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PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION THEORY AND
VIEWS OF THE HUMAN PERSON

by

Gerald L. Zandstra

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
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School of Public Affairs and Administration
Dr. Matthew S. Mingus, Advisor

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PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION THEORY AND VIEWS OF THE HUMAN PERSON

Gerald L. Zandstra, Ph.D.

Western Michigan University, 2007

Public administrative theory, despite its reach into American life, lacks broad agreement about its field of inquiry, its underlying presuppositions, and its purpose. Theorists such as Herbert Storing, Stephen Bailey, Richard Stillman, David Hart, Vincent Ostrom, William Dunn, Bahman Fozouni, Mark Rutgers, Michael Harmon and others have observed and lamented these shortcomings. Without well-developed theory, the objectives of public administration are a moving target.

This project does not attempt to resolve this deficiency. Instead, it is intended to address a primary question pertaining to public administration's core principles: what is the nature of the human person? The line of argumentation is not that public administration theorists do not have an operative view of human nature. Rather, it is proposed that all theories of public administration begin with some assumptions about human beings which can be termed operational anthropologies.

No attempt is made to consider all possible aspects of human nature. Only two are examined: the classically defined virtues of prudence and justice. A definition of each is provided followed by an examination of the theories of Frederick Taylor, Herbert Simon, Frederick Mosher, Vincent Ostrom, and Amitai Etzioni. The goal is to determine what each author believes to be true of human nature as

determined by an examination of their most prominent book.

The project ends with a call for additional research to be done into the major theorists' views of the human person. It also calls for those currently working in public administrative theory to clarify their anthropological assumptions as an important part of their theorizing.

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Gerald L. Zandstra

PREFACE

My interest in the nature of human persons has been part of my journey throughout my entire academic and professional life. It began with theological studies at Calvin Seminary. One of the first considerations in doing theology proper is the nature of the human person. Making use of sacred texts, philosophy, history, biology, sociology, theological tradition, and other disciplines, budding theologians are taught to come to some conclusions about what human beings are and are not as well as what they can and cannot do. Capacity and possibility are taken just as seriously as are origin and telos. The Westminster Catechism is a good demonstration of the seriousness with which theologians think about human beings. The first question asks, “What is the chief end of man?”

After serving as a pastor and teaching a bit in a seminary, I moved on to a think-tank on economics, theology, and ethics and eventually taught global economics courses in an MBA program. In studying economics, it quickly became clear that the consideration given to anthropology in economics is just as serious as it is in theology. The first economists were philosophers and, in many cases, theologians. While modern economics is more often associated with charts, graphs, and complicated mathematics, the science originally was more interested in how human beings make use of their resources and provide for themselves and their families.

Thinking about the nature of the human person and examining operating assumptions are pivotal to understanding economic theory and practice.

When I came to thinking about public administration and began to read its history and some of its chief theorists, I was struck by two things: a sense of wandering or uncertainty in its theoretical basis and a suspicion that the cause might be an inattentiveness to assumptions about the nature of human beings. The more I read, the more I realized that, while others in the field had the same sense of wandering, few were working to address it or attempt to get at some of the core reasons for it. It is my hope that this project is at least a first step, albeit a wobbly one, toward clarity in anthropological assumptions.

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CHAPTER I

THE CONTINUING INTELLECTUAL CRISIS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

An Overview of Public Administration Theory

Public administration theory is a young field of inquiry in the United States despite the hefty role public administrators play in the lives of citizens. Trillions of dollars in taxes and fees are collected and dispersed by every level of government, most with a great deal of discretion by public administrators and civil servants. Public administrators have input into and often control over the military, postal services, parks, foreign policy, trade agreements, education, transportation, police and fire services, water and waste management, neighborhood planning, construction, and a host of other areas that affect virtually every part of American life. Little in American society is untouched by civil servants.

It would be reasonable for most citizens to expect public administrative theory to be highly developed because of its deep reach into American life. A theoretical construct of public administration would seemingly be important as a reference point for guiding and evaluating public administration. This has not been the case.

The first written work of significance on public administration in the United States is Woodrow Wilson's *The Study of Administration*, written in 1886 during his

tenure as a professor at Princeton University. It was merely a start, despite being written after the United States celebrated its 100th birthday.

Since that time, public administrative theory has moved forward and back again with different theorists rising to prominence for brief periods of time, only to be followed by their decline. Rather than one theory building on another, what occurred more often was one theory obliterating an earlier one. Studying public administration theory and its history is frustrating. There is little sense of an accumulation of knowledge or the specification of theory in which portions of a theory are pruned away and others with greater explanatory power take their place.

