

Reagan and Bush presidencies. Their administrations helped to make access to the courts a less significant tool for citizen organizations. In response to these developments, many public interest lawyers developed a range of alternate strategies; working more directly in the legislative and administrative processes; filing suits in state courts; and relying more heavily on citizen actions.

The turn of the federal courts in a conservative direction was matched by increasing sophistication and resources in the advocacy effort of large corporations. No longer content to rely on the skills of legal advocates to shape public policy, corporations drew more heavily on public relations professionals. They relied more heavily on political action committees and the financing of political candidates and campaigns, and on massive advertising campaigns to shape public opinion.

Despite these challenges, public interest law in the USA continued to thrive, affecting policy decisions, and providing a measure of balance in the legal system. There are many more law school graduates seeking public interest law work than there are jobs; and there are many situations in which effective public interest advocacy, were it available, would lead to better policy outcomes. The development of public interest law in other countries holds significant promise for fair processes and broader public participation in critical policy decisions ranging from environmental protection to the protection of racial minorities. Globalization creates new needs and opportunities for public interest lawyers to function in transnational settings.

*See also:* Democracy; Discrimination; Equality and Inequality: Legal Aspects; Justice and Law; Justice, Access to: Legal Representation of the Poor; Law and Democracy; Law and Society: Sociolegal Studies; Law as an Instrument of Social Change; Law: Overview; Political Lawyering; Public Interest; Race and the Law

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## Public Management, New

A term coined in the late 1980s to denote a new (or renewed) stress on the importance of management and 'production engineering' in public service delivery, often linked to doctrines of economic rationalism (see Hood 1989, Pollitt 1993). The apparent emergence of a more managerial 'mood' in several (mainly but not exclusively English-speaking) countries at that time created a need for a new label. The new term was intended to denote public service reform programs that were not confined to the 'new right' in a narrow sense, but also came from labor and social-democratic parties and in that sense could be considered as part of what was later labeled a 'third way' agenda.

New Public Management is sometimes (understandably) confused with the 'New Public Administration' movement in the USA of the late 1960s and early 1970s (cf. Marini 1971). But though there may have been some common features, the central themes of the two movements were different. The main thrust of the New Public Administration movement was to bring academic public administration into line with a radical egalitarian agenda that was influential in US university campuses at that time. By contrast, the emphasis of the New Public Management movement a decade or so later was firmly managerial in the sense that it stressed the difference management could and should make to the quality and efficiency of public services. Its focus on public service production functions and operational issues contrasted with the focus on public accountability, 'model employer' public service values, 'due process,' and what happens inside public organizations in conventional public administration. That meant New Public Management doctrines tended to be opposed to egalitarian ideas of managing without managers, juridical doctrines of rigidly rule-bound administration and doctrines of self-government by public-service professionals like teachers and doctors.

However, like most divinities, the core of New Public Management is somewhat mystical in essence, despite or perhaps because of the amount that has been written about its central content. Different authors give various lists of its key traits (e.g., Hood 1989, Pollitt 1993). Some have identified different styles of public-sector managerialism over time (see Ferlie et al. 1996). How far the small-government economic-rationalist agenda that went together with more stress on public-sector management in the 1980s and 1990s was integral to those managerial ideas is

debatable (see Barzelay 2000). But it is hard to separate these elements historically, since the advent of a new generation of public-sector managerialism coincided with concern by numerous OECD governments to reduce the power of public service trade unions, increase regulatory transparency and tackle perceived inefficiencies of public enterprises. A commonly-cited view of New Public Management's central doctrinal content is Aucoin's (1990) argument that it comprised a mixture of ideas drawn from corporate management and from institutional economics or public choice. To the extent that Aucoin's characterization is accurate, it suggests New Public Management involves a marriage, if not exactly of opposites, at least of different outlooks, attitudes, and beliefs that are in tension. Savoie (1995) argues that the central doctrinal theme of public-sector managerialism is the idea of giving those at the head of public organizations more discretionary decision space in exchange for direct accountability for their actions.

Despite the label, many of the doctrines commonly associated with New Public Management are not new. Jeremy Bentham's voluminous philosophy of public administration developed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century provides the *locus classicus* for many supposedly contemporary ideas, including transparent management, pay for performance, public service provision by private organizations, and individual responsibility. The idea that more effective public services could be obtained by judicious application of private-sector management ideas is also a theme going back at least to the US city-manager movement of the late nineteenth century (cf. Downs and Larkey 1986). It was advanced early in the twentieth century by figures like Taylor (1916) and Demitriadi (1921). The idea that public services can be improved by giving some autonomy to managers operating at arms length from political standard-setters was often invoked in the nationalized public enterprise era. It was central to Beatrice and Sydney Webb's early twentieth-century Fabian idea of the proper way of organizing the 'social' tasks of government. Some have argued the contemporary doctrine of creating 'managerial space' in public services harks back to the US Progressive-era doctrine of a politics-administration dichotomy and independent regulators (cf. Overman 1984).

