CEC) network across the country. The strategy involved a detailed communication plan that presented different messages to different audiences. While the

impetus for the rationalization was budget reduction, and as a result many offices scaled back operations or were closed completely, the government positioned the announcement as providing an improvement in service. In parliament network rationalization was presented as a cost-saving measure. Network rationalization was presented to the public service as providing the basis for an environment in which employees would become empowered and more responsive to their clients.

Looking at the past fifteen years the goals of government, in relation to management changes implemented within the public sector, become clear. Various typologies have been used in order to categorize these changes, most of which have separated approaches into two streams, those focusing on efficiency and effectiveness.³ This categorization does not, however, consider or explain the recent trend in Canadian governance toward a fundamental reexamination of the business of government.⁴ Within this chapter management changes are divided into three chronological phases that represent the goals of their respective reforms: cost-cutting and centralized control efforts, efficiency and effectiveness, and cooperative change.

Phase One: Cost-cutting and Centralized Control Efforts

Phase one is used to loosely signify the period between 1984 and 1992, when successive Canadian governments attempted, primarily through central control tactics, to cut the cost of operating the public service. Reforms during this period included those with such stated goals such as: reduction in the operating budgets and size of the public service, more tightly controlled and efficient financial management, and the implementation of centralized efficiency initiatives.

³ Peters (1995) divides reforms into three categories, those designed to make government more: efficient, effective, and more democratic.

⁴ Professor Laurent Dobuzinskis, my supervising professor, pointed out this omission and suggested that it may be an area which required greater examination.

From the time that the professional public service came into existence in Canada there has been a desire on behalf of government to improve its functioning. What differentiates this period of examination is the urgency with which government began to treat this issue. National and international financial crises led government to the realization that they could no longer expect to routinely offset inefficiencies with the injection of additional financial resources (Seguin: 1992). This financial impetus was coupled with changing external expectations of government service, and new international trends in public service management.

In 1960 the government of Canada announced the formation of the Royal Commission on Government Organization, the Glassco Commission. Reporting in 1962, the commission provided recommendations designed to "promote efficiency, economy, and improved service in the dispatch of public business" (Canada: 1962: pp. 1). Glassco, with its call to "let the manager manage," is acknowledged to have encouraged a number of reforms which tinkered with the complex processes in place which affected the role of federal public managers. The Glassco Report was widely criticized for its uncomprehensive approach to decision-making within the public administration environment (Savoie: 1991).

As a result, within the 1970s, the Royal Commission on Financial Management and Accountability, the Lambert Commission, revisited the issue of the accountability of public sector managers. The report, released in 1979, acknowledged that the federal public service accountability framework had become tremendously complex, and that the realities of these relationships were not adequately specified for public sector managers (Canada: 1979). Although Lambert pointed out a lack of control over the spending of the federal public service, its recommendations did not have a significant impact on government operations (Savoie: 1991).

Political concern with the efficiency of Canada's public administration was evident when, as a lead-up to the 1979 election, Conservatives indicated that if elected

they would cut the public service by 20% (Campbell: 1983: p. 94). Although the Clark government did not remain in power long enough to institute a comprehensive program of governance, suffering a vote of non-confidence on their first budget and subsequently suffering defeat in a 1980 election, the stage was set for the introduction of similar reforms when a new Conservative government was elected in 1984.

In the lead-up to the 1984 election, the future Prime Minister Brian Mulroney promised the public service "pink slips and running shoes" (Zussman: 1986: pp. 255). Following his election, Mulroney instituted a Task Force on Program Review that was supposed to report on and analyze all aspects of government operations. The full mandate of that task force was never achieved (Aucoin: 1995), however their 1985 report (Canada: 1985) did look generally at management initiatives in the public service.

The goals of the Mulroney governments were to reduce the size of the public service, make its operations more efficient, and to reclaim political control over the bureaucracy (Savoie: 1994). During this period efforts to reform public administration focused on cost-cutting and incremental, layered, largely centralized reforms through which the government tried to legislate and regulate efficient public administration. The government also focused on wide-ranging, centrally introduced management initiatives, that attempted to push changes through via the senior management levels of the federal public service.

Over the course of many years layers of accountability measures had been put in place primarily to foster central control of government decision-making and budgets. By the late 1980s the public service accountability structures had become so complex that they were impeding performance (Osbaldeston: 1989). Central measures put into place with the goal of increasing central accountability were decreasing efficiency and causing dysfunctions in the operation of public bureaux.

The government's ideological orientation was to implement cost-saving measures primarily through repeated cuts to the operating and salary budgets of departments. The

Mulroney government chose to bypass traditional union-management negotiation processes and collective bargaining process that had become available to public servants, overriding unions' collective agreements. Incremental wage increases were frozen, inflation adjustments were discontinued, and a moratorium was placed on the designation of indeterminate employees. Employees faced legislated salary freezes while successive budget reductions cut into programs with no allowance for reductions in output. These actions led to general unrest among employees, and resulted in a general public service strike during 1991. When legislated back to work, the government's workforce was generally showing signs of feeling undervalued and unrespected by their employer, who required their cooperation if efficiency of operations was to increase.

The 1986 introduction of the Increased Ministerial Authority and Accountability (IMAA) initiative paradoxically introduced a centrally conceived and managed program of decentralization. The stated goal of this initiative was a reduction in central controls of the Public Service Commission and Treasury Board, allowing Ministers and their Deputy Ministers greater flexibility. Although it had the potential to reduce restrictions on managers, the potential benefits of IMAA were not immediately apparent throughout the public service, and therefore the response from departments to the initiative was lack-luster. The opportunities presented by the program were not efficiently utilized and the program did not result in a successful in devolution of responsibility to Deputy Ministers (Aucoin: 1994: pp. 128). Six years after IMAA was introduced, only one-third of eligible departments had filed the paperwork with Treasury Board necessary to allow for the full implementation of this concept (Savoie: 1994: pp. 269). The implementation of IMAA relied upon central agencies, however, they had no incentive to follow through on a program that would diminish their own responsibilities (Savoie: 1994: pp. 270).

In 1989 a report on public service reforms was initiated, that resulted in the release of Public Service 2000 in 1990. PS 2000 advocated: a new management of people philosophy, changes to the institutional framework of government to foster a new

orientation toward service to the public, and the modernization of management practices. Development of the report involved the comprehensive involvement of senior management, however, a successful approach to implementation was elusive. PS 2000 did not contain a coherent plan for devolving authority (Aucoin: 1994), and a lack of activity relating to the removal of barriers identified in the report only served to contribute to the negative attitude within the public service toward reform initiatives (Savoie: 1994). Although some of its proposals are now being revived, the principles of PS 2000 were never effectively communicated or transmitted to the rank and file of the public service. The primary flaw in the Conservatives' overall approach to management initiatives was that, for all of their verbiage about new approaches and methodology, not much actually changed for the general population of the public service.

At this point a disbelief culture was well established within the Canadian federal public service (Savoie: 1992, 1994). A general cultural malaise and negative attitudes toward new management initiatives were reinforced by top-down processes that never successfully permeated the lower ranks of the public service. Initiatives that were imposed and mandated, often in a confrontational manner with the public service, were in many cases viewed with suspicion and even thinly veiled hostility by the bulk of public sector employees. The expectation placed by the government upon senior government administrators was that there was too much "fat" in government, and that it could operate as effectively in a "leaner" form. The rise of neoconservatism, which has promoted an ideological perspective of government apparati as being inherently inefficient and unnecessarily intrusive contributed to this pressure for reductions in government spending.

During this phase the federal government undertook two types of initiatives, it cut budgets and it mandated centrally controlled programs designed to increase efficiency. "Cut-back management," which attempts to reduce operating and personnel expenses while an institution produces the same outputs, is now recognized as being neutral in

relation to any change in efficiency (Lane: 1995: pp. 149). Under the leadership of such central mechanisms as Treasury Board and the Clerk of the Privy Council, the federal government introduced initiatives designed to influence the management behavior of Deputy Ministers and senior administrators. The goals of these initiatives included streamlined operations and a reduction in overlap and duplication. The primary motivation, however, was to wring a greater degree of efficiency out of existing systems.

Technology, at this point, provided an opportunity to procure cost savings and enhance the timeliness and accessibility of some activities, however, it became an example of the manner in which decentralization initiatives can serve only to transfer management concerns to another layer of management (Lane: 1995: pp. 157). The adoption of new technological systems on as large a scale as that required by the departments of the federal government required large initial capital inputs and therefore would not reflect savings in the short term. Although this was the case, many elements of the federal public service had, through necessity, previously utilized early technological developments. By the early 1990s this technology was becoming dated and overloaded. Many systems were already becoming slow and tedious, unable to cope with the volume and complexity of information, and did not easily lend themselves to the introduction of new management techniques.⁵ The practical difficulty of adapting outdated technology to new nationally mandated efficiency initiatives created problems and frustrations for middle-level management.

The process of introducing centrally managed efficiency measures included some experiments with alternative forms of management. Following international trends, which had taken strong root in Great Britain, the government began to expand its experimentation with contracting out to external entities and the development of Special Operating Agencies. Although these alternative forms of delivery had the potential to

⁵ As a federal public servant myself at this time, these statements are based on personal observation.

radically reshape the public service, during this period the Conservative government instituted these measures on very limited and isolated bases.

In the 1970s and 1980s, governments had tried to legislate, regulate and implement effectiveness through the implementation of central controls. This resulted in a bloated central bureaucracy, a matrix of competing authorities for managers, and fostered, rather than rectified, the problem of overmanagement in the public service. As the 1990s began, the public service was struggling with low morale, decreasing budgets, and many outdated and cumbersome central reporting systems. A requirement for new management techniques began to permeate throughout the public service, and within the international public administration community it had become clear that a highly centralized approach to management overhaul contained inherent inefficiencies that could not be overcome through additional centrally administered programs (Lane: 1995: pp. 154). In addition, most senior administrators had "grown up" in one stream - either policy, administration, or operations - with little attention paid to the development of generic managerial skills (Aucoin: 1995). The knowledge and ability of managers relating to effective management techniques, separate from the inherent concerns of their specific portfolios, were not skills that had been valued or rewarded.

One of the problems noted with attempts during this period to reform public administration, is the fact that no overarching vision of the values of public administration was ever endorsed by the government. Although some initiatives clearly contradicted the traditional function of the public sector, there was no attempt made to communicate a new philosophy that would justify an overall restructuring of responsibilities and processes (Savoie: 1994). The Conservative governments of this period did make some attempts to influence the management processes of the federal public service, but national unity clearly topped their agenda as an issue of paramount concern. Without the development of a commitment to management reforms throughout the public service, and specifically within the central agencies, any new initiatives were

destined to fail. As a result, most of the changes brought to bear during this period resulted in tinkering around the edges of traditional structures and processes, rather than the wholesale introduction of new management techniques in Canadian public administration.

Comparatively, international trends at this time were leading toward attempts to "consolidate and centralize decision-making power within the executive structures while fostering a greater devolution of administrative authority, responsibility and accountability for the management of government operations" (Aucoin: 1995: p. 90). Canadian federal public administration faced these influences as well, and managers were the ones who ended up suffering as a result of the inherent contradictions within this centralization-decentralization conundrum.⁶

At this point, taking its lead from experiences in the private sector and more market oriented management techniques that had been receiving a great deal of public attention, internal expectations of management in the public service did begin to change. The restructuring of government departments, beginning in 1993, provided a trigger point for these changes to begin to effect some concrete change throughout the public service.

Phase Two: Efficiency and Effectiveness

Clearly the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration has been an ongoing concern for Canadian governments.⁷ The period from 1992 to the present marks a change in the management techniques utilized by managers within Canadian public administration. This shift toward what has been termed "managerialism" (Pollitt: 1990; Savoie: 1993) and "new public management" (Hood: 1991), involved a fundamentally

⁶ Peter Aucoin and Herman Bakvis labelled this contradictory approach within their book: The Centralization-Decentralization Conundrum: Organization and Management in the Canadian Government (The Institute for Research on Public Policy, Halifax, 1988).

⁷ Management goals that are seemingly contradictory and conflicting is not a new phenomena. The 1962 Glassco report urged government both to strengthen the "central direction of government" to "let the manager manage"(Canada:1963).

new way of looking at the role of public administration for practitioners. This shift involved a recognition of the significance of the activity and process of management as a distinct activity, and as a result fostered the widespread acceptance of new tools and techniques available to assist managers in their roles.

The introduction and availability of new management techniques paralleled a reduction in the degree of structural centralization in government, the endorsement and utilization of new organizational structures, and an increased autonomy afforded to managers. This shift also led to requirements for changes in technology, motivation structures, general administration practices, budget and planning processes, communication and information flows, and accountability measures.

As outlined in the cost-cutting phase, for many years government had successively cut departmental operating budgets without effecting concrete changes in the efficiency of public administration. By the early 1990s it was becoming clear that the quality of delivery of existing programs and services would face negative impacts without the acceptance of new efficiency measures and a complete overhaul of structure of many programs and processes. Although the government had tried to mandate some improvements within the public sector, PS 2000 for example, the deep-rooted disbelief culture combined with government's inability or unwillingness to follow through on its recommendations had resulted in little concrete change to this point. Outmoded organizational structures and the need to innovate relating to the introduction of new technologies and their effects on employees, created the urgent need for a new management approach (Kernaghan: 1992).

By the late 1980s the problems of governance had become so apparent that the attention of government had begun to shift "away from policy and towards management" (Savoie: 1992: p. 9). Many pressures with international origins, the quality service movement for example, had led critical assessments of the Canadian federal public

service.⁸ Public service practitioners began to search out new management tools and techniques due to the need for improvements in efficiency, intense dissatisfaction with traditional accountability regimes, and the looming threat of privatization (Doern: 1994), that combined to create an undesirable situation within the present environment. At this point business consultants were prepared to supply much antidotal and prescriptive information to public administration related to private-sector driven changes in management techniques. As a result, many of the tools accepted and implemented by public administration were based on trials and evaluations conducted within the private sector.

One immediate and significant impact on public servants during this period was Prime Minister Kim Campbell's 1993 consolidation of Cabinet portfolios. Rumors preceded the formal endorsement of the "de Cotret exercise", as it was known within the ranks of federal government management. This dramatic reduction in the number of Ministers and Ministries to twenty-five set into motion a massive amalgamation exercise among the policy, operations, and administration sectors of departments which had previously operated separately. This crisis point forced many branches to justify their roles, as administration and operation branches merged and amalgamated. It also provided an opportunity for managers to evaluate systems, processes, and delivery mechanisms.

Although the government had for some time been supportive of the introduction of private sector and market-based managerial techniques, these techniques had not always been compatible with existing public service realities. By the early 1990s, observers had noted this paradox, stating that government's attempts at "centralization, coordination, and control were paralleled by increased efforts to decentralize, deregulate and delegate" (Aucoin: 1995). The resulting environment was confusing and unpredictable for public managers. The disbelief culture prevalent among members of the

⁸ Please see the "Cost-cutting and Centralized Control Efforts" section of this chapter for an overview of these difficulties and governmental responses.

public service resulted in the fact that most notices about reform were buried while urgent program or policy matters were undertaken (Savoie: 1992). Until delayering and dismantling of traditional structures began, changes that involved the development of a new culture could not be successful.

This environment did not stop the flow of information and ideas relating to managerialism to public administration managers through other channels, for example through journals, training courses, popular literature, the media, and professional networking. Managers themselves began to experiment with those techniques that were gaining popularity internationally. "Inspired in part by private sector management practices, the new management approach emphasis[ed] simplification of structures and processes, decentralization of authority, empowerment of managers and front-line employees and self-discipline of employees rather than a reliance on a central 'command and control' approach" (Savoie: 1992: p. 9).