Theorists began to notice this trend in the 1960s, a short seven decades from the Wilsonian genesis of American public administrative theory. In 1965, Herbert Storing wrote an article on the theory and work of Leonard White in which he opined:

As an intellectual discipline, the field of public administration lacks much, including an account of its historical development, a comprehensive statement in terms of its underlying principles, an exact definition of its central concepts, a penetrating analysis of its foundations in psychology and sociology, and an interpretive account of its role in the structure of government and life. (p. 39)

Of course, the same can be said, to some degree, of many fields of inquiry. Storing's comment indicates that he desired a single, unifying construct upon which all theorists would agree. What is more typical among theorists, regardless of the field, is competing schools of thought whose theoretical foundations have been examined, defended, and critiqued. Theoretical development is more typically like

evolutionary development where one theory builds on another. Rarely is a theory completely destroyed. Rather, one theory tends to morph into another with some still clinging to the old model and others pushing to eradicate it and move on to higher and more nuanced understandings of human or other realities.

Given that theorizing about the role, nature, and substance of public administration in the United States is still a young science, it is more like an adolescent than a mature adult (Frederickson and Smith, 2003). It is a series of starts, fits, failures and do-overs. Perhaps it is true that the more mature sciences are able to prune and add to the knowledge of their fields of inquiry without the lack of roots noticed by Storing. Heeding his call for a more theoretical, in-depth, historical examination of public administration should have led to at least some degree of clarity. Unfortunately, it did not.

In 1968, a group of young public administrative theorists gathered at what would eventually be known as the Minnowbrooke I Conference. Their goal, according to Richard Stillman (1999), was “to make a bold synoptic approach to the discipline of public administration” (p.1). It is important to pay careful attention to Stillman’s use of the word synoptic. Technically, taking a synoptic approach to something means that the group would take a similar view of the entire field of public administration. It is a perspectival word in that it refers to something viewed through a common eye. Those gathered at Minnowbrooke had a desire to gain some consensus and come to common and broad agreement about their field of inquiry and some of its underlying presuppositions.

Did idealism dominate those gathered at Minnowbrooke? Perhaps. Even skilled scientists studying innate objects can disagree as to what they see in their microscopes or telescopes. A search for a single, unifying or synoptic perspective in public administration theory might not have been either possible or desirable. A brief glimpse at the history of thought in virtually all fields of inquiry, from astronomy to zoology, demonstrates that when everyone sees things the same, their theory is likely to be deeply flawed.

Were the goals of Minnowbrooke I met? It seems they were not. In 1972, David K. Hart stated in *Public Administration Review*, "It is now time for a generation of 'public administration philosophers' who will address themselves to the resolution of extremely difficult normative questions that plague nearly every book and article [written on public administration]" (p. 617). The most serious problem facing public administrative theorists and practitioners, according to Hart, was the "absence of such metaphysical speculation" (p. 617).

Hart was not alone in his desire to raise the level of discourse in discussions on finding some unifying theory that would act to solidify the practice of public administration. Vincent Ostrom extended the critique in his 1974 book, *The Intellectual Crisis of Public Administration*. William Dunn and Bahman Fozouni (1976), writing three years after Hart and two years after Ostrom, noted that "Administrative theory is conveyed today as a chaotic array of fragmented assumptions, vacuous prescriptions, and disorganized beliefs about public organizations" (p. 5). What was missing was a focus on foundational issues.

The 1980s and 1990s held promise. The call for reflection on the nature of public administration had been put forth in previous decades. Perhaps the building of a coherent theory or series of competing theories for public administration would pick up steam in the 1980s and 1990s. It does not appear that this is what occurred. Many books focusing on public administration were written in this period. However, producing books and gaining understanding is not necessarily the same thing, as the writer of Proverbs points out.

A second Minnowbrooke conference was held in 1988. It was hoped that those attending would form a series of questions which might lead to the development of a core theory or series of theories. Again, the conference seems to have disappointed those who attended. Richard Stillman (1999) writes of one person who attended Minnowbrooke I and Minnowbrooke II and asked why public administration theory must “personify ‘the trek in the continual wilderness?’” (p. 3). Reflecting on this comment and on the field as a whole, Stillman summarizes the current state of thought and theory of public administration with the following questions: “Why does the field seem so malleable? so impermanent? so impossible to pin down? and seemingly recast in any direction according to personal whim? More fundamentally, after two decades and more of wrestling with public administration theory, why are we no closer to defining what ‘it’ is?” (p. 3).

Why is this the case? Why the unwillingness or inability to ask foundational questions about the true nature and core principles of public administration?