Like feminism or environmentalism, New Public Management is both a social movement and a subject of academic study. Indeed, during the 1990s, New Public Management has become a major academic industry across the world, filling bookshelves and websites with writings and conference proceedings using the term in their titles. It has its advocates and its critics, its analysts, morphologists and epistemologists, its evaluators and case-historians. Advocates stress the value to citizens and consumers to be gained by enlightened managers moving beyond what is claimed to be an outdated 'bureaucratic paradigm,'

paying more attention to how to satisfy citizen demands and to service delivery through organizations other than traditional public bureaucracies (see Barzelay and Armajani 1992, Osborne and Gaebler 1992, Jones and Thompson 1999). A sophisticated defence of public-sector managerialism is Moore's (1995) exposition of a 'strategic triangle' (of political possibility, substantive value, and administrative feasibility) within which skillful and entrepreneurial public managers can 'add value' to public services. Critics of public-sector managerialism stress the virtues of traditional Weberian bureaucracy for rule-of-law or public accountability (cf. Goodsell 1994) or see managerialism as a 'wrong problem problem' (Frederickson 1996) diverting governments' attention from hard policy choices. Some critics of New Public Management doctrines see them as too heavily based on business-school and private-sector management perspectives, and some public-choice scholars have offered 'rent-seeking' explanations of contemporary public sector reforms (see Dunleavy 1992).

Morphologists and analysts of New Public Management have several concerns. They include exploring different forms and types of public-sector managerialism, identifying how managerialism varies cross-nationally, and explaining the observed commonalities and differences (cf. Savoie 1995, Aucoin 1995). A key debate (to date inconclusive because of poor benchmarking of historical points of origin) concerns how far or in what ways contemporary public management reforms represent convergence on some global paradigm. Some stress the international commonality of public-sector management reform themes while others stress the different political motivations that prompt reforms (Cheung 1997) or argue that New Public Management represents an 'Anglo-Saxon' reform agenda that does not resonate in other contexts (Derlien 1992, Kickert 1997). A related explanatory enterprise is represented by a search to understand why management-reform ideas became popular when and where they did (cf. Hood and Jackson 1991). Epistemological debates concern the appropriate disciplinary framework for reasoning about contemporary public sector management and the rival claims of different schools or approaches to intellectual ownership of the subject, particularly in the US context of competing schools of public policy, public administration and political science (see Lynn 1996, Barzelay 2000).

Evaluators and case-historians of public-sector managerial change track the processes of reform and explore their effects. Much of this work is pitched at the level of single agencies (such as Jones and Thompson 1999), but there have been some attempts to evaluate government-wide changes (see Schick 1996). Evaluation of the effects of new managerial techniques has been patchy, but several scholars have identified 'managerial paradoxes' of one kind or another. One of those paradoxes is Maor's (1999)

observation that the development of a more managerial approach to public service produced more, not less, politicization of the senior public service in six countries. A second is Gregory's (1995) controversial claim that orthodox managerial approaches foster a 'production' approach to public services that leads to several unintended effects, including downgrading of responsibility and what he termed 'careful incompetence.' A third is the claim, redolent of Tocqueville's paradox of administrative development in post-revolutionary France, that contemporary public management may in fact involve more rather than less 'rules-based, process-driven' bureaucracy, as a result of increasing oversight and regulation and continuing stress on compliance-based rather than result-based evaluation (see Light 1993, Jones and Thompson 1999, Hood et al. 1999, Pollitt et al. 1999).

In spite of the scale and growth of the New Public Management 'industry,' or perhaps because of it, the term New Public Management has probably outlived its analytic usefulness. The term is ambiguous because the agenda of public sector reform has moved in some respects beyond the traits identified by scholars of public management in the 1990s reflecting the various cultural cross-currents that have swept through managerial debate. The term is also too crude for the fine-grained distinctions between different sorts and themes of managerialism that academic scholars need to make as the study of public services develops and the public sector reform movement becomes professionalized. Just as Eskimos are said to have many different terms to distinguish different types of snow, we need more words to describe the cultural and technical variety of contemporary managerialism. So it is not surprising that there have been numerous attempts to proclaim a move beyond New Public Management (e.g. Minogue et al. 1998). Nevertheless, in spite of its oft-proclaimed death, the term refuses to lie down and continues to be widely used by practitioners and academics alike.