This program was commonly referred to in the private sector as total quality management (TQM). Effectiveness, in this sense, flowed from the philosophy that organizations could increase their efficiency through a fundamental re-examination of their product and processes. In its original private sector form, this process involved an optimization of customer satisfaction with minimal capital outlay. Improved service delivery, improved quality, and greater customer satisfaction were touted as the end results. An organization going through this process would be expected to adapt to greater customer involvement in decision-making related to products, a new relationship with its employees (including empowerment and rewards for entrepreneurialism), and a reduction in middle management through the elimination of rules or hierarchical processes that did not add value to the final product.

In the adaptation of these ideals from the private to the public sector, some parts of the process were amended, ignored, or dropped. Due either to necessity resulting from conflicts with the mechanisms of bureaucratic management, strictly for ease of implementation, most of the reforms introduced were specific techniques associated with

this process, or very specific changes that had been prescribed to successfully improve the performance of public administration.

Initially the appeal of these techniques were their potential to generate immediate savings. Tied into financial reductions, the package has generally been sold as "government that works better and costs less."⁹ Managers were looking for a way to reduce the per unit costs of services, however they had little ability to control the larger factors effecting policy developments of the government in general. The fact that many central units were slow to implement TQM and managerial initiatives further illustrates the point that the effectiveness efforts of many public service managers acted in opposition to the traditional mentality retained by policy units and administrative agencies (Savoie: 1994; Barzelay: 1992). Earlier central government initiatives like IMAA and PS 2000 had, however, opened the door to some new ways of conducting government business. As the realities at the middle management levels shifted, the environment envisioned within these initiatives came closer to reality.

Although TQM in the private sector involved a fundamental reexamination of product as well as process, public sector managers generally did not have the latitude to undertake a fundamental reexamination of their purpose and function. Public administration therefore tended to skip this analytic step and jumped right into the use of tools that had been used in private sector environments. These tools included: increased flexibility in the working environment (through the elimination of those unnecessary processes and rules over which managers themselves had control), empowerment of employees (flattening structure and giving more responsibilities to lower levels of staff), performance-based contracts, the development of a service focus and service standards, and customer (external) evaluation. Other implications of these initiatives included significant cultural changes: a new emphasis on leadership and learning; and the

⁹ The American National Performance Review on public administration, presented by Vice-President Gore to President Bill Clinton in September 1993, was subtitled "Government that works better and costs less."

increasingly strategic use of technology. Bureaux tried to rebuild processes and amend organizational structures based on these new tenets of good management.

Significantly, the introduction of these initiatives required a state of positive labour-management relations. When Conservative governments first tried to impose these reforms on the public service, a negative attitude towards management and a significant disbelief culture within the public service posed significant roadblocks to implementation. After the defeat of the Conservative government in October of 1993, there was a considerable softening of negativity within the public service ethos, and more congenial relationships began to develop between government and its employees. Liberal governments of the past had a history of more positive and congenial relationships with the public service, and Liberal comments during the 1993 election campaign with regard to the role of the public service were positive. The appointment of former Deputy Minister Marcel Masse to the Ministerial post of Public Service Renewal also helped to solidify positive relations with the public sector.

The movement to TQM had important implications with relation to changes in the accountability framework of federal public administration. Traditional accountability relationships and processes, including the norms and ethics implicit in public service employment, were incongruent with the expectations of TQM. These important issues will be discussed in chapter two of this paper, *Visions of Accountability*.

Advocates of TQM principles warned of the importance of following through the TQM process, although through necessity many bureaux were only able to integrate TQM on a piecemeal basis. One writer cautioned public sector managers to avoid three potential pitfalls: 1) thinking that it will be easy; 2) thinking it will be incremental & slow; 3) thinking it can be all neatly planned in advance (Seguin: pp. 472 - 73). The risks associated with these pitfalls included: organizational demoralization, difficulties associated with processes, and ultimately failure. The transitional environment which faced managers, in which the government seemed to be interested in but not ultimately committed to TQM (supportive as long as they produced success stories), created the

potential for innovative managers to face either great success and recognition or bombastic failure.

As the challenge of incorporating TQM management techniques within the restrictive environment of public administration became apparent, privatization and contracting out of services appeared to offer government and managers a simple way out. Although the inherent conflicts between traditional and TQM management philosophies initially was a source of great frustration, there were soon advocates of renewed government who offered a vision of public administration which meshed private and public sector values.

In 1992 Osborne and Gaebler published their work, Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector, to great international fanfare. A key element of the book was its proposition that public administration did not have to be privatized in order to become more effective and adapt to market mechanisms. The authors argued, in fact, that many functions were better performed by the public sector within an environment in which managers had the freedom to use new management techniques and tools. Osborne and Gaebler came along at the right time to justify and explain the paradigm shift which had already begun. They provided a framework to explain and put into context many changes to public organizations and, as a result, their book became a phenomenon in the public administration community (Rhodes: 1994).

The book outlined ten principles of entrepreneurial government:

- 1) competition and catalyzing action (emphasis on governance not delivering services)
- 2) empowerment
- 3) outcome focus
- 4) substituting mission-driven for rule-driven government
- 5) define clients as customers and give them choices, becoming service-friendly
- 6) prevent problems, becoming anticipatory, not just reactive
- 7) look for opportunities to earn or leverage resources
- 8) decentralization
- 9) look to the market mechanism instead of relying on traditional command principles, and
- 10) catalyze actors into action in communities (Osborne & Gaebler: 19 - 20).

The point at which the Canadian federal government embraces the concept of reinvented government, marks a new phase in management. Within the phase of cooperative change, both government and public administration begin to approach institutional, administrative and program reform from a new management perspective. Far from signaling the end of TQM and its associated techniques, the movement into the cooperative change period is signified by government's acceptance of these market-based philosophies.

The introduction of TQM and its associated philosophy represent a new paradigm in public management. Managers moved out of the routinized bureaucratic behavior which had been reinforced through traditional bureaucratic structures and processes (Savoie: 1993: pp. 16), and adopted a new perspective with respect to the values associated with effective management. The adoption of managerialism reflects an international trend within public administration. Numerous other countries, including Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, Germany, and the United States, are commonly recognized as having undergone this paradigmatic change, which represents a globalization of the public sector management approach (Savoie: 1992).

Public administration literature has provided a typology of managerialism as an ideal-type, antithetically opposed to the ideal-type of traditional bureaucracy put forward by Max Weber and his contemporaries.¹⁰ Managerialism has provided a new method of structuring the values inherent in the public administration function, in diametric contrast with many elements of traditional management theory and practice, as illustrated within

Table 1.

Table: 1

<u>Traditional</u>	<u>New Management</u>
Planning	Evaluation
Control	Discretion
Minute regulation	Framework legislation

¹⁰ An overview of the arguments of Weber is available in Kenneth Kernaghan and David Siegel's Public Administration in Canada: A Text, Scarborough, Nelson Canada, 1989, pp. 33 - 37.

Line-item budgets	Block grants
Means focus	Management by objectives
Steering	Measurement of outputs and outcomes
Collective incentives	Individual incentives
Taxation	User fees
Authority	Exchange
Hierarchy	Networks ¹¹

This oppositional contrast of philosophies sets up significant differences between the traditional and new ideal-types. Traditional bureaucracy is no longer seen as a relevant guide for managers (Savoie: 1994), as expectations and values have been dramatically overhauled.

Although managerialism is portrayed as representing a paradigm shift, its effects have not been instantaneous. The vast majority of public servants were routinized into a culture largely supportive of traditional bureaucratic values, and therefore they have maintained an attachment to some elements of these traditional values (Barzelay: 1992). When managerialism was first introduced, government and central agencies were cautious in providing an explicit endorsement of changes to the public administration accountability framework. Managerialism introduced a new philosophy to the activity of management within public administration, but this concept has had to compete with the realities of other competing demands within the political process.

At times, the very things that we want or demand from government - equality, fairness, and due process - are the very things that produce some of the bureaucratic dysfunctions that we all complain about. On the one hand, citizens want a lean, mean public service and, on the other they want their own cases to be considered fairly, equally, and deliberately. It is not always possible to have both, and sometimes government operations have to have a certain amount of balance between the competing demands (Savoie: 1992: p. 10).

¹¹ This table is a variation on one produced by Lane (1995), Table 6.3, p. 150. The titles at the top were changed, as the original referred to "Ex ante" and "Ex post" models. The last item in the table: contrasting hierarchy with networks, was my addition.

The values of managerialism contrast with some of the tenets of bureaucracy previously considered sacred. Traditional bureaucracy viewed citizens as subjects, not consumers, and saw function primarily as the routinized administration of rules, not the innovative provision of services (Aucoin: 1995). In exchange for the relinquishment of certain fundamental rights, civil servants were appointed to their positions for life with guaranteed remuneration and pension. Within the managerialist paradigm the conceptions of the role of public servants has changed dramatically. In addition, the form of government programs and the structures of government institutions have undergone greater scrutiny.

Some observers have asked whether public administration should be concerned about the influence of private sector values on traditionally public values. It has long been the assumption that management responsibilities inside government are unique, and cannot be compared to experiences outside of government (Allison: 1982).¹² While the actual process of privatization looks at a reduction in the size of public administration in favour of a private sector approach, the new management approach has the goal of reforming the private sector from within, through the introduction and internalization of private sector or market-driven techniques.

A number of problems have been identified with the translation of TQM to the public sector, including: the services vs. products orientation; the problem of defining the government customer; the traditional government focus on inputs and processes; and the unique nature of government culture (Swiss: 1992). While these obstacles make the adaptation to a TQM orientation challenging for public sector managers (Kernaghan: 1992), it appears that managerialism is not irreconcilable with the requirements of the public sector. In fact, these new influences have the potential to make a very positive contribution to public administration. When the traditional and managerial paradigms are

¹² Analysis of the private-public puzzle is provided within Chapter Three: the search for public administration's holy grail.

looked at in opposition to each other, the effect is an overemphasis on differences. In reality, elements of each value system have been evident within the Canadian political system for some time.

During the efficiency and effectiveness period Canadian public administration began to adapt to TQM techniques and the new managerialism paradigm at the grass roots managerial level. As the mid-1990s approached it became clear that a broader governmental commitment to the managerialism paradigm would greatly enhance opportunities for change. At the time it was not evident how quickly, and just how significant this change would be.

Phase Three: Cooperative Change

Looking at Canadian governance in 1993, Savoie (1993) noted that managerialism was failing as a panacea for the ills of public administration. Since that criticism was made there has been a dramatic shift in the management approach undertaken by government with relation its governance responsibilities. Although this new relationship has been labeled "cooperative change" for the purpose of identifying this phase, in many respects it has been anything but cooperative. As government embraced the managerialist paradigm it began to operate in a manner which facilitated a more cooperative approach to the introduction of new management initiatives within the public service, but it also set up the basis for significant conflicts. Acting itself as an empowered manager, government has moved forward with an agenda which has involved a re-evaluation of programs and the manner in which they are carried out. This new process has created stresses on the relationships which government has with both its internal and external partners.

As a part of the 1994 budget process, within a government publication entitled Canada's Economic Challenges, it was noted both that "[t]he size of Canada's government sector relative to GDP is large"; and that "Canada's government expenditure

on goods and services is one of the highest in the G-7 as a proportion of GDP" (Canada: 1994: pp. 53). The budget cut-back programs which government had imposed on public administration over the last eight years had clearly not yet yielded a leaner government apparatus.

As the Liberal government came into power in 1993 the timing was right for the formation of a new relationship between government and public administration. Previous governments had failed in their efforts to control the costs, efficiency and effectiveness of the public service, but at the management level changes were taking place. As the philosophy of management within the public sector was changing, the Liberal government faced new expectations as they entered office. The attitude of government toward its public administration apparatus has been recognized as a key determinant in the success of reform initiatives (Peters: 1991).

A number of elements combined to create different expectations on public administration at the time that the Liberals took office in 1993, including: a new political arena where interest groups had significant input into the policy-making process; a growing aggressiveness by the mass media in their quest to expose deficiencies with government systems; and general public demands for a decrease in the power of government and an increase in the direct responsibility of parliamentarians directly to their constituents (Aucoin: 1995: pp. 38). A subsiding concern with the issue of national unity also contributed to a willingness of government to look at the issue of restructuring within government, as opposed to the creation of a new overarching constitutional agreement which outlined the respective responsibilities of the federal and provincial governments.

The Liberal's 1993 election platform, outlined in the "red book;" Creating Opportunity: The Liberal Plan for Canada; did not directly address Canadian public administration as a problem, nor did it propose an overarching solution to management

issues. It did, however, espouse a philosophy which has had a tremendous impact upon the manner in which decisions about governance are made and implemented.

A society of reciprocal obligation is a society that can try new things and take risks, because those risks are shared by all of us. Such a society encourages its citizens to experiment and to innovate... Our challenge, as always, is to do more with what we have. We believe we can do this in three ways. First, by stressing the notion of partnership with all sectors of society... Second, we wish to focus our efforts on leverage points... Third... we have to measure whether specific government programs actually deliver results over time... (Liberal Party of Canada: 1993).

In a sense the empowerment and emphasis that TQM placed on citizens as consumers of government services contributed to this shift in emphasis. Growing responsibilities for groups to "partner" with government in the development of services, sharing of risks (and rewards), and greater flexibility at the community level in the design of new program options are all elements of this new direction. Techniques employed during this period included: the review and justification of all programs and services provided by the federal government (resulting in the elimination or amalgamation of programs), negotiations with other levels of government or external agencies relating to the devolution of certain areas of responsibilities altogether, and a new emphasis on partnerships which increases the responsibilities of individuals and local organizations with relation to the development and delivery of programming.

In addition to the empowerment of their partners, the Liberal government empowered public sector managers to make substantive management decisions relating to delivery of programs and services. It attempted to provide frameworks in order to guide the actions of managers, and introduced processes which were much less centrally driven than those which had been implemented by the Conservatives. In 1995, for example, within the department of Human Resources Development local management functions were restructured through a process which extensively involved representative managers themselves. The result of this process was a re-classification of managerial positions

which resulted in an upgrade to the "Executive" level (EX 01), the highest category of classification within the Canadian public service. The expectation has been that this new role for these managers will involve enhanced authority and decision-making responsibilities, as well as the development of new relationships with local communities.¹³

In 1995 Treasury Board released its Framework for Alternative Program Delivery (Canada: 1995). This framework was designed to structure the alternatives available to managers who were being given increased latitude to make substantive decisions about the future of their departments:

Today's environment demands a highly flexible and innovative public sector that can respond to the challenge of our fiscal situation and adapt to new ways of doing business. Departments and agencies are encouraged to use this framework as they redesign program delivery so they can carry out their mandates within the ever decreasing resources available (Canada: Framework for Alternative Program Delivery: 1995: pp. v).

In October of 1995 Treasury Board released a series of papers entitled: Quality Services. This series for managers included an overview on the subject of quality services, and specific guides on the subjects of: client consultation; measuring client satisfaction; working with unions; establishing a supportive learning environment; recognition of individuals and teams; employee surveys, service standards; benchmarking and best practices; and communications (Canada: Quality Services: 1995). The publication of Quality Services, and the inference that this method of operation was now the accepted norm within government, indicates a general acceptance within the political environment of the values associated with the managerialist approach.

¹³ Information relating to this example is provided through experience gathered as a result of personal involvement in this department with these managers.