Theodore Lowi (1992) believes it was intentional:

From out of the beginnings in the 1890s, where the writing was legalistic, formalistic, conceptually barren and largely devoid of what would today be called empirical data, the founders of [American public administration theory] were committed to political realism, which meant facts, the here and now, and the exposure of the gap between the formal institutions and the realities. (p. 1)

To prove his point, Lowi tells the story of James Bryce who, in 1909, advised the members of the American Political Science Association to “Keep close to the facts. Never lose yourself in abstraction. . . . The fact is the first thing. Make sure of it” (p. 1).

The genesis period of public administration theory focused on facts. By the 1960s, it became clear to theorists that facts were not enough. Two national conferences had not clarified the foundational questions. The comments of Richard Stillman in 1999 and the fact that Ostrom’s book is still in print and an updated version was produced in 1989 are indicators that little progress has been made in the development of generally agreed upon underlying principles.

The Need for Theory

It is possible to assert that a unifying theory of public administration simply is not needed. It may be that theory either does not matter much to the practice of public administration in general or, more specifically, in the American context. Richard Stillman’s theory (1999) of “chinking-in” refers to filling in the spaces between logs

in a log home. There is nothing systematic about it. American public administration simply responds to needs that arise. It is not proactive. It is not by design. It does not consider what ought to be done. Rather, it looks at what needs doing and can be accomplished in the most efficacious fashion. Pragmatism reigns and normative questions are discarded.

While this approach does make for a public administration structure that is flexible, dynamic, and responsive to new challenges, it also calls into question the legitimacy of public administration as a science guided by core principles. It can also result in constant tinkering with the policies and programs the government offers to its citizens. One “reinventing government” scheme is quickly followed by another with little thought given to how government ought to function. Furthermore, it avoids the heavy academic lifting of developing a theory or series of competing theories that would form the intellectual skeleton of public administration.

Vincent Ostrom (in Sabatier, 2002) rejects the argument that theory and core principles are unimportant. Rather, he writes:

All analysts of microbehavior use an implicit or explicit theory or model of the actors in a situation and thus about the matter of joint results that may be produced. The analysts make assumptions about how and what participants value; what resources, information, and beliefs they have; what their information-processing capabilities are; and what internal mechanisms they use to decide upon strategies. (p. 44)

In other words, the lack of a coherent theory is not caused by the lack of a need for one nor because such theories don't already exist. They do exist, insists Ostrom, and are operative in various schools of thought. The only issue is whether they are explicit or implicit. If explicit, they can be debated, compared, contrasted, and challenged. Here the potential for finding some common ground exists. Left implicit, they are unexamined and lack the discipline that can only come from critique. Mark Rutgers agrees.

The reality is that metaphysical theory is present in all schools of public administrative thought. Even more importantly, it is necessary that the metaphysical assumptions be named, critiqued, and examined. He writes (1995), it is theory that determines what the study is about. This in fact is an insight common to administrative discourse over the centuries. Again and again the study is regarded as striving for practical relevance, and therefore in need of theoretical foundations. It is always theory that provides the basis for identifying or constituting the subject matter. If it is not consciously studied or learned theory, then it will be some sort of unreflected, everyday notion. (p. 70)

Whether studied or not, the theory exists.

This research project asserts that the reason there is so little agreement or clarity on the underlying assumptions in public administrative theory is that theorists begin with the wrong questions. Hart, quoted above, claims a lack of willingness to

examine the metaphysical issues embedded in public administration theory is the cause of theoretical consensus. The first foundational issue to be addressed ought to be the nature of the human person. According to Stillman (1999), theorists have “an inherent ambivalence toward the nature of mankind, even a reluctance to deal directly with the topic of human nature” (pp. 36–37). Instead, the focus is on the pragmatic, the numbers, and the results.

Little progress will be made toward a deeper understanding of government and public administration until those who study and theorize about it demonstrate a renewed interest in anthropology or the nature of the persons in public administration and those for whom they are administering. All theories of bureaucracy, political science, economics, sociology, and psychology begin with some assumptions about the nature of the human person. All theories in each of these fields have operational anthropologies. Those with gravitas make them clear at the beginning of their theorizing. It is time that public administration theorists focused their attention on this important discussion.

Anthropology Matters

There are many wonders, but none more wondrous than human beings. Sophocles

The real nature of man is the totality of social relations. Karl Marx

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? Psalm 8, KJV

The Need for Anthropology

Paradigms are the grids through which human beings consider and reflect upon their existence. They are determinative in that they enable people to frame what they experience as well as interpretive in that they determine what meaning these experiences might have. Paradigms are operative in understanding the past and present, forecasting into the future, and bringing such forecasts into reality. Policies and procedures in every human organization and every person working in an organization have some paradigmatic structure through which they view and attempt to control their world. Because they are also future oriented, such paradigms are determinative of what people believe will happen in the lives of individuals and in society as a whole.