*See also:* Administration in Organizations; Bentham, Jeremy (1748–1832); Planning, Administrative Organization of; Public Administration: Organizational Aspects; Public Administration, Politics of; Public Bureaucracies; Public Sector Organizations

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## Public Opinion: Microsociological Aspects

Although the insight that public opinion is a powerful force goes back to premodern social thought, the task of modeling how public opinion evolves through the interdependent choices of individuals was not taken up until the last quarter of the twentieth century. Through the ensuing theorizing, the term has acquired a more precise meaning than it holds in everyday language. In choice-based, microsociological theory, a group's 'public opinion' now refers to the distribution of the preferences that its members express publicly. By contrast, 'private opinion' signifies the corresponding distribution of genuine preferences. Where individuals choose to misrepresent their actual desires in public settings, these two distributions may differ.

### 1. Theoretical Foundations

The theoretical literature on public opinion addresses diverse phenomena that have puzzled social thinkers. They include its resistance to changes in social structures and policy outcomes; its capacity for immense movement if ever this resistance is overcome; its sensitivity to the ordering of social shocks; and its imperfect predictability.

Most variants of the theory draw on a class of constructs known as 'threshold,' 'critical mass,' 'bandwagon,' or 'cascade' models. Originally designed to explain epidemics, these were subsequently applied most influentially by Schelling (1978) and Granovetter (1978) to various social phenomena that exhibit periods of stability punctuated by sudden change, for example, stock market bubbles, bank runs, cultural fashions, corporate conservatism, and academic fads. The common feature of these phenomena is that they are shaped by interdependencies among individual decisions.

Public opinion harbors two distinct interdependencies. Wherever individuals lack reliable information of their own, they look to others for clues about the reality they are seeking to grasp. Such 'free-riding' on publicly available knowledge makes people's genuine wants interdependent. Also, in articulating preferences and conveying knowledge, individuals frequently tailor their choices to what appears socially acceptable. This conformism, which is motivated by the wish to earn acceptance and respect, creates interdependencies among the wants that individuals convey publicly.

### 2. The Public Opinion of a Poorly Informed Group

The essential contributions of the theory may be sketched through a model drawn from Kuran (1995), which contains additional details. Certain initial assumptions will be relaxed further on.

#### 2.1 Thresholds and Expressive Equilibria

Consider a 10-person society that must decide a certain issue, say, the government's crime-fighting budget. Two alternatives present themselves: low ( $L$ ) and high ( $H$ ). Each individual will support whichever option appears socially optimal. Everyone will want this budget increased if crime seems to be rising but decreased if crime appears to be falling.

By assumption, no one has perfectly reliable private information. Consequently, every individual's judgment will depend partly, if not largely, on the apparent judgments of others. This does not mean that individual beliefs must converge. Because of differences in private information, any given common signal about the distribution of preferences may make some people favor  $H$  and others  $L$ .

For any individual, the minimum share that must consider  $H$  optimal for him or her to concur constitutes what is called that individual's responsiveness threshold. This threshold is a number between 0 and 100. Listing all 10 thresholds in ascending order yields society's threshold sequence ( $T$ ). Here is an example:

$T: (0, 10, 30, 30, 40, 50, 50, 60, 70, 80)$

These individuals may be labeled  $a, b, \dots, j$ , with  $a$  considered female,  $b$  male, and so on, in alternating fashion.

Given the heterogeneity reflected in this sequence, the perceived division between the supporters of  $H$  and those of  $L$  can influence dramatically the realization of public opinion. For a demonstration, suppose that initially only 10 percent of society is thought to favor  $H$ . Whatever the source of this perception,  $a$  and  $b$  will favor  $H$ , because their thresholds lie at or below 10; and the remaining eight members of the group will favor  $L$ , because their thresholds lie above 10. The resulting public opinion will thus lean heavily against  $H$ , which will enjoy the support of only 20 percent of the 10 individuals. The outcome will not impel anyone to switch positions, so it represents an expressive equilibrium. The knowledge that only two of the 10 individuals favor  $H$  will make exactly that share do so.

This particular expressive equilibrium is not the only possible self-sustaining outcome. If initially society was believed to be divided evenly between the two options, the first seven members of the sequence (all