Increasingly government also grew to view strategic partnership as an effective managerial tool. The federal government has adopted techniques ranging from information-sharing agreements to the leveraging of matching funds on program initiatives with other levels of government and community stakeholders. Partnerships can take many forms, from loose information-sharing arrangements to highly structured contracts. The federal government is now commonly utilizing partnerships explicitly to reduce the scope of federal responsibilities and financial commitments. Although in 1992 Kernaghan could say that federal government partnerships were being utilized as a management technique and not a political tool (Kernaghan: 1992), it has now become clear that these arrangements can serve a dual purpose.

In 1995 the federal government canvassed the provincial and territorial government with relation to their interest in participation in a "federal" child care plan. The Liberals had outlined their commitment to such a plan within the 1993 "red book" of campaign promises (Liberal Party of Canada: 1993), however, they approached the other levels of government with a partnership proposal which required from them a substantial financial and organizational commitment. Initial attempts to gain some national consensus on this program failed, largely because of the unwillingness of the provinces to commit their resources to a program which, at this point, had only been elevated to a crisis point on the federal political agenda.¹⁴

The concept of Program Review was introduced prior to the 1993 election, but it did not begin to take shape until the February 1994 budget. The government stated that Program Review involved the assessment of existing government programs against a number of tests: the public interest test; the role of government test; the federalism test; the partnership test; the efficiency test; and the affordability test. In practice, Program Review has provided the government with the opportunity to restructure programs, in

¹⁴ This conclusion is a personal one, made by me as a result of my knowledge of this issue based upon experience gained during these negotiations.

order to bring them into congruence with their philosophy of management. Program review has been utilized as a vehicle to cancel or restructure programs which have been perceived as having inherent inefficiencies, or which have been viewed as difficult to administer. This process has provided the government with an opportunity to advance its principles of leveraging and partnership, restructuring the relationships it has with many external organizations and other levels of government.

The Liberal government has approached the issue of the role of the federal government from an holistic perspective. It has devolved a substantial amount of authority, creating new relationships between federal and provincial governments. These new relationships have the potential to create a de facto delegation of responsibilities to provincial governments not far from those envisioned in the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords. The difference in this case is that the government has retained constitutional authority, and ultimate financial control over these areas of responsibility. One example of this trend has been negotiations relating to the transfer of responsibility for employment and labour market programming to the provinces. The government introduced a new framework for employment programming in 1996, which was premised upon the devolution of substantial responsibility and resources, previously managed federally, to the provincial governments. The federal government mandated responsibility for the negotiation of these agreements to the department of Human Resources Development, specifically to the Directors General of each province. As of April 1997, agreements for the hand-over of this major responsibility have been concluded with four provinces, Alberta, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, and Quebec. Agreements with the remaining provinces are expected by the summer of 1997. While the federal government has opted to concentrate on large scale federal transfer programs, provincial and local governments have now taken on increased responsibility for specific allocative tasks (Lane: 1995: 146).

Many reforms initiated by the federal government in Canada have concentrated on a decentralization approach, and easing the burden of governance at the federal level.

Another example of this trend had been the decision of the federal government to withdraw federal services in the area of subsidized housing programs. This would appear to be the case within Canada today, as the federal government utilizes devolution and partnership agreements in order to decrease the complexity of its responsibilities. The government has also moved from an active to a more passive role in many sectors.

One result of these changes is that federal government administration will be less concerned in the future with the details of programs and services, and more with a very general accounting for the manner in which partnered resources are spent. The role of federal public servants is shifting toward that of facilitator, as they broker agreements and provide support to framework programs actually operated by external bodies. In return, it would appear that government expects not only responsiveness and support from public administration, but also expects "partisan" support for its programs when pitching them to external audiences and potential partners (Aucoin: 1995). This expectation has been evident within the official communications of the federal government.

The 1995/96 federal budget made significant cuts to the budget of Human Resource Development Canada. Spending was to be reduced by \$600 million within 1995/96 and by \$1.1 billion in 1996/97 and 1997/98. As a result, in August of 1995, following a process of "service delivery network rationalization," a new national Human Resource Centre network was announced. Local public servants were expected to communicate the rationale for these changes to local community partners. Print advertising and local communications packages accompanying the announcement positioned the changes as an improvement in service,¹⁵ when in reality many offices were

¹⁵ The full-page advertisements, which ran in regional and national Canadian magazines in August and September of 1995, were titled: "WE'RE CHANGING TO SERVE YOU BETTER."

closing. The introduction of new voice-mail and self-service kiosks in locations which previously had staffed offices allowed the government to make this claim on what was a highly political issue among the government's Members of Parliament. Although the news release for the announcement acknowledges, in its final paragraph, that the changes to the network were a result of budget reductions,¹⁶ departmental managers within the federal public administration were directed to pass on the political message of service improvements to communities and partners. In a letter dated August 14, 1995, the clerk of the Privy Council, Jocelyne Bourgon, wrote to the Deputy Minister of the Department of Human Resources Development Canada, in order to: "...congratulate you for the excellent work you and your Minister have carried out to streamline your department's service delivery network." The media were not as supportive, and the headline in the national newspaper The Globe and Mail on a story relating to the announcement ran under the headline: "3,500 at job centres face axe: Ottawa plans self-serve computer terminals for employment seekers, pensioners."¹⁷

The federal government has also reviewed its role within large income redistribution programs like the Canada Pension Plan, Employment Insurance, and tax programs. Within its early mandate the Liberal government issued: Improving Social Security in Canada: A Discussion Paper (Canada: 1994), and then initiated a process of "Social Security Review" which engaged stakeholders in a redefinition of the way that these federal programs were managed. The changes which have come about as a result of these reviews have had a significant impact on the manner in which these programs are managed, and in some cases a shift has occurred in the methods of resourcing these

¹⁶ The August 2, 1995 news release from the Office of the Minister of Human Resources Development Canada, concludes with the paragraph: "'The new service delivery network enables HRDC to achieve the administrative savings set out in the February 1995 budget,'" Mr. Axworthy said. At the same time, it will allow us to maintain our quality of service to Canadians."

¹⁷ This story ran on the front page of The Globe and Mail on August 3, 1995.

programs. One area where the government has chosen to greatly strengthen their dedication of resources has been the investigation and control of fraudulent claims upon the government. Not only has the federal government greatly enhanced the capacity of its own departments to identify and prosecute those persons who willingly abuse the system, it has also fostered the development of information-sharing agreements with provincial/territorial governments and among federal departments in order to identify irregularities. Programs are now being designed with consideration given to enforcement issues at the outset. This has involved a major shift in policy development for the federal government.

Government has reached a point where broad institutional management reforms and not strictly budget cuts are its ultimate goal. This may result in the application of some public service reforms which will end up costing money (Lane: 1995). The government has chosen to justify increased expenditures in some areas of public administration, investments in new training and development regimes for managers for example,¹⁸ in order to support its philosophical commitment to this new managerialist ideological approach.

Today and in the future, the proactive role which Canadian public administration plays on the international scene will become increasingly important (Paquet: 1995), especially within the foreign affairs arena. As well, both public administration and government in general have been increasingly pressured to operate in an open and exposed form of governance (Aucoin: 1995). There has been a loss of anonymity among

¹⁸ In communications to employees as a part of the 1995/96 budget reduction process, the development of a new "Human Resources Management Vision" was highlighted. The message that investment in employees would become a new theme of management was articulated in the document: A Framework for Managing Workforce Reductions at HRDC (HRDC: April 1995: pp. 1): "Achieving this highly skilled, multi-disciplinary and empowered work force to serve Canadians will require a significant investment in our staff...The ultimate goal is to create a high performance workplace where people are committed to achieving HRDC's goals because they have been given opportunities to heighten their abilities, potential, and independence."

public sector managers brought about by increased media scrutiny and greater demands for public responsiveness.

Although managerialism and a cooperative approach to change in public management with government bode well for public administration managers, there are concerns that many initiatives now going ahead have not been well thought through. The fact that the values inherent in managerialism have been embraced today by both public administration and government have facilitated some rapid changes in the structure and function of public administration. As the government continues to devolve responsibilities for program areas like employment programming to the provinces, the potential ability of future governments to reverse this trend is weakened. As a result, Canadian society is now committed to a certain degree to these arrangements, even if values shift in the future.

Concern about political control over the bureaucracy is repeated within public administration literature as a common concern of governments (Savoie: 1994). A shift to managerialism on the part of government or public administration, however, does not directly address this concern. Managerialism offers individual communities increased local responsiveness through improved relationships with government. While this may appeal to today's Members of Parliament, who see the potential for their constituents to receive better service, there is a potential conflict between the separation of the respective roles of public administration and government in the future. Managerialism, taken to its ideal, involves the implementation of cyclical planning processes, which should not face significant interruption from centrally mandated changes in agenda, policy, or budget. This may prove to be problematic within a government system which at times may have difficulty maintaining a sustained direction over a period of a few months, never mind over a period of a few years (Paton and Jelking: 1994).

An evaluation of the effectiveness of the managerial approach will need to take place over an extended period of time. The benefits of this approach may be expected to

become evident at the local level, and presumably may be aggregated for reporting purposes in order to assess an overall effect. This type of overarching change is a significantly different from the incremental method of adaptation previously prominent in public administration. The fact that many programs are being re-engineered, at the same time that processes are being improved, will make evaluation even more difficult.

It is inevitable that the future will bring changes in the values and priorities of society. Programs being designed at this point may not be judged to be effective in the future. The concepts embodied in many of today's reforms have opened up new avenues and alternatives for public sector managers. Within the phase of cooperative change, both government and public administration have embraced the promotion of a managerial approach to administration. The experience of dealing with these arrangements will increase the depth of the public sector management experience. Government and public administration have entered a phase in which they are both undergoing a continual process of "administrative" or "institutional" policy-making (Lane: 1995). Through this experience government and public administration may be expected to be able to incorporate a more diverse and integrated approach which will allow them to deal more effectively with the multifaceted needs of society (Painter: 1994). The specific values associated with the ideal type of managerialism have clearly influenced both government and public administration, however the realities of the environment in which the respective players operate is such that a complete shift toward this type of management style is prevented. To this point it is not evident that a complete shift to the values of managerialism is any more possible than it was to operate public administrations of the past strictly based upon the tenants of traditional administration.

Three Phases Later: Are We There Yet?

The last fifteen years have brought significant changes to the practice of public administration. The philosophy of management has shifted strongly to an endorsement of

managerial concepts and values. Techniques for government management of public administration have shifted from the imposition of centralized management initiatives to cooperative change. The culture and environment within which public managers work has shifted from one of conflict to one more reflective of cooperative values with government.

The three phases which have been outlined in this chapter illustrate a change in attitude regarding the management of public service. There has been a shift to focus on identification of what the public service does, how to secure value for money, and how to provide better service (Doig: 1995). The value ascribed to the functions of public administration have changed. The activity of management is now recognized as being a separate skill, distinct from the knowledge or experience gained within a line department. Managers are now being assessed on criteria including their ability to create successful partnerships and operate more efficiently.

Recent changes in public administration will eventually result in increased participation opportunities within the political process. As bottom-up feedback becomes entrenched, as managerialism promises, public administration will take on the role of enabler for its constituent groups. This process will serve to appease both the extreme right and left wings of the political spectrum, which both have as a goal increased opportunities for participation at the community level (Aucoin: 1995).

In many ways these developments within Canadian public administration have followed international developments. Within a continually changing environment management practices are bound to face significant reform. It is evident that government and public administration can affect much greater degrees of change when they are working toward the same goals. Within phase one, government's management reform initiatives were stifled by an antagonistic public administration. During phase two public administration tinkered with new initiatives at the local level but faced many constraints which restricted the wider application of managerialist initiatives. Phase three, however,

represents the combined efforts of public administration and government to forge new relationships through a holistic approach to the review of programming. Although this approach has been shown to be somewhat problematic, it has created a greater degree of change than either of the two previous phases. At this point it is logical to conclude that strict adherence to the managerialist ideal does not guarantee an innately efficient and effective form of governance. Government is such a diverse activity, that it is necessary to consider a number of other factors when evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of a management approach.

Considering the fact that public administration has faced some significant reforms within the past fifteen years, the issue of the definition of an accountability framework looms large. The new philosophy and approach accompanying the acceptance of the managerialist approach have an effect on accountability relationships and processes. Scholars have begun to express concern about the normative implications of entrepreneurial public administration and streamlined government on public administration in general. Managerial and traditional administration clearly represent oppositional philosophies on a number of fronts. Clarification of the expectations of citizens and governments on public administration is therefore an issue of paramount importance.

In 1992 Donald Savoie predicted that Canadian public administration would become: "increasingly knowledge-based, composed largely of specialists who will plan and monitor their own performance through feedback from colleagues and clients" (Savoie: 1992: p. 9). That point was quickly reached, and the next phase of public administration has already begun. Through the provision of alternative ways of looking at the worth ascribed to the activities of governance, managerialism promises to impact significantly on the activity of the management of public administration. The future of public administration will be considered further in chapter three of this paper.

CHAPTER TWO: VISIONS OF ACCOUNTABILITY

The managerialist paradigm has changed the environment in which public administration functions. As a result, the relationships which departments have with their Ministers, Members of Parliament, interest groups, communities, citizens, and with other bureaux, are evolving. Public sector managers in Canada have to adapt to these changing expectations, and therefore the articulation of a new accountability framework for public administration is of critical importance. This chapter examines the origins of the concept of accountability within government, what elements the term encompasses, the effects of managerial administration on accountability, and the relationship of these values to others implicit within the political system.

Growth and Development of Accountability

Accountability is a complex concept which has played an important role in the development of public administration in North America. The tension between accountability and effective action has been cited as "the classic dilemma of public administration" (Self: 1972: pp. 278). History has shown that, given the opportunity, those in power may exploit the resources of government according to their personal interests. The American revolution was brought about, in part, by a dissatisfaction that Americans had with the way the British were administering the affairs of the colonies, in fact a dispute about bad public administration. This fundamental issue was debated during the formation of an independent American government. Within The Federalist Papers there are a number of references to the importance of good administration, including that within Paper #68 which reads: "...the true test of a good government is its aptitude and tendency to produce a good administration."¹⁹

In the late 1800s the Canadian civil service was rife with patronage (Kernaghan: 1991). Appointments, made or bought through personal and political connections, gave

¹⁹ This quotation is taken from paper #68: Hamilton, in Clinton Rossiter (Ed.) The Federalist Papers: Hamilton, Madison, Jay (Mentor, Scarborough, 1961), pp. 414.

certain people personal advantages in the affairs of government. In an attempt to create some order within the public realm, the 1908 Civil Service Act established the Civil Service Commission, and rules relating to the employment and activities of public servants. A 1918 amendment placed most civil servants in Canada under these regulations. At this point, when the public service was still relatively small and expertise was largely a function of experience within its ranks, hierarchical accountability was seen to provide an effective means of controlling its activities.

Until the 1940s the Canadian public service maintained the character of an administrative hierarchy. Following the Second World War and the influx of large numbers of university graduates recruited in the 1950s, it gained a much more specialized and professional character. At this point traditional hierarchical standards began to compete with the relationships that professionals and specialists had with their peers. Government had to adapt in order to accept the legitimacy of this new influence. The character of the management cadre also changed, as supervision became a more varied responsibility.

In the 1970s the Canadian government centralized control over its federal administrative apparatus, acknowledging the need for "accountability, review and assessment" mechanisms (Morgan: 1986: pp. 119). The high degree of political leadership exercised over the affairs of public administration led to the criticism that "comprehensive, long-range social and economic planning" was being neglected (Prethus: 1973: pp. 60).