Michael Hackman and Craig Johnson (2000) refer to this as the “Pygmalion Effect” (p. 251). Prince Pygmalion is a figure from Greek mythology who “creates a statue of a beautiful woman he named Galatea. After the figure was complete, he fell in love with his creation. The god Venus took pity on the poor prince and brought

Galatea to life” (p. 252). The lesson, according to Hackman and Johnson, is that human expectations often bring about reality. The concept is parallel to that of the self-fulfilling prophecy in which people live up to the expectations they and others have of them. Those expected to do well frequently actually do well. Those expected and expecting to fail often do fail.

These paradigms or perspectives on reality of the past and of the future are, at their core, belief systems and, according to Stevenson (1987), “assert a certain authority” (p. 7). Paradigms are not merely theoretical. Rather, they are action-oriented. As Stevenson points out, they are “based on a theory of human nature which somehow suggests a course of action” (p 9).

Once paradigms are believed as fact, writes Thayer (1980), “we accept them, our actions implying that we actually prefer them. Obeying orders from superiors is one example, assuming greed an unchangeable ‘fact of human nature’ is another, politics and economics assume man is and should be greedy. Once accepted, then facts are indistinguishable from values” (p. 91). The connection between paradigm, values, and every day decisions is clear. Of course, it is true that human beings frequently act in a manner inconsistent with their paradigms, their stated beliefs, and their values. But even this is an anthropological assumption about the nature of the human person in relationship to his or her stated values, which not only explains past behavior but also has some predictive capability as to future behavior.

Paradigms of the human person are at the bedrock of human understanding. What is a human being? Stevenson (1987) comments:

This is surely one of the most important questions of all. For so much else depends on our view of human nature. The meaning and purpose of human life, what we ought to do, and what we can hope to achieve—all these are fundamentally affected by whatever we think is the ‘real’ or ‘true’ nature of man. (p. 3)

It is helpful to consider a sampling of intellectual fields as well as those thinkers whose theories have dominated them at one point or another in history. More significantly, it is vital to give serious thought to the kinds of questions that these leading theorists in their fields were asking about themselves, their fellow human beings, and the world in which they lived.

Economics is more than how economies work. Digging deeper into its history and theory, economics is about goods, services, and how capital flows to meet the needs of human beings. At its core, though, it is about the nature of the human person. From the theologians of the School of Salamanca in the 16th century to the philosophy of Adam Smith and Karl Marx, from the theories of John Maynard Keynes to those of Friedrich Hayek and Ludwig von Mises, the study of economics is, at its core, about the nature and makeup of the human actor.

Philosophy, political theory, mathematics, cosmology, theology, sociology, psychology, medicine, art, literature, and virtually every other form of human inquiry begin with some version of a basic anthropological understanding. For Freud, the human person is primarily sexual. For Skinner, human beings are more akin to machines responding to stimuli. Aristotle, Rousseau, Mills, Locke, and Martin

Luther all have core beliefs about human beings, political order, human rights, and the structure of society. Theologians from Augustine to Aquinas, from Calvin to Schleiermacher have detailed theories about the nature of the human person, most using this as the launching pad for their theological structures.

Painters and poets—whether realists, modernists, postmodernists, abstractionists or members of some other school—operate with certain assumptions about human beings and their society. Cosmologists and physicists, from Newton to Copernicus, from Galileo to Sagan hold certain beliefs about the meaning, location, and relationship of human existence to the rest of the cosmos. Sociologists like Max Weber held core assumptions not only about individual human beings, but also about how they worked, played, competed, and socialized with each other.

Are there theories about various approaches to the question of human nature and how they theoretically and operationally function? Douglas McGregor is well-known in social science for his theoretical work on the nature of the human person (Hill, 1997) and serves as an example of why paradigmatic belief systems about the nature of the human person result in profoundly different approaches to public administration and management in general. He contrasted what he termed “Theory X” and “Theory Y” views of human nature. According to Hill, “Theory X . . . assumes that people are generally lazy, dislike work, avoid responsibility, and require external stimulus to perform tasks adequately” (p. 151). Obviously, such a paradigmatic understanding of human nature is going to have a profound impact on management and administration systems at every level of society. A generous supply

and application of both carrots and sticks is going to be necessary to get people to do what needs doing in any organization. Left on their own, people will demonstrate little creativity, ambition, or drive. They will place their own security above all others' needs.

In contrast to this paradigmatic view of persons, McGregor developed what he termed a "Theory Y" perspective on human nature. Those holding to this conception of the human person believe that on their own, people tend to be creative, innovative, responsibility-seekers who can direct their own affairs (p. 151). In this view, work is natural. Good decisions are common and most often made with little interference from others. Such an understanding of human nature will result in a vastly different form of management style than that of those who are proponents of Theory X. Perhaps some gentle nudging is needed by those in positions of authority to get people moving in the right direction. Carrots and sticks are not only unnecessary but would likely interfere with the more decentralized approach of letting people make their own decisions, believing that they will come to the correct ones on their own.