As governance has become increasingly complex, and governments have struggled with their responsibility to control public administration, rules and regulations were introduced which limited the latitude that public sector managers had to potentially make bad decisions (Savoie: 1992). Over time, "mechanisms for promoting administrative accountability [had] emerged largely in an *ad hoc*, uncoordinated fashion to cope with the gradual expansion of bureaucratic power" (Kernaghan: 1991: p. 161).

The 1960s and 1970s also saw, along with the birth of the civil rights movement, a wider recognition of individual rights in general, and an increased expectation that government would be responsive to the needs and desires of its citizens. With the introduction of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, this responsibility to citizens became constitutionally enshrined (Cooper: 1995). Today there is an expectation that governments will react to the needs and desires of communities affected by its decisions.

Different expectations are placed upon managers within the public and private sectors in Canada. Public administration has to cope with additional responsibilities, including: assurance of a certain degree of equality of treatment for citizens, the wise and efficient use of public funds, confidentiality and discretion, and the inclusion of fairness as an element of program delivery. Public administration is also expected to respect and follow the directions of governments quickly, while providing longer term continuity of the public's interests. It is required to promote the values of equality, stability, reliability, responsibility, flexibility, and adaptability.

There is no contract or framework which outlines the expectations of, or the responsibilities placed upon, the federal public administration in Canada. Accountability can be extremely variable, and many responsibilities of public administration are more implicit than explicit. The values inherent within the managerialist approach have had a significant impact on public administration, both from the perspective of internal and external expectations.

At this point it is clear that society and government have found the accountability of public administration to be a cause for concern. Government has sought to make public administration accountable mainly through the imposition of centralized controls and restrictive covenants. This is, however, only a very general and incomplete picture of a very complex subject. Only through a more detailed examination of accountability is it possible to consider the implication of this important subject for the future of governance.

Revisiting the Basic Elements of Accountability

Accountability is a concept comprised of many elements. Relationships, process, and timing have all played a part in the development of an accountability framework for government. These elements are reflective of values inherent in society and within the political process. The introduction of the managerialist paradigm has had a significant effect on the manner in which these elements come together to form an overarching accountability framework. Managerialism has contributed to the types of tools and techniques which are available to managers, and it has placed a different emphasis on the manner in which accountability is measured and controlled.

Relationships

Public managers work within a matrix of accountability relationships. They can have accountability relationships: up, to Ministers and the government; down, to their constituencies and citizens in general; and across, to their professions and personal ethics. Accountability relationships can be nebulous and temporary, as they constantly change with the political environment. The challenge of government within the framework of managerialism will be to articulate those accountability relationships which are both desirable and necessary, and to design a framework and process in order to support public administration within its role.

Accountability-up

Accountability-up has traditionally been embodied in the concept of Ministerial responsibility. In order to ensure effective governance, public administration has ultimately been responsible for its actions to either a Minister or an elected body of government. In turn, the Minister was held responsible to the government for the actions of his/her department. Ministers have theoretically exercised ultimate and complete control over their departments. The concept of ministerial responsibility basically states that a Minister gives public administration the responsibility to undertake certain duties in

order to define and implement public policy, but that the Minister remains the ultimate source of authority. The concept of accountability-up, inherent in the traditional view of public administration, has been significantly influenced by the introduction of managerialism.

Historically, a key aspect of accountability-up was the responsibility for, and accounting of, the government's fiscal resources. Today, however, the broader concept of decision-making also forms an important element of this concept. Ministerial responsibility has also extended to general practices of good and responsible management, including such values as privacy, confidentiality, equality, and fairness.

Within traditional public administration theory there was an incentive for a Minister and senior departmental executives to control the activities of their subordinates. Managerialism has had significant impacts for accountability-up with relation to its impacts on new organizational structures and technology. The more hierarchical an organization is, the more simple the execution of Ministerial responsibility. Managerialism has led to a reduction in the structural hierarchy of organizations. This has reduced the capacity of management to actively control the activities of subordinates. New technologies also increased the span of control for managers, and created new communications flows which created opportunities for the subversion of traditional top-down communications flows. Electronic mail, for example, was quickly embraced by federal public servants. The capacities of electronic mail within government have allowed employees to quickly share information across traditional boundaries. This ability to quickly relay information throughout organizations informally has increased the pressure on all public service managers to communicate thoroughly and effectively with their employees on matters of key importance.

Issues relating to staffing and employees deserve specific mention, as many traditional accountability measures were related to the special and privileged relationship that government had with its employees. Hiring, promotion, and reward structures were

geared toward the concept of public sector employment as life-long commitment. Public servants were expected to make a commitment to political neutrality, follow stringent conflict of interest regulations, and to refrain from participating in the political process with respect to any issues relating to their employment. In return employees could expect stable employment with advancement based upon adherence to the merit principle.

The difficulty of holding Ministers accountable for all that goes on within their departments has been evident for some time. Strict accountability-up becomes more difficult to control the further employees are from the centre of an organization. It is evident that the closer public servants are to the "front-line," of service delivery, the more accountable they feel to those that they serve. The question of whether Ministerial accountability can work effectively within a large, complex, decentralized organization, has been an issue for some time. Managerialism has forced a further loosening of strict managerial control as more responsibilities are pushed out to lower levels of management, however the doctrine of Ministerial responsibility has survived.

It is possible that the values of managerialism may not be compatible with strict accountability-up. "One reason why Canadian governments have made only modest progress in implementing participative forms of management is official concern that the bottom-up participative approach to decision-making is incompatible with the responsibility of ministers for the acts of departmental officials" (Kernaghan: 1992).

Although Ministers and the government continue to profess that they are accountable for their departments, today it is unclear exactly what that means. Ministers have not been expected to have been aware of issues of which they were not informed by their subordinates. The Al Mashat Affair²⁰ and the Somalia Inquiry are two examples of situations where Ministers have been satisfied to allow their managers to take

²⁰ For a review of the accountability implications of this case see S.L. Sutherland, "The Al-Mashat affair: administrative accountability in parliamentary institutions" in *Canadian Public Administration*, Vol. 34, No. 4, Winter, pp. 573 - 603.

responsibility for events which transpired within their departments. At this time the concept of Ministerial responsibility is necessarily vague, as expectations of Ministers shift from situation to situation.

Accountability-up has traditionally been enforced through the development of processes which have served as constraints on the behavior of public servants. Central agencies have developed with the primary role of coordination and structuring of processes for federal government departments. Human resource matters, as an example, have been notoriously highly structured, with the central Public Service Commission ensuring the standardization of human resource practices across the public service. As the influence of the managerialist paradigm has spread, the controls offered by these central agencies has begun to diminish. Many processes which once were highly routinized now involve the discretion of individual departmental managers. Constraints in the area of budgeting, for example, have softened considerably. While at one time managers were totally restricted by line-object codes which specified the exact use of each portion of their budget allotment, the use of more flexible accounting measures has now increased the ability of managers to move money between priorities within their own scope of authority.

While the provision of policy advice to government is generally considered an aspect of accountability-up, managerialism has introduced the concept that incorporation of feedback from the front-lines is a necessary element of effective policy-making. A process in which front line employees input to the determination of policy is one "rooted in accurate reasoning and real experience" (Moore: 1995: pp. 55), which considers practical experience to ensure that strengths are exploited and inefficiencies are addressed. The concept that managers are accountable for feedback and communications, which may include criticism of existing policies, is an important element of managerialism. This new arrangement has the potential to introduce competing loyalties

into the policy-making process. This subject will be further examined later in this chapter.

Although accountability-up has consistently played a role within the history of the Canadian political system, this concept has undergone some dramatic changes. Responsibility for substantive decision-making has been decentralized, and individual public servants have been called to account for their actions. It is not reasonable to expect that a Minister can know about everything that is going on in a modern-day government department, and certainly one cannot be expected to be in control of all of a department's activities. The new relationship which has developed, however, has not been clearly articulated or understood. This vagueness could pose substantial problems in the future, as the federal government within Canada increasingly devolves resources and responsibility for the delivery of programming to the provinces and external partners. If the federal government hopes to maintain any sort of national standards for this programming, it will have to explicitly specify the responsibilities devolved along with program responsibilities.

Accountability-up relationships have traditionally formed the backbone of responsibility and the primary method through which federal government departments may be called to account for their actions. As the implications of the Canadian federal government and federal public administration's continued shift toward the managerial administration paradigm becomes more clear, the concept of accountability-up will clearly require revision. If accountability-up is to act as an effective guide or constraint on the activities, the respective responsibilities of all parties delivering federal government programs will need to be clarified.

Accountability-down

Accountability-down denotes an element of responsibility to the public, citizens, and consumers of government services. Elements of Canadian federal public

administration relate to diverse constituencies. Some central agencies, for example the Privy Council Office, relate almost exclusively with Ministers and their Deputies, while others like the department of Human Resources Development, are largely decentralized and deal directly with many citizens across the country. Accountability-down recognizes the fact that it is desirable for public administration to act in a manner that is responsive to those people or groups which it serves. The issue, in this case, is a matter of whether and how government can enforce the accountability-down responsibilities of public administration (Gruber: 1987).

Public administration has developed both formal and informal relationships with its constituents. Accountability-down relationships can be viewed as a continuum, from those which lack any formal structure to those which are highly structured. At its most informal, an accountability-down relationship could involve casual information-sharing or discussion with external groups on certain issues. In a highly structured scenario, public administration faces strict constitutional, legal and procedural requirements forcing it to act in a certain manner.

When the highly-structured mechanism of legal enforcement is cited as a tool of accountability, it is usually thought of with relation to accountability-up and not accountability-down. There have been suggestions, however, that recent shifts like introduction of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, have legally entrenched elements of accountability-down (Cooper: 1995). This emphasis on the rights of individuals and certain groups within society has created, in some cases, constraints on the actions of public administration. While managerialism supports the concept that accountability-down be strengthened, it is not evident that it would support the imposition of mechanisms which would constrain and restrict the ability of public administration to act in an efficient and unencumbered manner. Legal enforcement of accountability-down would most likely take the form of a guarantee of rights, services, or representation to certain individuals or groups. This responsibility would constrain the ability of public

administration to have the freedom to continually evaluate and modify the manner in which its programs are managed. Under this scenario it would become increasingly difficult to change a process if that action effectively removed the "rights" of a group to influence or control federal government programming.

Accountability-down, especially a form of accountability to citizens and constituents which is highly structured, presents a threat to the primacy of accountability-up. When federal government departments are expected to make decisions relating to the needs of their clients, the line between political and administrative issues becomes blurred. Today and in the future, public administration managers who are involved in a dialogue with their constituents, and who have input into policy-decisions, will present a prime lobbying opportunity for special interest groups. As public administration increasingly acts in partnership with its constituencies, the legitimacy of its ability to present the voice of its communities is greatly enhanced (Lindquist: 1992). This change causes tension between public administrators and politicians, as both may claim to represent the best interests of the community. Scholars have suggested that the best way to resolve this problem is to define the limits of customer influence within the managerial process (Pollitt: 1985). The Canadian government has also tried to address this situation by shifting responsibility for these programs to a different level of government. In the past, for example, decisions about the federal purchase of seats in training programs offered by public and private educational institutions, relating to employment programming, were made by federal public servants. This process set up a conflict between national and provincial training priorities. In order to resolve this problem, the government has now devolved responsibility for the purchase of training to the provinces, which have a constitutional responsibility for education.

Although the concept of accountability-down has not yet generated many studies or analyses, the British system has solidified accountability-down and a number of its concepts within its Citizen's Charter. The Charter was introduced in 1991 as an initiative

of the Prime Minister, although it has no formal legal status. The stated purpose of the Charter has been to clarify what British citizens can expect from their public administration relating to four themes: quality, choice, standards, and value. Following the introduction of the Next Steps initiatives to reform British public administration, the Charter appears to have been an attempt to ensure the public that the neo-conservative actions of the Conservative government would not jeopardize the rights of citizens with respect to "good" and responsive government. Although no legislation relating to the Charter concepts has been planned, during its life the document has been highlighted as a priority by the British government. At this point no corresponding statement of expectations has been presented by the Canadian government.

In order to assure the responsiveness of public administration to its constituents, within the British system five key management mechanisms have been identified with the maintenance of accountability-down responsibilities: 1) the function of ombudspersons; 2) audit/monitoring by external bodies; 3) the disclosure of full information to the public; 4) the use of tribunals to arbitrate disputes; and 5) the critique of outputs by a politically literate public (Reid: 1992). These mechanisms present constituents with a number of preventative or redress options with regard to the responsiveness of public administration. In addition, the accountability-down responsibilities of public administration are monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis through these measures.

There are an infinite number of practical outcomes along this continuum, as the approach taken within Canada to the issue of accountability-down has been to apply different expectations and parameters to the many specific activities performed by public administration. To this point, however, the introduction of the managerial administration paradigm has only produced implicit expectations relating to accountability-down responsibilities. Programs which begin as loosely structured ideas, and are developed

through input from stakeholders,²¹ will be finalized in an environment over which the federal government and its administration do not have total control. For this reason it will be important that the federal government articulates clearly its expectation with respect to the responsibilities of each party to an agreement.

Through negotiations with partners over the terms of program delivery, the federal government is displaying a certain degree of responsiveness to the principle of accountability-down. There is still an expectation on behalf of society in general, however, that the interests of all citizens, and not just the interests of representative organizations or governments, will be protected. The structuring of accountability-down mechanisms, as a responsibility of those groups partnering with government in the delivery of programming, will become an issue of concern in the future.

Accountability-down denotes that relationship which public administration has with its constituents and citizens. Managerialism has highlighted the importance of this concept with relation to the efficiencies to be gained through the effect of consultation with clients. The degree of formality with which these relationships are entrenched will have a significant impact on the structuring, process, and outputs of public administration. To this point within Canada there has not been an overarching effort to outline or quantify the responsibility of government to citizens, or to create sanctioned redress mechanisms for disaffected constituents, as has been the case in some other countries. As the shift to the managerial administration paradigm within federal Canadian public administration continues, the expectations of managers will need to be

²¹ Examples of this type of agreement include the federal child care initiative, and the Framework Agreements on Native Education and Training. In order to secure the support of its partners within these programs, the federal government initially proposed programs which had only very broad parameters. The specifics of each program were negotiated with representatives of each group. In each of these situations the federal government had to negotiate with a number of partners. As a result, in each case there were a number of variations among the final agreements in each situation.

clarified with regard to the accountability which they are expected to have to their clients and partners in delivery.

Accountability-across

Accountability-across²² signifies the external environment which effects and guides the decision-making and performance of public servants. Elements of accountability-across include professional/technical value systems, ethics, and the cultural ethos of the workplace. Separate from a responsibility to one's employer or clients, the activities of public servants are controlled to some degree by the norms and values which have been internalized through education, training, and personal experience. Accountability-across mechanisms have been viewed as having tremendous potential as an effective constraint on the behavior of public servants. The seminal debate on this issue took place between Friedrich and Finer in the late 1930s. Finer thought that the use of strict controls on bureaucracy were necessary to prevent the abuse of power. Friedrich saw subjective responsibility, accountability to the public, and professional and personal ethics as the most effective way to control accountability. Finer advocated centralizing control, while Friedrich believed that "administrative responsibility can be more effectively elicited than enforced."²³

Many public servants are now specialists and professionals in their own field of study. In addition to their relationships at work, the members of these professions share specific information and technical expertise among themselves as a group. Professional groups may share common education and training, belong to the same associations, and utilize the same reference material. When an employee utilizes knowledge and values gained by virtue of association with other specialists or technicians, it will have an impact on the manner in which decisions are made and work is carried out. Growing

²² Also referred to as 'accountability out' in Mitchell (1992).

²³ A summary of the Friedrich/Finer debates is provided in Kernaghan (1991), pp. 319 - 321.

professionalization has resulted in cadres of professionals that, as groups (across departmental and regional separations), make recommendations and determine standards for management (Lane: 1995: pp. 166).

Another element of accountability across is the sense of personal ethics. Ethics involve the value system to which people subscribe, and their fundamental beliefs about what constitutes appropriate behavior under various circumstances. Accountability-across is a highly personal and subjective issue, and may vary considerably even among members of the same profession.

Ethics form one part of the frame of reference that individuals consult when making decisions. They play the role of a behavioral constraint, restricting the actions of individuals to those which are felt to be appropriate under the circumstances. The experience and background which an individual has will affect his personal ethics (Todres: 1992). Traditionally ethical standards in the public service were felt to be stricter or more rigorous than those adhered to within the private sector.

As the values of managerialism become more dominant within the public sector there is some concern that it will be difficult to maintain distinct public sector ethical standards. As more business oriented values mix with public service values, it is argued, there is a concern that social values of equity and fairness will be lost (Painter: 1994), and that these changes will negatively impact the public service's traditional ethical framework (Doig: 1995). In addition, as employees shift increasingly between public and private roles, behavioral expectations will continue to undergo modifications as the private sector culture evolves. Today there is no consensus among managers as to what constitutes acceptable and appropriate behavior within the civil service environment (Doig: 1995).

Ethics are identified as a part of the accountability-across relationship through which the actions of individuals are constrained by their professional relationships or personal beliefs. Regardless of the orientation of those beliefs, behavior will be affected

by them. There has always been a diversity of ethical viewpoints within the public sector, and more important to identify the effect that a blurring of the distinction between the norms of the public and private sectors may have upon the manner in which public administration functions.

While there have been concerns expressed about the boundaries of proper conduct, much of the literature addressing this subject has centred around lament for loss of a public sector cultural ethos. Change in public administration culture has resulted in employees operating in an environment of uncertainty. Employment distinctions, which in the past have made public sector employment unique, are fading. The new managerial paradigm does not focus on ethics or cultural ethos, except in those situations where the success or failure of an initiative may be affected by a negative operational environment.

Accountability-across plays an important role in the structuring of decision-making and action within public administration. The three main components of accountability-across (professional/technical association, personal ethics, and cultural ethos) illustrate potential accountability management opportunities within public administration. The contrast of private and public cultural ethos will become an increasingly important issue as the public sector becomes inculcated with private sector norms and expectations. As an example, issues which will require clarification include the distinctions which must be maintained between personal and professional relationships when one is making policy recommendations to government, and the specific responsibilities which come with responsibility for administration of public accounts.

The potential power of accountability-across to elicit certain responses may eventually be shown to be superior to that provided by either accountability-up or down, and may very well be shown to act both as a predictor and control of public administration. In order to fully understand and take advantage of accountability-across a framework of explanation needs to be constructed relating to this subject. This schema

would include an analysis of the effects of professional associations, ethics, and culture on the activities of public servants. In addition, it would be helpful if this sort of framework could examine the effect of managerialism on both the elements of accountability-across and the constraints on actions generated by this environment.

Relationships and relativity

A review of accountability relationships (up, down and across) contributes to an understanding of the competing demands placed upon public administration. As more of an emphasis of late has been placed on the responsibility of public administration to citizens, the potential for conflict with Ministerial responsibility has become a concern. As the federal government increasingly utilizes general framework agreements in order to deliver its programming through partners and other levels of government, the role played by these third parties adds another element of complexity to the concept of accountability relationships. This issue will raise the question of the degree to which the federal government can and should influence or control the accountability framework parameters of programming which it does not wholly resource or deliver.

The accountability relationships which exist within the culture of Canadian public administration are only vaguely defined, and as such they are remarkably flexible. Thus, the introduction of managerialism has taken place without a great deal of upheaval relating to traditional accountability relationships. Changes associated with the introduction of the managerial administration paradigm, however, have been substantial enough that they have prompted the call for a clarification of the federal public sector accountability framework and process.

Process

Historically the need for accountability within government is obvious. In the early stages of public administration theory and practice it was not evident that enforcement measures, such as the strict application of Ministerial responsibility, would

be the best means of ensuring accountability. The most effective way to handle the issue of accountability has been debated for some time. Today, as the managerial paradigm changes that way that governance is conducted, traditional rules and regulations which were put into place to elicit accountability are being dismantled. At this point, therefore, it is necessary to examine the implications which managerialism has had on both formal and informal accountability mechanisms.

The fact that traditional public administration theory and the new managerialism promote different values and goals has an impact on the expectations placed on federal public servants. The theory of management relating to traditional public administration was conducive to the strict application of rules controlling the actions of public managers. Today, however, managers face new complex issues at the same time that many traditional rules are being reduced or removed, resulting in a dramatic reduction in traditional checks and balances (Doig: 1995). This is happening at the same time that public managers are expected to forge new relationships with their constituents, and traditional ethical and cultural frameworks are undergoing substantial change. Private sector perspectives are being introduced into the public sector context, and various organizations which are changing in different ways at different times are faced with diverse issues relating to accountability.

Financial management is often cited as an indicator of accountability shifts. The entire process surrounding resource procurement has changed for many government departments. If the trend toward self-financing programs continues, for example employment programming being paid for from the Employment Insurance account, there is the potential for even greater budget responsibility to be passed directly to public sector managers.

Many human resource management measures previously instituted standardly across public administration, in order to ensure honesty and neutrality in the public service, have been diluted or removed. These measures included fixed salaries, rules of

procedure, permanence of tenure, restraints on the power of line management, and clear lines of distinction between public and private sectors (Hood: 1991). The speed and complexity of changes, and the resulting removal of many processes previously put into place to assure checks and balances; for example hierarchical reporting structures and actions closely bounded by rules; have resulted in managers having to deal with new challenges within a new culture.

Managers throughout Canadian public administration have also been expected to take on many new administrative roles previously subject to central controls, including strategic planning, financial management, human resource management, and purchasing. They have been faced with turbulence and volatility in terms of their own job security, as reductions have taken place within the middle-management ranks. The reward system within public administration has been restructured in order to recognize new managerial skills like customer service, speed of delivery, cost-cutting, and performance by results (Doig: 1995).

The structure of the framework of accountability within Canadian public administration is largely informal. The philosophy of government and citizens creates expectations which are enforced through informal means. As Friedrich argued, informal mechanisms can be a very effective way to elicit accountability. In this situation value shifts create the need for continual adaptations on a personal and informal level. Within a changing environment, however, where values may compete and at times conflict, it can be very challenging for managers to sort out their role. As managerialism introduces new values into public administration, they become a part of a system within which many different values compete for political recognition.

There is concern that traps for public servants, related to the influence on managerialism on formal and informal accountability structures, exist within this new operational environment.

[Managers] can be caught: between established formal policies and temporary political maneuvers to address public opinion demands; between accountability constraints on discretion and demands for more flexible performance based on behavior in response to customer demand; between expert knowledge and experience and a rising and often ill-informed populism; between demands for rapid responses and expectations of expanded consultation and participation; and between demands for earlier and more open dissemination of critical information and punishment by the press of unrefined policy and management proposals that find their way into the public light.²⁴

Public servants are now being asked to facilitate the development of partnership arrangements, and are put into the position of promoting government programs to other levels of government and communities. As such, they are effectively structuring the relationships these third parties will have with government. As federal employment programming is transferred to the provinces, many current federal employees will become provincial employees. As these public servants begin to deliver programs provincially what they used to deliver federally, it is evident that they will face different political expectations from government. It will be interesting to see how federal concerns, bilingualism for example, are handled by the provinces once they have taken over responsibility for this programming.

As a source of continuity and experience in specific policy areas, a middle-man between government and communities, public administration is bound to become involved in issues of public interest. Although informal accountability mechanisms play a role in public administration's relationships with constituents and communities, the boundaries and limitations set by the government will need to guide public administration in this role. The situation may arise where public administration, acting on behalf of public interests, would be placed in a position of opposition to the direction of the government. Although some scholars advocate that accountability be structured in a

²⁴ This information came from Cooper (1995), who credits Aucoin in a 1993 presentation to the Canadian Centre for Management Development.

manner which will not engulf the public service in politics (Aucoin: 1995: 45), in reality the evolving role of public administration is very political. Instead of attempting to restrict the involvement of the public sector in political issues, the goal of government and public administration should be to structure accountability in a manner which ensures that the expectations and responsibilities of managers are clearly defined.

Managerialism has created an opportunity to revisit a number of accountability issues, specifically because of the new relationships being formed between the public and private sectors. Some of the specific changes brought about by managerialism which will have an impact on the accountability framework of the public sector are:

- 1) new personal behaviors and attitudes
- 2) agency independence in decision-making
- 3) privatization and commercialization of activities
- 4) information technology (with private sector norms)
- 5) arms length relationships
- 6) private delivery of public services
- 7) access and private sector accountability (access to company's private records, etc.)
- 8) political objectives (desire to maintain standards & some control)

(Doig: 1995).

Various trends affecting our political system today will also impact conceptions of accountability on an ongoing basis. Current political trends with the potential to affect accountability structures include: weakening of political parties, separation of interest groups from parties, breakdown of party discipline, increasing personalization of the Prime Minister, character and uses of public opinion polls.²⁵ In addition, increased sensationalist investigative reporting by the media, which has come to view itself as a public watchdog, has the potential to impact the development of an accountability

²⁵ Once again, Cooper credits Aucoin's 1993 presentation with the identification of these trends.

framework. Increasingly the media has utilized its right to pursue access to information requests, in order to call public administration to account for its actions. Public servants, frustrated with the actions of the government have also at times resorted to leaking information to the press, in order to bring certain issues into the public domain.

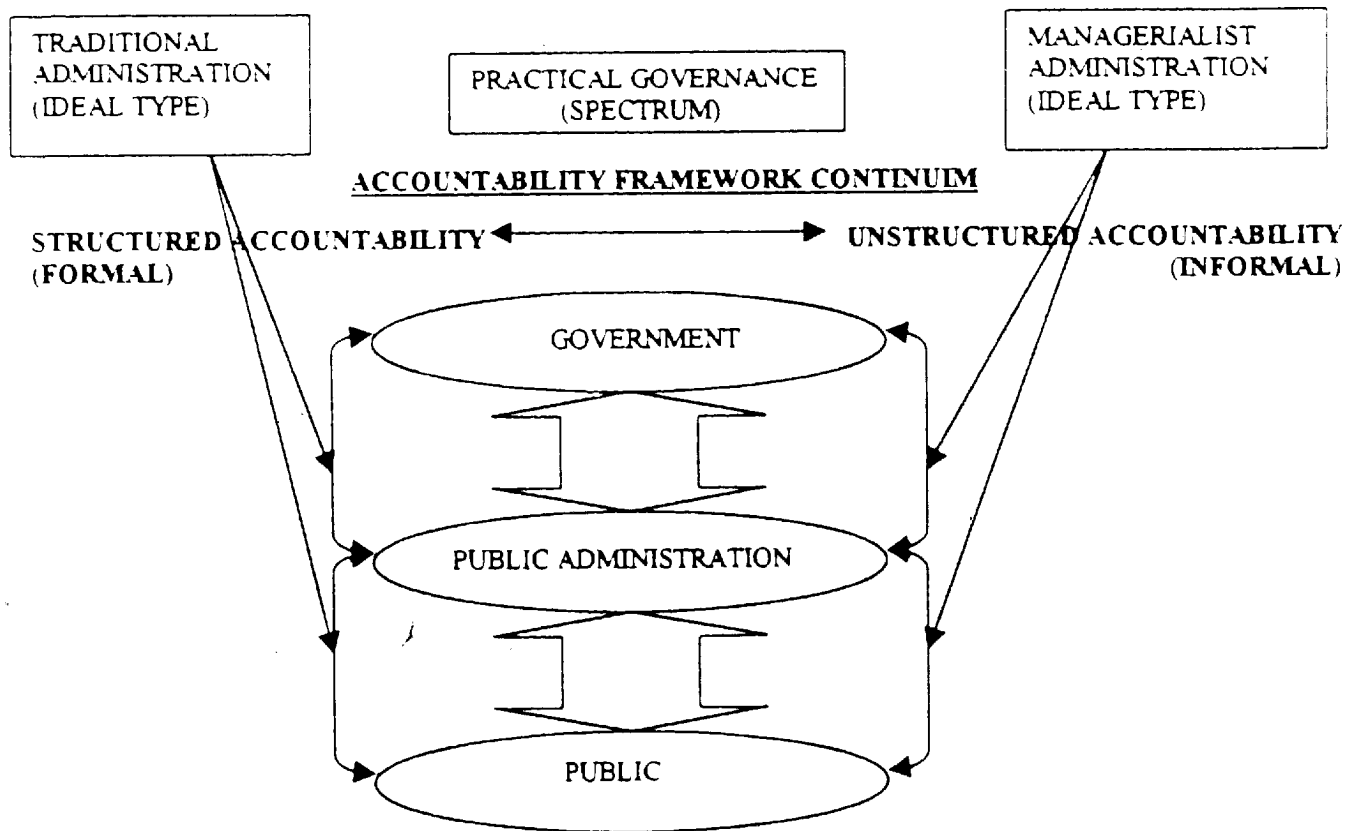
In order to accurately assess the impacts which changes in the philosophy of management will have on the accountability framework of public administration, a conceptualization of the issue is helpful. Table 2 illustrates a continuum of structured (formal) and unstructured (informal) accountability relationships reflected in the traditional and managerialist ideal type forms of administration. Within this schema traditional accountability is reflective of highly structured relationships between public administration and both government and the public, characterized by the imposition of formal rules. Managerialism, on the other side of the continuum, reflects an ideal of unstructured relationships, in which managers and employees are free to make decisions based on outcomes, unrestricted by process.

As this table indicates, both traditional and managerial administration are ideal types, and therefore within the centre of this table practical governance has been added. Practical governance is represented as a spectrum. The proposition of this arrangement is that practical governance must involve a combination of formal and informal, structured and unstructured mechanisms. The flexibility of this arrangement allows public administration to utilize a range of accountability measures, it also has created an environment in which the accountability values of both traditional and managerial administration can coexist. Another benefit of this flexibility is that other values within the political system can also be incorporated within this accountability framework.

The concept of accountability frameworks is central to any understanding of public administration. The construction of a detailed continuum which outlines specific mechanisms within the areas of accountability-up, down, and out, would be extremely useful within examinations relating to the evolution of public administration. If

accountability mechanisms could be outlined along a continuum which showed the range of options available to government, and the values associated with these mechanisms, it may be possible both to assess and predict movements within the accountability framework.

Table 2: Accountability Relationships in Traditional and Managerialist Administration



If the assumption were made that the accountability framework for public administration were in transition from a traditional to managerial construction, a radical transformation would be expected to take place. While it is evident that notions of legitimacy and accountability have shifted, it is not evident that accountability structures will face this type of complete transformation. The shift to managerialism does, however, put a new focus on a number of aspects of accountability. It is the duty of government and public administration to respond with a review of formal accountability mechanisms, to ensure that the accountability framework in place supports these new values.

Timing

Another element of accountability which is tied to the concept of structured and unstructured relationships is that of timing. Managerialism has been noted to have had a significant impact on the point within the decision-making process at which public service managers are called to account for their actions. If accountability is defined as: "the obligation to answer for the fulfillment of assigned and accepted duties within the framework of authority and resources provided" (Kernaghan: 1991: p. 161), there are two points at which accountability comes into play, accountability before and accountability after. The accountability mechanisms of public administration are currently shifting from an emphasis on accountability before to accountability after (Moore: 1995).