While McGregor's two theories are simplistic, his work points out the need to be clear about operating anthropological assumptions in organizations. Theory X would lead to one type of public administration model. Theory Y would lead to quite a different model not only in how public administrators work with one another but also in how they relate to the general public and politicians in their everyday activities.

Kelly Clark and Anne Poortenga (2003) expand on McGregor's two extremes to provide a fuller range of possibilities how a particular understanding of the human person might influence political and administrative theory as well as their practice:

If you think human beings are basically and irredeemably selfish, you might opt for the moral views of Thrasymachus, the Sophists, or Hobbes. If you suppose that humans are initially selfish yet capable of obtaining the divine grace necessary for moral transformation, you may embrace the views of Augustine, Aquinas, Kant, or Kierkegaard. If you conclude that our finer nature can be trained by proper education for virtuous activity and selfless pursuits or for contemplation, you may prefer the moral teachings of Plato and Aristotle. If you judge that human beings are by nature good and social, you may prefer the views of Marx. And if you believe that humans are animal-like in their need for power and dominion, or godlike in their need for creative self-expression, you may find the moral views of Homer, Nietzsche, or Sartre attractive. (p. 2–3)

Public administration theorists focused on productivity, statistics, efficiency, and effectiveness might be tempted to simply ignore such fundamental philosophical questions and move to practical solutions, but they do so at their own peril. Questions of human nature are essential and must be addressed and clarified prior to the development of any system of public administration. Theorists' unwillingness to examine such questions directly contributes to the view of public administration that it lacks scientific and philosophical weight. As Robert Behn (1995) points out, "any

field of science is defined by the big questions it asks” (p. 314). Public administration theorists are not asking enough big questions.

Because public administration is so concretely human-focused on both individuals and groups, clear and concise theories of human nature ought to be of central concern. Campbell (1981) claims that “it is impossible to conceive of a theory of society without a conception of human nature” (p. 18) and that “basic to all social theory is its view of man, or theory of human nature” (p. 19). This is true not only of public administration theory but also of all social and political science. Madison’s question in *The Federalist Papers* is instructive to all who contemplate the role of government in society: “What is government itself but the greatest of all reflections on human nature?” (as quoted in Diggins, 1984, p. 27). Stephen Monsma (1974) echoes Madison’s point when he writes:

More basic to politics than laws and constitutions is man himself. It is, in the final analysis, men who write laws and constitutions, and men for whom laws and constitutions are written. . . . The nature and purposes—and shortcomings—of man’s political life grow out of the nature and purposes—and shortcomings—of man himself. (p. 11)

Why is this the case? Because, as Leslie Stevenson (1987) points out, “Different views about human nature lead naturally to different conclusions about what we ought to do and how we ought to do it” (p. 4). It is important to note that Stevenson emphasizes both the content of *what* human beings ought to do and the process of *how* they ought to do it. Anthropology contains within it some claim about

not only what kind of beings humans are, but also a normative expression of oughtness. There exists in all anthropological assumptions a compulsion toward something or away from something. These “somethings” will be determined by the operative anthropology of those who theorize about human beings, government, and society as a whole. Making implicit anthropological assumptions explicit enables theorists to compare and evaluate various anthropological paradigms but also to be explicit about how one in particular might lead to certain practical applications while another might lead to a completely opposite set of applications.

At its core, reflection on anthropological presuppositions is an exercise soaked in practicality. Kapiiec (1983) points out:

The contemporary explosion of anthropocentrism was caused not so much by a desire on the part of thinking as by, above all, practical reasons. The most complete picture possible of man proves to be indispensable particularly for theology, ethics, pedagogy, politics, and medicine. This seems to demand that the philosophy of man not limit itself to speculative investigations, but realize the fullest possible integrating vision of human nature and, in the course of doing so, take advantage of the findings of particular sciences. (p. 363)

In other words, anthropological reflection is not a leftover for philosophers to chew on when the practicality of all things has been concluded. It is the first and most necessary move. It is normative from the beginning of every inquiry. It will shape and mold all conclusions, plans, ideas, and strategies. What is believed to be true of human persons forms the questions, directs theorists into fields of investigations,

colors the data attained, influences how data is summarized, and directs the conclusions. Because this is the case, it is necessary to be clear about operational anthropological assumptions for, as Mark Rutgers (1995) points out, “there is no value-free, objective perception of reality that is at the basis of our knowledge” (p. 68).