Accountability-before

Traditional public administration emphasized strict controls of those responsibilities delegated to public administration (Barzelay: 1992). The accountability framework within which managers worked was designed to act as a presumptive measure, in order to constrain the options available to public servants. Mechanisms which encouraged compliance by constraining managers actions at a point before

decision-making, included the application of strict rules relating to the expenditure of federal budgets. Line-item budgets constrained the ability of managers to move funds within their own areas of responsibility. If, for example, a manager and his staff were expecting to slip funds at year-end in one allotment, but had a demand for funds which exceeded their ability to respond within another fund, there was almost no way that this money could be shifted in order to be utilized effectively.

Accountability-before has as its goal the production of predictable outputs. Another way in which accountability-before has been utilized is through the creation of an ethical or cultural code which acts as an effective predictor or controller of the decisions made by public servants. An example within this area would be the development of departmental mission statements, intended to influence the actions of employees. Through these types of manipulation of the environment, government has been able to control outcomes by guiding the actions of public servants.

Accountability-after

Managerialism, with its emphasis on outcomes, presents accountability in a different light. Managers have always been responsible for outcomes, but managerialism implies that freedom of process is a necessary precursor to effective and efficient decisions and actions. The managerial approach models the activities of government on market-based mechanisms of accountability, which reflect a performance-based bias (Cooper: 1995).

The significance of the managerial ideal is that success or failure is based upon outcomes. Within this scenario work is structured in order to outline "bottom-line" or final expectations within performance contracts prepared at the outset of an undertaking. Evaluation will play an important role within this process, as the quality of management is judged by how well managers do with relation to their ability to meet the terms outlined within these contracts.

Problematic for this approach is the fact that the role of public administration is affected on a continual basis by politics. Changes in priorities, budgets, and programs are affected by political decisions which may take place at any time within the duration of a performance contract. A process within public administration which strictly measured the success or failure of public administration through accountability-after would not produce valid results unless managers were allowed to operate within a stable environment during the term of their contract. This issue is one which will require further consideration.

As accountability-after produces a much less constraining environment for managers, many of the expectations explicitly placed upon managers have been removed. Evaluation, after the fact, becomes the primary mechanism through which public administration is controlled. This method may reduce the ability of Ministers to exercise Ministerial responsibility over decisions made within their departments. In addition, the role of evaluation gains significant profile, and the function of evaluating contracts will necessarily become a major focus of senior government administrators within this new scheme.

The significance of timing

The traditional administration paradigm was based upon a focus on accountability as being rooted in rules, processes, and philosophies which prevented undesirable decisions or actions. The new operating environment created by managerialism has encouraged a shift toward an emphasis on accountability after the fact. If managers and their partners are being given increasing freedom to experiment and work creatively, then it is reasonable to assume that an evaluation of their results should be as important as their adherence to process.

The accountability emphasis on public administration has shifted from responsible government to good government (Aucoin: 1995). It has shifted in emphasis from

justifying costs to delivering value. If, as managerialism asserts, public sector accountability begins to focus more on outcomes, with freedoms given to managers during the implementation process, managers will be making significant decisions with relation to programming, and they will be expected to incorporate external interests. The line between policy and administration blurs, and the public service is forced into a more political role.

Framing Accountability

Accountability involves a number of elements, including relationships, process, and timing. The introduction of managerial administration and its related ideals has resulted in a shift in focus within public administration.

The speed and direction of devolved managerial autonomy, together with the promotion of an entrepreneurial culture and of privatization as a goal for public sector organizations, have raised questions about the vulnerability of public sector organizations, the weakening of the public sector ethos, the impact of public sector perspectives within a public sector context, the consequences of change as parts of an organization change in different ways at different times, the inevitable balance between public service and personal benefit and the implications of change on existing but ill-defined relationships of accountability, monitoring, and control (Doig: 1995: p.207).

As formal and structured mechanisms of accountability are dismantled, issues of fraud, corruption and mismanagement have begun to take on increasing significance within public administration. These issues will continue to take on increased relevance as a result of the shift toward the managerial administration paradigm. These issues highlight the importance of clarity with relation the expectations placed upon public sector mangers:" Given the fact that the public service ethos has not in any case always been uniformly applied or accepted, and the framework that would sustain, police and adapt it is itself in need of revision and overhaul, [the mixed signals present in the current

environment] suggest that there is more cause for concern than the teething troubles of change" (Doig: 1995).

Within the British system, which moved toward an acceptance of managerialism a few years before Canada, concerns are now being expressed with regard to the maintenance of an emphasis on "impartiality and incorruptibility" in the public service (Painter: 1994). Although many scholars have recommended a particular method by which government might increase their control over bureaucracy, Gruber's (1987) exchange scenario for example, without a framework which outlines the various accountability relationships through which the actions of public administration should be influenced, the only explicit direction that public administration will receive in this area are those goals outlined within performance contracts.

At this point the structuring of performance contracts, with relation to such issues as accountability-down, is not clear. Within the mixed accountability framework presently being utilized it has been difficult to define the relationship which a department should have with its constituents. Political viewpoints will inevitably come into any subjective evaluation of the success of programming. For example, the enhancement of personal freedom and opportunity may be seen by some persons as the true goal of an income redistribution program (Laycock: 1994: 244). Under some governments this may be an implicit goal, under others it may not. The source of concerns with the inadequacy of the current accountability framework may be related to political perspectives which have generally perceived the bureaucracy as ineffective and unresponsive to community and grass-roots needs.

It is important to note that the accountability framework of public administration is necessarily tied to the political system of the country as a whole. Within the process of change management, the following question must be posed: "How can reform be made workable in the political environment that government operates in, when every exercise of responsibility, and every answer in the name of accountability, is judged in political

terms" (Johnson: 1992)? This interrelationship of public administration with the larger political process highlights the complexity of the task of defining a specific accountability framework for public administration.

The important lesson learned from a study of the impacts of managerialism is not that the focus of accountability within public administration must undergo a radical makeover in order to mesh with an ideal philosophy. It is critical to understand that the introduction of new values and processes will create conflicts and challenges for the public sector. The accountability framework of government has been necessarily adaptive, and this allows the incorporation of new values. Recent changes do, however, highlight the need for what should routinely serve as a periodic clarification of the expectations which both government and the citizens have of public administration. In addition, the development of an explanatory model of accountability, which would explain the values and implications derived from the use of different formal and informal accountability mechanisms, would be a welcome contribution to the discussion of the framing of accountability within public administration.

Accountability in the Politicized Environment

The previous examination of accountability has produced a number of ideas about where accountability can come from and how it can be enforced. We may be tempted to stop at this point, considering a review of accountability complete. To do so at this point, however, would be remiss. There is another important aspect of accountability which must be considered, and that is the fact that accountability is a part of a political process, in which many philosophies and ideas compete for recognition.

Just as traditional and managerial administration put forward two distinct schools of thought with relation to accountability, there are a number of other political philosophies which provide different perspectives. Although these ideal-types may never become dominant within our conception of the public sector, they do influence ideas

about how public administration should be structured, and about the function of governance. In order to gain a different perspective on how accountability may be used in the future, it is worthwhile to briefly examine three variations on this theme: postmodern accountability, market accountability, and democratic accountability.

Postmodern accountability

The postmodern view of governance and public administration begins with the assumption that the structure of government, as it exists today, contains inherent flaws which restrict its ability to provide a meaningful accountability to the public.

Postmodernism critiques the metanarratives which structure people's constructions of the world in a static and illusory manner. With relation to government, the postmodern view presupposes that the entire construction of government contributes to its inadequacies.

As Robert Pirsig explained in *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*:

To speak of certain government and establishment institutions as "the system" is to speak correctly, since these organizations are founded upon the same structural conceptual relationships as a motorcycle...But to tear down a factory or revolt against a government or to avoid repair of a motorcycle because it is a system is to attack the effects rather than the causes; and as long as the attack is upon effects only, no change is possible. The true system, the real system, is our present construction of systematic thought itself, rationality itself (Pirsig: 1974).

Postmodernism advocates getting rid of as many rules as possible, and letting partnerships and flexibility create policy from the local level up (Aucoin: 1995).

Empowerment and devolution are seen to exist naturally within an infinitely adaptable environment. One issue that postmodernists would identify as key to the accountability process is the governmental process of "issue structuring", which they contend is inherently biased. The concept relates to the process by which individual or societal

problems are interpreted and packaged by dominant interests within society, in a manner which benefits certain groups and discriminates against others.

With perspective similar to that of public choice, there is an assumption that problems within society are ill-structured, and that resolution of these problems would be much easier in the long run if government invested more time and effort at the outset to allow for more personalized attention to issues (Chilsholm: 1987). Overarching issues of concern to society would be handled more efficiently through networks of those persons associated with more personalized responses, than through initiatives of big government.

French interprets many of the changing attitudes toward government in Canada today as the result of a societal shift to a postmodern view of the role of government. Participation in pressure groups may be seen as a direct result of people becoming more interested in single issues than in political parties which present more overarching views of society, French argues (French: 1992). As a result of this shift in outlook, French suggests that government has become more focused on issues which are "expressive/symbolic in nature" (French: 1992: pp. 50).

Postmodernism serves as a critique, and as such it does not align itself clearly with any specific form of public administration. The postmodernist view is deconstructionist, and would endorse the creation of programs able to provide flexibility and inputs at the community level. With relation to the subject of accountability, postmodernism emphasizes responsiveness and individual or small scale solutions.

Public choice accountability

The public choice model inherently is distrustful of government. This model advocates changing rules to make delivery client focused and supports any initiatives which open up the political policy-process. Overall it has the goal of a reduction in formal government structures. Public choice advocates a model of informed consumers participating in public issues within a competitive market (Laycock: 1994). Within the market model utility is reduced to rational market behavior, and even the processes of politics come to signify an unwelcome disutility.

Within Canada the Reform Party has presented a value-system consistent with this vision. The reason for the popularity of this outlook has been linked to a merger of traditional populism with new neo-conservative values (Laycock: 1994). The market orientation places an emphasis on accountability for the creation of an environment in which a free competition of ideas and options can take place.

The public choice school does not readily support the involvement of government in any specific area of jurisdiction. The preference outlined within this theory is that a market of free choice creates an environment of optimal efficiency. When government decides that they want to retain an area of jurisdiction or responsibility, they are de facto admitting that, for some reason, the function could not effectively be carried out by the private sector on its own. Although the public choice school clearly does not favour government activity, they have provided some theories about how government activity works where it does exist. Within those areas which must be relegated to the jurisdiction of government, public choice advocates the maintenance of control over public servants,

who are seen to operate in their own self-interest. Contrasted with managerialism, the application of rules may actually increase in the public choice scenario, as management controls create an environment that is rigid and entrenched (Aucoin: 1995).

As the public choice theory represents just one of many values competing for political attention and validation, it is not logical to assume that public choice theory would be thoroughly integrated into the existing political system.

Democratic accountability

Democracy is a sacred concept within North America, and it would be difficult to argue for anything that goes against democratic principles. Democracy as a concept hosts a variety of interpretations, including those advocating: representative democracy, representatives of citizens making policy decisions; pluralist democracy, organized groups formed to advocate interests or viewpoints; and populist democracy, decision-making directly by citizens (Self: 1972: pp. 281 - 282). In addition, complete or "full" democracy (Adams et al: 1992) is commonly viewed as a democratic system which has a responsibility to assure "liberty and equality" (Waldo: 1982) to all citizens. In some cases, the argument follows, people may need to be treated differently in order to be treated the same.

As government has become more complicated it has become less directly accountable to citizens, who would ideally play an active role in the most basic forms of democracy. In today's world individual citizens can not possibly operate with full information, and as a result many specialized interest groups now watch government and public administration (Reid: 1992). The role of individuals and interest groups is

becoming more important as managerialism requires inputs from constituencies on the development and design of programs. One critique of managerialism has been its inability to deal effectively with the representation of those people or groups who do not want or cannot participate in the development of programming that affects them.

One of the fundamental concepts of democracy is the legitimacy of government. As contrasted with the managerial paradigm, sometimes the most efficient course of action for a manager may not be the most publicly legitimate. As the democracy/efficiency contrast illustrates, within the realm of public activities democracy may require that government take on certain responsibilities like information-sharing and public education in order to create a literate public which can have the voracity to hold them accountable for their actions.

The values of democracy contrast some of the fundamental expectations of government. While democracy places a premium on values like liberty and equality, the role of government includes responsibility for a country's security, safety, productivity, and efficiency. In addition, the role of public administrators is problematic with respect to the democratic ideal:

"The strains created by the relationship between bureaucracy and democracy have been exacerbated by the fact that it is precisely at the juncture between the two, that the codes or rules inevitably are unclear, inconsistent or even reach a breaking point. For in practically all Western countries the rules call for bureaucrats to be both subject to the control of politicians (with respect to devising and implementing policy) and free from such control (with respect to partisan interest)" (Etzioni-Halevy: 1983: 227).

Consideration of the compatibility of democracy with managerialism has produced ideological difficulties precisely because efficiency and democracy are

antithetical. The challenge of administrative efficiency is to find ways in which the state can achieve its goals with a minimum of input costs, with consideration of the "essential requisites of accountable democratic government" (Doern: 1994). Negotiation or bargaining between these priorities is necessary in order to achieve acceptable governmental outputs (Doern: 1994).

The notion of democracy is central to the Canadian value system, and an ongoing concern for government. In light of this importance, concerns about democratic accountability should be highlighted within the accountability framework for public administration. If democratic values represent consistent and unchanging priorities, then it would seem to follow that they should be formally incorporated into the accountability framework, however they have been conspicuous mainly in their absence. The Charter introduced some legal parameters relating to these values, however the applicability of these measures when they relate to partnership arrangements is questionable. Democratic accountability is generally assumed to serve as a part of the informal environment of governance, forming the basis of what makes the public sector unique.

While these philosophies represent extreme points of view, elements of the value systems of each already exist within our existing accountability structure. The fragmentation of power provided by a system which validates diverse values and beliefs also creates alternative forms of political participation, one avenue of which is clearly now through interaction with public administration.

Accountability: Revelation or Red Herring?

The concept of accountability within public administration is profoundly affected by political values. The introduction of managerialism has changed the expectations placed upon government and public administration. Methods of governance are more than static examples of organizational structure, they go right to the heart of country's identity, the relationship and values which it shares with citizens.

It is clear that the accountability framework of government never has, and never will, come into complete alignment with any ideal-type philosophy. There is, therefore, no final agreement about how accountability will be structured and how it will function in the "new" public administration (Cooper: 1995). A flexible accountability framework considers relationships-up, down and out; it adapts to elements of both accountability before and accountability after; it utilizes formal and informal processes, and maintains the ability to incorporate other societal values. It would be in the best interests of all players in the political process to take the initiative in order to ensure that expectations relating to the role of public administration are clear. Although the fact that accountability is notoriously difficult to define has discouraged government and public administration in the past from outlining a comprehensive accountability framework for managers, the complex changes facing managers today create a need for direction and guidance. This type of arrangement would encourage the operation of public administration in an environment of full information, and full democracy would not expect anything less.

CHAPTER THREE: THE SEARCH FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION'S HOLY GRAIL

The study of public administration has been an ongoing concern now for over one hundred years within North America.²⁶ Within the last fifty years, many resources have been devoted to the critique and explanation of bureaucracy, and scholars have created numerous theories and models designed to improve and perfect public administration.²⁷ To this point this thesis has examined the implications which the introduction of the managerial administration paradigm has on the existing accountability framework of federal public administration in Canada. Another important element of this review is an evaluation of the positive and negative repercussions which this paradigm inflicts upon public administration. A survey of literature relating to these issues is therefore prudent. Practical analysis of recent changes, the contrast of private and public sector ethos, the process of change management within public administration, and the models and theories which have been utilized to categorize and explain behavior, are all important elements of an overall evaluation of recent management changes within public administration in Canada.