The need for clarity on and debate over operative anthropological assumptions exists and must be brought to the forefront if public administrative theory is going to move beyond its current status.

Anthropology and Public Administration Theory

Michael Harmon (1981) summarizes the need for anthropological clarity when he writes:

Beliefs about human nature are central to the development of theories of public administration, as well as to all other social science. In order to provide the foundation for developing and integrating epistemology with a descriptive and normative theory, these beliefs should be ontologically grounded rather than selected for reason of convenience. (p. 25)

The important question to ask at this point is whether public administration theorists have met the ontological and epistemological challenge of creating such descriptive and normative theories. It should not be assumed that such theorists have been operating without anthropological theories. They have, as will become clear in

chapter 3. The question is whether theorists have been explicit in naming and defending their operational anthropological theory.

In 1949, Stephen Bailey noticed and lamented that public administration theorists had not done the necessary ontological reflecting but could actually learn to do so from a variety of non-scholarly pursuits:

Whether we care to admit it or not, many novelists, poets, and playwrights, some painters and musicians, and even a few literary critics have a far deeper insight into political man, or more accurately into man in a political or administrative context, than all but a thimbleful of political scientists and public administration experts. (p. 51)

Bailey's comment comes in the midst of a review of a novel in *Public Administration Review*. He further opines, "It may be that the time has come when we in political science could with advantage spend fewer hours reading the annual report of the CAB and more hours reading Homer and Tolstoy" (p. 51). He concludes by calling his colleagues and students to read the book he is reviewing, a novel entitled *An Affair of the Heart*:

It is hoped that many students of political science will read the book and read it carefully. Until we in political science are able to bring to our research something of the sensitivity of the novelist, the poet, or the playwright, and are able to apply our science to encompass the product of that sensitivity, we must talk humbly about the adequacy of our theory. Until that great day comes, we can learn a lot about 'human nature in administration' and 'the differentiated

continuum of policy' from our artistic and literary colleagues. They have more of ultimate truth by the tail than have we. (p. 53)

Have public administration theorists ignored the question of the nature of the human person altogether? Not entirely. The most common approach has been to uncritically borrow anthropologies operative in other disciplines. According to Ostrom (1973), this has meant the development of a "science of administration informed by a theory of bureaucracy, a political science informed by a theory of the state, and an economics informed by a theory of the market" (p. xvii). It is important to note that each theory of bureaucracy, politics, and economics has its own theory of the nature of the human person.

For example, in economics, the Marxist theory of economics considers human beings primarily from a materialistic perspective set within a social context. As Karl Marx wrote, "the real nature of man is the totality of social relations" (as quoted in Stevenson, 1987, p. 4). A proponent of the free market system is more likely to view the human person primarily as a rational individual, motivated by self-interest. Clearly, administrative theories based on such divergent conceptions of the human person are going to vastly differ. Before either system can be adopted by the field of public administration, their competing anthropological perspectives must be considered and subjected to criticism.

A public administration theory that borrows heavily from Max Weber's work is going to conceive of bureaucracy as the solution to many of the problems of modern society. Society's problems are caused by disorder and will be solved by

order. Public administration theorists will emphasize clarity in lines of authority and communication up and down the chain of command. What matters is that everyone knows their place. The key to effectiveness is knowing which task belongs to which person or category of persons. As government grows, bureaucracy expands.

Normative questions about how persons fit into such a structure or whether or not such a structure reflects the nature of the people involved are not actually considered important. What matters is how the machine fits together, with each part doing its proper role. But what if this is not the way humans work best together? What if some people need more than what being a part of an extensive bureaucracy can offer? Caldwell (1980) wonders if the “apparent human tendency to develop large, impersonal, centralized bureaucracies to cope with social needs could be a monumental error compounded by man’s understanding of his innate needs and limitations” (p. 2).

Public administrative theory which holds efficiency and effectiveness as its primary objectives tend to be built on a cost-benefit analysis structure in which the humanness of the system or whether or not it contributes to human dignity are lesser considerations. The nature and makeup of the human persons in the system does not much matter. The focus is primarily on the creation of and meeting established and clear goals and objectives in the quickest and most cost-effective manner possible.

Administration, then, becomes a matter of numbers, record-keeping, and productivity. While perhaps at first attractive because of its orderliness, something is missing in such a system. As Lynton Caldwell (1980) writes, “Once empirically

testable methodology replaces moral philosophy as the basis for ascertaining the propriety of social behavior and political action, the old metes and bounds of constitutional order become questionable” (p. 5). Matters of legality, ethics, and a basic sense of common good and common evil are pushed to the side. What is being done does not matter as much as whether it is being done with efficiency and effectiveness. Those who refer to people whose focus is said to be rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic are expressing exactly this concern—that while orderliness matters, it is not the chief human good and, in some instances, a waste of time and resources.

Caldwell believes that this bureaucratic approach is the cause of much of the frustration with and within public administration. He asks:

Why do so many people regard the problem-solving record of modern government to be impressive for its failures? And why have historical bureaucracies, intended to strengthen social planning and control, so often become obstructive burdens to social vitality, swelling to inordinate size during the declining years of political systems? Does recourse to bureaucratic government follow from a misreading of human nature and the conditions conducive to human cooperation? (p. 1)

Caldwell believes that it does. Francis Neumann (1996) takes the argument further. The focus on bureaucracy is more than a failure to bring about good results. It is more than simply bad structure. Driving deeper, Neumann asks if “the greatest questions that can be found within the field of public management concern the

efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery system, what does that say about the character of the field?" (p. 411).

In answering his own question, Neumann asserts that this is indeed the core of the problem in public administration theory. He wants to get to the "real big questions" (p. 411). His conclusion, though, still does not get to the core of the issue. He gets very close but stops a level or two below where he needs to be. He does not ask about the nature of the human person. Rather, he focuses on the nature of organizations and asks questions about how such organizations relate to their environment and what it means to manage a public organization. The assumption is that persons operate primarily within organizations and no thought is directed to how they might operate prior to or apart from them or even whether his organizational human might be merely one side of a more complex reality that is the human person.

The result of such adoptive strategies for public administration theorists is that the anthropological assumptions built into the bureaucratic, government, and economic theoretical choices have not been examined with a critical eye. Such bedrock philosophical and epistemological assumptions have a powerful, albeit unexamined, influence on the conclusions drawn by theorists who adopt them. As Simon (1973) states, "There is nothing about social and human phenomena that permits us to devise and test social designs without the corresponding foundation of descriptive knowledge about human and social behavior" (p. 351). To take his comment one step further, it is also necessary to devise and test various descriptions of human behavior which serve as the foundations for social design, for as Mieczylaw

Krapiec (1983) writes , “The structure of the community must correspond to the structure of man” (p. 260). Without a theory of the human person, it is impossible to discuss what is the good for human beings, leaving public administration subject to a host of temporary pressures.

William Scott and David Hart (1973) do not believe better processes will bring about greater efficiencies. Rather, Scott and Hart submit that the central issue is a lack of philosophical reflection on the “innate moral nature of man” (p. 416). Their observation is,

made on the grounds that: (1) an administrative elite performs the functions of leadership in advanced societies, and (2) this elite subscribes to a metaphysic that influences its decision and its behavior in the management of technology in complex organizations, but (3) this administrative metaphysic is unarticulated, and, therefore, is unexamined. This, the crisis in administration, is the neglect of metaphysical speculation. (p. 416)

Why has such metaphysical speculation been neglected despite its centrality to the endeavor of public administration? The authors list two reasons. First, administrators primarily concern themselves with “matters of expediency” (p. 416). Second, they are far more comfortable with paradigms built on “technical and economic rationality” (p. 416). Public administrators do not want to be evaluated by any other criteria, especially that which is metaphysical in nature because such an approach “is condemned as a wasteful excursion into mysticism” (p. 417).

In an age where numbers too often tell the story and quantitative is generally believed to be superior to qualitative, it is little wonder that public administrative theorists default to considerations of effectiveness and efficiencies, especially when those who hold elected political office are primarily concerned about results and getting the most for the taxpayer's money or for their own political careers. In the relatively closed loop of developing governmental annual budgets, congressional hearings, incrementalism, pork barrel spending, set-asides, log-rolling, blame-shifting in the extreme sport of bipartisan politics, it is too much to ask that those who practice public administration also be those who theorize about it. The theorists must lead. Lest the pragmatic tendency to focus only on results and ignore theory presents too great a temptation, it is important to remember that Karl Marx's writings were mostly produced in near isolation in a London library and are still largely unread by proponents and opponents alike. And yet, they have had profound influence on the shape and form of human existence around the world for more than 100 years.

Despite this unwillingness or unease in asking the big questions, Scott and Hart believe that "administrative theorists have an image of man's moral nature. Imbedded in their writings are moral assumptions which are seldom recognized by them as the foundations of theory and practice" and yet influence "every one of his prescriptions for organizational design, managerial style, and social goals" (p. 418). In other words, formative and primary perspectives on human nature are part and parcel of every theorist. And yet, despite the strength of the view held and their

influence on the development of theory, these perspectives are simply accepted as fact without investigation or even the acknowledgement of their existence.