Public administration's holy grail signifies a model or theory which will explain and validate the process of change through which our bureaucracy currently travels.

Theories about the general state of public administration may provide some clues as to

²⁶ Woodrow Wilson's 1887 "The Study of Administration" in (Political Science Quarterly, vol. 2 (June), pp. 481 - 507) is commonly cited as providing a starting point for the study and critique of public administration.

²⁷ An helpful summary of historical scholarship within public administration is provided in Adams (1992).

the potential 'ideal-state' of public administration, and will allow an assessment of the benefits which can be associated with public administration today.

Historical Perspective and Predictions

In order to assess the state of public administration today, it must be held up to some criteria of evaluation. The process of evaluation necessarily involves a comparison with some standards which are identified as ideal or undesirable. In the past, the discipline of public administration has been chastised for its inability to properly consider history in interpretations of the present (Adams: 1992). For this reason a clarification of the parameters surrounding the assessment of public administration today is necessary.

Explaining the Past

When what has come to be known as the traditional administration conceptions of bureaucracy were put forward by Max Weber,²⁸ they presented an ideal-type organization, styled with maximum rationality for maximum efficiency. In that era, an explanative framework for bureaucracy was descriptive and prescriptive, however, this has proven to be an overly simplistic representation.

Administration was seen to revolve around the interpretation of rules, based mainly on past cases and experience, in a similar way to the manner in which the legal system still operates today. With its goal a politics-administration separation, the expectation was that bureaucracy would focus on the performance of administrative

²⁸ To reference Weber's philosophy please see: Weber, Max. "Bureaucracy" in H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (ed.s), From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology, translated (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 196 - 244.

duties. Public administration operated in a closed system where information was power, and new recruits gained prestige only through time and experience within the service.

Traditional public administration's primary management concerns were the "implementation of rules and the administration of systems" (Aucoin: 1995).

While public administration theory started with the ideal type outlined by Weber representing the most efficient and rational form of administration, challenges were quickly brought to the table. As public administration and its followers expanded, scholarship began to focus on a critique of traditional administration as an ideal-type. It has been argued that all subsequent public administration theories have challenged this idea of inherent efficiency and the legitimacy of this traditionalist argument (Lane: 1995: pp. 69). This is not to say that the goal of efficiency was questioned, but rather whether the structuring of traditional administration was the best way to reach this goal. Even if one assumes that the efficient implementation of government decisions is the primary role of public administration, there have clearly been substantial challenges to the appropriateness of large and hierarchical bureaucratic organizations for this task.

There have been attempts to separate the history of public administration into a series of themes,²⁹ roughly corresponding with each decade in the history of the discipline, and in some cases a cycling of these themes or trends has been noted (Ingraham: 1995). These phases represent different approaches to the study of public administration, however, they also reflect a different management perspective utilized by

²⁹ Adams (1992) outlines one such timeline for which he credits Nicholas Henry's 1990 article: "Root and branch: public administration's travail toward the future" in Naomi Lynn and Aaron Wildavsky (Ed.s), Public Administration: The State of the Discipline (Chatham House Publishers, Chatham, 1990).

public administration practitioners. Depending on the management focus which is in vogue at the time, very different management techniques have been utilized in order to bring governmental direction through to the implementation phase. This focus has shifted between a preoccupation with structure, rationality, effective management, and harmonization with the external environment. Each of these foci have contributed to the manner in which public sector management is viewed today.

Throughout the history of the discipline, metanarratives have attempted to categorize and define the purpose and function of change within public administration by compartmentalizing it into summary groupings. This has resulted in a discipline of public administration facing inherent difficulties a result of the way the discipline is perceived. "The modernist epistemological project has proven problematic, and the modernist dialect of public administration is limiting" (Farmer: 1995: 247). A recognition of the importance of perspective, and the role which the framing of issues may have in the examination of this subject matter, leads us into an examination and evaluation of the present state of public administration.

Evaluating the Present

As the expectations placed on the public sector constantly shift, public administration is faced with conflicting principal-agent relationships which are not most effectively tackled through traditional bureaucratic structures (Lane: 1995: pp. 12). Canadian society has shifted its mindset with regard to the broad purpose of government. Instead of public administration being perceived as a force which will mold and shape the future of Canada, it is now looked upon as: "no more than a continually renegotiated

bargain for the distribution of public goods, the internal coherence of which is of interest only to editorialists" (French: 1992: pp. 49). Public administration maintains a nebulous and complex web of values and relationships. The maintenance of these arrangements, and any changes to this pattern, will necessarily involve a trade-off between different values inherent in this administrative environment (Hood: 1991; Painter: 1994). At this point in history there is not unanimity on what constitutes good management practices (Painter: 1994).

International trends within public administration have introduced three new values into public administration: client-centred bureaucracy; participative bureaucracy, and representative bureaucracy (Waldo: 1992). These themes, when incorporated, necessarily displaced some previous values. Stewart identified six challenges that this new emphasis has presented to public sector managers:

- 1) self-sufficiency of traditional public administration is challenged as the most effective form of administration, as departments come to depend on alternative forms of partnership and cooperation;
- 2) hierarchical direct control is challenged by control through specification expressed in contract agreements, performance targets, competitive and trading relations;
- 3) uniformity is challenged by choice options;
- 4) accountability up is challenged by accountability out;
- 5) standardization is challenged by incentives; and
- 6) administrative and professional cultures are challenged by entrepreneurial culture (Stewart: 1992: 509).

The adaptation of private-sector influenced management techniques into the public sector has created specific challenges for public sector managers: "the extent to which performance is subject to competing perspectives and values and - perhaps most significantly - the casting of citizen as customer - cause TQM in the public sector to an unpredictable and rather iconoclastic endeavor" (Ingraham: 1995: p. 248). Questions

about the philosophical role of citizen contrasted with that of consumer, and the ultimate responsibility for processes designed to gather and interpret of the needs of the public, have moved the public manager far beyond a role devoid of political responsibilities. Public managers are now routinely expected to deal with multiple, various, and conflicting clientele, bringing together problems and solutions where the opportunities arise.

Accompanying the shift to a managerial focus has been a corresponding rise in the emphasis on effective leadership skills among public managers (Paton and Jelking: 1994). Within the new role that public managers are being asked to take on, new competencies are required. Recently the Public Service Commission released a leadership profile for its next generation of senior executives. The profile outlines fourteen core competencies which executives will require in the near future within Canadian public administration.

Personal Competencies

- 1) Stamina
- 2) Ethics and values
- 3) Personality
- 4) Behavioral flexibility
- 5) Self-confidence

Intellectual Capacities

- 6) Cognitive capacity
- 7) Creativity
- 8) Visioning

Management Capacities

- 9) Action Management
- 10) Organizational awareness
- 11) Teamwork

Relationship Competencies

- 12) Partnering
- 13) Interpersonal skills

14) Communication³⁰

The public service is preparing itself for a future in which managers play an increased role in the leadership of the political process, a role which was reserved within the traditional administration model for elected politicians. In a system of competing accountabilities, will democracy (through government) or democracy (through community participation directly in decision-making) take precedence? Government will be forced to delineate the boundaries of customer influence (Pollitt: 1995).

Although the role of managers is acknowledged to have changed, and new values have been incorporated into expectations of public sector management, many traditional constraints and controls continue to restrict the practice of public administration. In most cases many unique public sector constraints continue to be used as an evaluation of managerial behaviors, including the traditional method of year to year budgeting and restrictions on administration, finance and human resource activities. In addition, the role of government involvement in local issues has not yet been resolved. Public administration today is being challenged to operate within an environment of uncertainty, within a system that does not yet have a complete inventory of questions, never mind the answers.

Questions of practical accountability have risen to the forefront, simply because public administration is being placed in the situation where they cannot be avoided. New alliances with constituents and communities involve long-term commitments and a

³⁰ A report on the release by the Public Service Commission was contained in the article "Potential leaders need to be groomed for public service: new breed of bureaucrat sought for Ottawa ranks" within the Vancouver Sun, January 27, 1997, pp. A7.

guarantee of the availability of the resources necessary to back up these agreements. Diversity of programming at the local level is resulting in unstandardized and unequal treatment of citizens across the country. Customized framework agreements result in programs which favour some industries and businesses while threatening others. Local priority setting creates competition among communities. Issues like these will become even more pronounced as the government continues to devolve responsibility to other levels of government, the private, and not-for-profit sectors. The negotiations and bargaining efforts of managers have the potential to "compromise among competing values in a way that pleases nobody" (Kaufman: 1982: pp. 216). The tension which has always been inherent in the political process is becoming apparent within the scope of public administration management.

Today's reforms have not yet been fully evaluated or assessed. To this point "analysis is illuminate rather than synoptic" (Pollitt: 1995" p. 205). Public management today promises the completion of extensive evaluations, in fact they form an important part of the underpinning of future goal setting within the managerial administration environment. The quality service focus is "a battleground between groups with very different visions of the public service"(Pollitt: 1995: p. 222). There are many critics who will look forward to the opportunities provided by an assessment of the new public administration.

Prescriptive Future

If public administration continues to follow the path which it has currently set for itself, cultural change will play a significant role within its future. The development of

frameworks, to establish the expectations to be placed on public administrators and their contractees under new structures, is of key importance.

One message which it will be important to bring into the future when facing these challenges, is the significance of rhetoric and charged language within the change process. Certain expressions and terms within our language system are loaded with either good or bad connotations. As a result, the utilization of these words can skew opinions and prejudice outcomes. Bureaucracy, for example, has taken on the implication of atrophy and unresponsiveness. Efficiency on the other hand, rivals motherhood as a feel-good concept which it is difficult to question legitimately.

The public responsibilities/private sector delivery contracting process is bringing public administration into a new era. Although some guidelines with respect to the framing of contracts have been developed, it will become increasingly necessary to ensure that negotiations take place in an environment within which the expectations of both contracting parties are clearly articulated. Also, government must recognize that it may not always be appropriate to draw up contracts: "...while contracting is an entirely appropriate approach for some services, it may offer no obvious advantage for others, and for others again it will prove positively detrimental" (Pollitt: 1995: p. 225). Questions about the future of public administration are indivisible from questions about the future of government. Government has to articulate the motives behind efforts to facilitate managerial and administrative changes: is the goal higher standards, lower expenditure, or optimizing within fluctuating priorities (Pollitt: 1995: p. 222).

While chaos may be one possible vision of the future, many scholars have been looking to alternative ideas about the function of governance as a guide to decision-

making about the structure of public administration in the future. Gruber (1987) looks at "models of exchange" as potential methods of controlling, or directing the activities of bureaucracy: "In an exchange model, control results not from political actors telling bureaucrats what to do but from constructing conditions in which bureaucratic behavior is constrained in exchange for resources which bureaucrats seek" (Gruber: 1987: pp. 211). Savoie sees a need for the development of introspective facilities within public administration itself: "Bureaucracies - need a stronger capacity to challenge their operations and be self-critical - the challenge is to attack institutional sclerosis, and it is a challenge the reforms of the 1980s did not meet" (Savoie: 1994: pp. 345). Beetham (1996) states that the search for the definitive bureaucracy must be a part of a broader reconsideration of, what has been referred to as, truth, beauty and goodness: "which lies beyond the particularism of special disciplines, the competing worlds views of major social groups, and the eclecticism of "multiple viewpoints" (Beetham: 1996: 104). The evolutionary model, its structure based on Darwin's theory of evolution, notes that organizations may succeed or fail based on their compatibility with their external environment (Kaufman: 1982).

These critiques of a modernized bureaucracy highlight the fact that the political system serves a role in the mitigation of diverse and varied priorities. As external environments constantly change, methods of governance will evolve as well. It is impossible to predict with any certainty what society will require from public administration in the future, and therefore what the focus of management will be for public administration practitioners. Although rationalism has led people to believe that a reasoning man controls his destiny, there will always be forces of change beyond our

control (Kaufman: 1982). The structure of public administration is determined by the relationship which government has with its citizens (Doern: 1994), at any point in time.

The Private/Public Puzzle

Society views public and private sector management in different lights, and with justifiable reasons. Government is not a business and cannot be run the way that a business is run (Wilson: 1989). The expectations which society places upon managers and employees differs from the private to the public sector. Expectations also vary with the type of role or function that is performed within the public sector. Those with responsibilities related to policy-making, or with a high potential for conflicts in interest, have been expected to operate under a more stringent ethical code in order to ensure that the public interest is upheld.

Public administration has traditionally fostered the perception that it had its own role and responsibilities, distinct from those of the private sector. There was recognition that, by virtue of the fact that society chose to make some activities public, they should be managed in a public manner. The application of restrictions on the power of public managers to make decisions was seen as being consistent with this expectation.

Even today, when public administration is sanctioned by government to perform an activity, that role becomes political. Public political preferences and desires, and expectations of justice and fairness come into play (Moore: 1995). With the introduction of managerialism and new forms of cooperative administration, and the proliferation of new management arrangements involving various organizations and institutions, a separation of public and private activities can become difficult. This does not, however,

diminish the expectation that government's responsibilities be handled in a manner consistent with the public interest.

Good government ... requires that, at a minimum, those who manage the delivery of public services, whether the delivery be undertaken by public servants or contracted out to the private sector, do so in ways that are in the public interest and that promote the highest standards of public service values and ethics (Aucoin: 1995: pp. 82).

Aucoin (1995) suggests the solution is to structure policy and program implementation in a way that will mandate local involvement. Through the preparation of detailed business plans relating to the execution of each new policy, performance standards, service standards, parameters for partnership arrangements would be set out. This process requires clarity at the outset in defining missions, tasks and standards, but Aucoin sees this as the preferred method for "restraining" the activities of bureaucracy with relation to its interactions with the private sector. Ideally this process would give managers structured flexibility, which could be managed in a manner similar to that which Gruber has proposed.

Scholars are now lamenting the loss of the public sector ethos, traditionally viewed as an effective informal constraint on public administration behavior. As we have seen, the incongruence of current public sector values with the traditional public service ethos has rendered this mechanism ineffective. If a public sector ethos is to be retained, which the private/public sector distinction implies, the expectations of public administration and parameters involving derivations from this ideal must be outlined.

Will public and private sector distinctions play an important role in the consideration of public administration accountability structures in the future? About

fifteen years ago eminent political observer Dwight Waldo theorized that the distinctions between public and private, which have served to structure society, were fading. "In the United States - and I believe much more widely - there is a movement away from a sharp distinction between public and private, and toward a burring and mingling of the two" (Waldo: 1982).

Internationally there has been a movement toward the privatization of previously public areas of responsibility, and the introduction of market mechanisms into the public service. The imposition of private sector mechanisms into public sector functions has, of all public sector reforms, the highest potential to create radical change (Lane: 1995). At this point it is not clear how far the government will go in terms of external contracting of services. Potentially independently organized groups of employees could bid on contracts put out to tender by the government, for all areas of its responsibilities (Lane: 1995). This proposition, however, would clearly face a number of challenges.

Is the management of private and public sectors unique? There is recognition today that, although some leadership and management skills are generic, public and private management roles differ in the stability of their goal orientation and the restrictions placed upon them by their external environment (Lane: 1995). One of the key differences is the fact that the private market operates on the principle of *innovation* (the creation of new markets for products), while the public sector is focused on *compression* (narrowing demands in order to deliver necessary programs within a limited expenditure) (Self: 1972: pp. 266 - 267).

Lane identifies a number of elements of management, within which different influences affect private and public sector managers, these include: design, principal,

involvement, authority, motivation, decision-making, implementation; objectives, process, legal constraints, efficiency expectations, outcomes, productivity/cost ratio, qualitative and quantitative goals, evaluation, openness, rules, consistency, values, equity, predictability, technology, administration/professionalism orientation, restrictions on organizational structure, inter-organizational dependence, customer orientation, conflict orientation, leadership, and rewards. This exhaustive list puts into perspective the challenges which managers face when they transfer into or out of the public sector. Having said that the preceding elements can create a different management environment within the private and public sectors, it is necessary to recognize the fact that public sector organizations themselves form a continuum.

It is clear that society recognizes that different things are acceptable from public and private sector management. The more these activities relate to the functions of government traditionally thought of as being political, the more stringent these expectations become. For example, while many people may consider it acceptable for a purchasing manager in a private company, contracted to purchase goods for government, to accept gifts from his suppliers, it is unlikely that many people would consider the same sort of behavior acceptable from a public administrator responsible for writing up legislation on a sensitive policy issue. The reason behind this seems to be a concern with the protection of a public interest, and the sense that the potential for conflicts of interest, real or apparent, is a cause for concern. For this reason it is logical to expect that private sector influences will affect various public sector employees differently, the speed of inculcation of these values being largely dependent upon the employee's role and function. If managerialism is successful in integrating private sector mechanisms into the

public sector, as it has already begun to do, it will inevitably create conflicts between the separation of the private and public realms.

As the environment in which public administration operates evolves, the expectations placed on public managers will evolve. It is important to continually reassess the mechanisms which public administration employs. Managerialism, as an ideal type, has introduced new philosophies and orientations, however, it is clear it will not be adhered to in a total or complete manner. Recent changes have been positive in that they have liberated actors in public administration from what was once a much more constrained and rule-bound environment. Changes have fostered a freedom and creativity which has served a liberation function within organizations suffering from a severe case of institutional sclerosis. The dividing lines between the private and public sector are becoming less distinguishable as the mechanisms and techniques employed by public sector managers change. The fundamental expectations of government remain.

Processing Change Management

The activity of change management has become an institution unto itself, with consultants promoting innumerable methods and processes designed to institute changes in organizations with minimal effort. This paper has outlined the details of considerable changes undergone by public administration. At this point a summary of the lessons learned and knowledge gathered will be provided.

It is important to note that public sector reforms can be either macro or micro-oriented (Lane: 1995). Each approach has its specific applications and, when managed in a staged manner, can be introduced slowly or quickly, incrementally or as a part of an

overall paradigm shift. The key to successful change is understanding its effects. An explanation of changes is necessary, outlining what is required, and the effects of reform on current roles. Consideration should also be given as to how change will be presented. Old ways of operating may be acknowledged and incorporated into changes, or they may simply be papered over with the gloss of a new orientation. Each of these elements will affect how participants form opinions about change.

Changes in structure or function may be evident, but changes in culture can be much more subtle. With any significant change culture will be impacted. The most effective method of implementing change will address these changes in culture, and provide the necessary supports for employees. "Organizational development strategies approach the problem of change by focusing directly on changing the people in the organization through providing them learning, new perceptions, attitude changes, and more effective ways of working together (Eddy: 1982).

Planning for change must take into account the type of change - evolutionary, revolutionary, or planned (Eddy: 1982) - and the impacts for structure, technology, and behavior (Eddy: 1982). Change will begin in one area but will quickly affect others. Successful public service managers will need to anticipate the ways that change will affect all areas of their organization. Change is more effective when it is managed by those whom it will effect. Imposed changes always face more difficulty and less acceptance: "...employees in most organizations have a myriad of ways of sabotaging, rejecting, and redirecting such imposed changes"(Eddy: 1982: pp. 277).

While many agencies and professionals have a long history within a certain governmental role, it is still the case that most top brass hold their positions only for a

short period of time within any particular area of programming. This lack of efficacy among many senior managers has the potential to create departmental resistance to any changes perceived as being hasty or dramatic (Kaufman: 1982: pp. 220).

Language and metanarratives have the potential to influence change in disproportion to their significance. There is a need to know what real requirements are before one jumps to solutions, which involves an investigation which is part practical and part philosophical. Statements about the need to control bureaucracy are often masquerading value judgments, promoting a bureaucracy that is more equitable, flexible, or responsive. When change is justified by the axiom "the bureaucracy is out of control," the message is not really that controls do not exist, but rather that different controls are necessary (Kaufman: 1982).

Change can be evident not only within the large scale strategy sessions, periodic reviews, and evaluations of government programming. Much is to be learned in fact, from those subtle changes in priorities and methodology which slip into operations incrementally and devoid of fanfare. "...What matters ultimately is not whether the performance measures are achieved, but what it is that is being measured" (Painter: 1994). The inclusion or exclusion of clauses within performance contracts relating to the creation of a positive environment for employees, for example, can make the difference between a nurturing and exploitative working environment for those delivering public services.

The single most important message relating to the subject of the introduction of changes in the public service, is that acceptance will hinge largely on factors beyond managerial control. The character of public administration, reflective as it is of public

values on a more broad scale, would find it difficult to embrace new concepts or ideas which were in antithesis to other commonly held beliefs relating to governance.

Modeling Alternatives

Many elements of public administration assessment are, unto themselves, independent fields of inquiry. The measurement of productivity has been elevated almost to the level of an independent science, and Total Quality Management has created an art form out of evaluation. The ultimate question, in the search for public administration's holy grail, is: what role should public administration play within the political system? Consequently, what mechanisms need to be in place to ensure that the public sector retains its public character. These questions need to be answered before the concepts of efficiency and effectiveness can be refined in a meaningful way.

The orientation of public administration toward a true ideal state would not occur in a vacuum. Reforms put into place would necessarily be judged against alternative ways of structuring and managing the public sector. Change also is reflective of the respective roles of government, public administration, and the public in society. "No public management reform is or can be simply technical or managerial but must, inevitably and irretrievably, be about the quality of government and the relationship of government to the citizens they serve" (Ingraham: 1995: p. 256-7). Even the successful application of the most simple management technique requires an assessment of compatibility within an organization as it currently exists. Any productive match must consider "function, form, and culture"(Pollitt: 1995: p. 234).

Who should set the values by which public administration will be managed? Can public administration be reasonably expected to embody changing values of governments and the public? The answers to these questions are not clear, and in fact they are disputed with the same veracity that competing value systems compete for any other political resource. There are, however, a number of models which help to outline a potential role for public administration in preparation and planning related to future requirements.

Hood states that government has four basic resources to draw on in its administrative operations: nodality (the legitimacy inherent in being government); treasure (command of a stock of freely exchangeable assets); authority (possession of legal or official power); and organization (direct possession of a stock of manpower, buildings and equipment (Hood: 1983: p. 201). Government operations in every course of action involve a different mixture of these four elements. Treasure and organization are depletable, and therefore must be rationed. Nodality and authority are less depletable, but also can wear thin on citizens if they are used inappropriately.

Hood notes that governments, as they have become more concerned with fiscal debt, have shifted the means which they prefer to utilize from active to more passive measures. The result has been an ability to utilize treasure resources in a more strategic manner. More responsibilities have been shifted to clients, reliance on the media as a communication resource has increased, and the introduction of self-funded programs has forced citizens to invest in those programs from which they will derive a benefit.

Government can be seen as serving three primary functions within society, that of: the guardian state which maintains law and order, the productive state which delivers goods and services (although not always itself), and the redistributive state which

transfers and redistributes resources among citizens. To this point the implementation of the new management perspective on operations has remained limited to those roles carried on by the productive state (Lane: 1995: pp. 153). If these values become entrenched within this section of bureaucracy, over time there should be an impact on the other forms of government.

The public sector today may be identified as having four unique preoccupations: accountability, legality, efficiency, and equity. While traditional public administration has reflected and provided the justification for the values of accountability and legality, and managerialism effectively tackles efficiency, the goal of social justice, or equity, is outstanding (Lane: 1995: pp. 153). This analysis leads us to believe that at some point in the future the framework of public administration will undergo a correction, the result of which will be a movement to incorporate the inclusion of equity as a legitimate preoccupation. The democratic values earlier outlined within this thesis, and the fact that the concern with "democratic bureaucracy" is currently attracting attention within public administration literature, confirm the hypothesis that social issues will increasingly become a concern for public administration.

Stowe (1992) has theorized about the motivation behind recent administrative reforms. He outlined the public service as serving four functions: to inform, to advise, to implement, and to account. He further outlined five key attributes of the character of civil service: "i) It is based on the merit principle; ii) It guarantees financial probity; iii) it respects political neutrality and impartiality under the law; iv) It is committed to serve any government well; v) It is accountable at all levels (Stowe: 1992: p. 390 - 391). This

characterization of public administration contributes to an understanding of what it is that makes the management of public administration unique.

Lane (1982) states that control of bureaucracy may be achieved through either intragovernmental or extragovernmental means (Lane: 1982: pp. 184). The intragovernmental options available include: audits, control of budgets, appointments, political controls, legislative controls, judicial review, hierarchy, central direction, internal controls of ethics and personal responsibility. Lane's characterization of extragovernmental mechanisms includes: interest groups, political parties, public opinion, direct citizen participation, scholarly inputs, freedom of information, and the media. The amount of "control" available to these players varies greatly over time. It is evident that this concept of control is an external analysis of what would be considered accountability from within the public sector. This breakdown does suggest that an analysis of the degree to which each of these different players exercise control may yield important insight into a theoretical framework of public administration.

A typology of five governance styles, each offering a different orientation to the provision of public services, has been supplied by Peters (1995): market model, participatory model, flexible model, deregulated model, and the traditional model. This overview of Peters' five models will be necessarily brief and cursory, however it will provide insight into the possibilities for structuring the various forms of public administration.

The traditional model originates with the public choice school. Within this structure private sector-based competitive agencies, which would be characterized as decentralized and entrepreneurial, would compete with each other for government

contracts. Citizens would be offered a range of services, among which they would be free to choose.

The participatory state model is reflective of an empowered state, which serves to incorporate marginalized interests through participative and bottom-up processes. The processes, in this case, are seen as being more important than structure, forming an opportunity for direct democracy, and the inclusion of those previously disenfranchised from the political process.

The flexible government model creates an allowance for a less permanent and unstructured organizational form of government. With no structure this form would ideally create no bureaucratic inefficiency. Any arrangements brought into being would include the date at which the grouping would cease to exist. In this manner flexible government would provide the opportunity for levels of government to rise and fall with the externally driven demands on government.

The deregulated government model sees bureaucracy itself as an untapped source of creativity and innovation. In its unencumbered natural state the deregulated model views members of the bureaucracy as potentially activist knowledge-holders. This model maintains a role for structure, and focuses external feedback through existing hierarchical structure. It removed the rules and constraints under which the ability of public services to innovate is restricted.

Finally, the traditional model of governance is not outlined in Peters assessment, however the implication is that the model is reflective of the values of stability, consistency, and reliability. The key to Peters modeling exercise is his conclusion that each of these forms of government represents presumptions, values, and biases. He does

not advocate for the adaptation of one model, rather he encourages government and public administration to work with the public in order to assess which form of government may be desirable under specific circumstances. Ideally, elements of each model could be used to reflect the various requirements of different programs and constituencies (Peters: 1995).

At this point no model(s) has been accepted as a clear and overarching explanation of public administration, and the discipline continues to lack one meaningful and accepted theoretical framework which differentiates the salient defining characteristics of bureaucracies (Page: 1987). There have, however, been a number of recent efforts in this regard, and the challenge of the discipline of public administration is now to delve further into the possibilities offered by these models.

Where do We Go from Here?

Peeking out of the quagmire which is now public administration, B. Guy Peters has posed the rhetorical question: "Can we go home again" (Peters: 1995)? The answer, of course, is no, and it is doubtful that Peters would truly choose to return to those explanations of public administration which focused on the subject as a stark contrast of ideals and opposites. Peters himself makes an important contribution to the process of modeling forms of governance, and his ideal types play an important role in an explanation of the philosophical ideals. The true contribution of ideal-type scenarios to the future development of public administration will be their application to practical situations, and their applicability to an explanation of the changes which affect

government on an ongoing basis. Consequently, there is a great deal of potential in the area of modeling within the discipline today.

Enthralled with modernity,³¹ scholars have attempted to provide overarching explanations which explain all of the intricacies of the interface between public administration and politics. Reality is much more complex than the frameworks offered by these models, hence the usefulness of these theories is quite limited. The conclusion of many of the theories presented is that each situation must be evaluated independently, and that the determination of the most desirable course of action depends on the factors which face any given organization at any time. Unfortunately, guides with respect to decision-making are quite vague and general, rarely incorporating a level of specificity which would make them useful for managers.

The discipline of public administration has the potential to provide a great benefit to the practice of public administration, through the provision of analysis and theories that can assist public sector managers in an understanding of the role that they play in society. In order to meet that challenge, however, it will be necessary for the discipline to move away from generalizations about 'ideal-types' of administration, to a focus more on the individual situations and techniques which face managers in the practical world.

³¹ I have borrowed this phrase, which is the title "Enthralled with Modernity" of Adams (1992) study of the history of public administration as a discipline.

CONCLUSION

Guy B. Adams has used the concept of "pentimento"³² to illustrate one of the fundamental problems with the study of public administration. Adams contends that there has been an obsession within public administration of calling for, and creating, new grand schemes. "Remaining enthralled with modernity, we remain unable to locate ourselves in our present historical circumstances, and thus relegate ourselves to issuing new calls for science and rigor in the future" (Adams: 1992). The preferable alternative, he states, is a discipline of public administration which reserves a role for historical analysis, looking to the past in order to learn about the future.

As we have acknowledged, the postmodern view suggests that theories of public administration based on a modernist perspective are doomed to failure because of their limited vision of government and its role. Postmodernism advocates a new frame of reference for the discussion of these issues, involving all of the perspectives and values relevant in Canadian society. Only then will a more complete picture of the role and function of both government and public administration be possible.

There is no holy grail for public administration, no ideal type to which the management of the public sector should aspire. Public administration, like political science in general, is the art of the possible, the balance of competing interests and expectations. Public administration reflects the values of the society which it serves, and

³² Pentimento is the term used to describe the process in which artists routinely employed previously used canvasses for their paintings. Over time the old painting(s) would bleed through the new paint, and the result would be a distorted image which contained elements of both pictures.

therefore it will constantly change. A wide variety of mechanisms are available to assist in the activity of governance. Public administration managers and governments choose between mechanisms based upon an objective evaluation of the needs of players within the political process. Each participant brings to the table different needs and priorities, and one of the roles of the political process is to broker these competing demands, producing outcomes which hopefully satisfy the greatest number of people. The perspective from which public administration is viewed will change over time and space, in synchronization with changes in the political environment.

Public administration is lacking theories and methods which would assist government and public sector managers in the process of choice between the management mechanisms available to them. Current theories relating to various overarching administration types hold promise, however a more specific outline to the situations within which they are applicable would provide great utility.

Politics creates an environment charged with paradoxes and competing values which present fundamentally different ways of assessing the value of governance. There is a role within the discipline of public administration for contrast and comparison of ideals, however, a practical analysis of public administration can only be attained through the application of a theoretical framework which illustrates the spectrum of values inherent within the various management mechanisms utilized by governments over time. This approach will allow for a meaningful interpretation of the changes currently affecting Canadian public administration.

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