Difficulties in Anthropological Clarity

Scott and Hart might have added a third cause of the unwillingness of theorists to address the metaphysical questions about the nature of the human person in public administrative theory: such speculation is difficult. It is cumulative and not solved once and for all. It is a body of knowledge that grows, goes in strange directions, and directly touches on who and what human beings were, are, and are becoming. Getting the answer “right” isn’t necessarily the goal. As the quote from Sophocles makes clear at the beginning of this section, human beings are wondrous things. Wondrous things are not quickly or easily understood, for if they were, the wonder would cease.

Francis Neumann (1996) points out that “among scientific disciplines the big questions are never really completely answered. The big questions, by their very nature, are multifaceted and extend into dimensions of which we are never fully cognizant at any one time” (p. 412). Few public administration theorists are trained in metaphysics or philosophy in general. Their concern is more often for the betterment of society or addressing a particular social need or phenomenon. Why spend time speculating about the nature of the person in poverty when in reality what is needed is some kind of poverty alleviation program? On the surface, this certainly seems both rational and humane. But beneath the surface are operating a myriad of assumptions

about the person in poverty, the person who wants to help, what kind of program would be most likely to help, and the most appropriate person or level of society to provide assistance. Without examination, such programs can and sometimes do have a series of unintended consequences which result in the impoverishment of another or in deepening poverty for the person of first concern. It is these unexamined anthropological assumptions that most often bring about consequences that few consider when putting in place a new program.

The difficulty of clarifying anthropological assumptions is compounded by the fact that there will likely be competing sets of assumptions that, in many cases, will be diametrically opposed to one another. Michael Novak (1991) points out that theorists:

must deal with humans as they are. Yet remarkably different hypotheses are entertained about human beings. Who are we? What may we hope? What ought we to do? These, Immanuel Kant suggests, are the perennial questions behind political economy. Every system . . . represents at least an implicit answer to them. Each system allows only so much scope to individuals. Each favors some instinct in the human breast and penalizes others. Each embodies a conviction about the most dangerous evils, which need to be watched or carefully repressed. (p. 82)

Anthropological assumptions, so formative in public administration theories, assert different sets of operational beliefs about the nature of the human person. Consensus is not likely. In some sense, the project of attempting to express and

discuss such perspectives seems inherently dangerous. It means moving past speculation about what public administrators do. It moves into the realm speculating about what public administrators and, more generally, the public itself actually are. No longer is the question merely “What can be done?” or “How can what is being done be accomplished with greater efficiency and effectiveness?” The question becomes “What ought we do?” What is consistent with the nature of the human person?

As Stevenson (1987) points out, such questions are difficult because their answers “assert something about the nature of all men, at any time and in any place. And these world views claim not only assent but also action; if one really believes in a theory, one must accept that it has implications for one’s way of life” (p. 7). Are theorists comfortable with making their assumptions about human beings explicit? If anthropological assumptions are taken to their logical conclusions, will the results be embarrassing or barbaric or too idealistic? Such questions are not easily answered. Nevertheless, public administrative theorists must be clear about what they believe to be true about what they perceive about reality because, as Rutgers (1995) points out, “there is no value-free, objective perception of reality that is at the basis of our knowledge” (p. 68).

The task is daunting and what follows is merely a first attempt to create a framework for evaluation. It is not intended to create new anthropological categories. This project is less ambitious and only seeks to name what already has been and provide one possible means of comparing past, current, and potential future theories

of administration. It does not attempt to cover every potential human trait but instead considers only two: the classical virtues of prudence and justice.

CHAPTER II

CREATING AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

“An intellectual construct is like a pair of spectacles. We see and order events in the world by looking through our spectacles and by using intellectual constructs to form pictures in our mind’s ‘eye’—an intellectual vision. We are apt to neglect a critical examination of the spectacles or the constructs themselves.” Vincent Ostrom

*“Poor man wanna be rich,
Rich man wanna be king
And the king ain’t satisfied
Until he rules everything”*
Bruce Springsteen

Narrowing the Anthropological Focus

Philosophical anthropology is a broad category. For the purposes of this project, the focus is narrowed and a number of issues inherent to the general field will not be considered. This project will focus neither on the origin nor on the telos of human beings. It will not include any attempt to define human happiness or where human beings fit into the broader scope of life or non-life on this planet or anywhere else. It will not consider the ontological makeup of human beings or questions on the existence of the soul.

This project will focus on how theorists believe human beings function as individuals and in social settings on the scales of the classically defined virtues of prudence and justice. The questions addressed will be those pertaining to human nature and its tendencies. Such matters are naturally tied to theories of society and

governance as well as to human capabilities and inclinations. To address such questions, it is important that the operating assumptions be made clear at the beginning. The basic approach will be that of Aristotle which asserts that human beings have the capacity to make choices and that they have the ability to consider both the options available to them and the consequences of their choices prior to the act of choosing. Aristotle assumes that each human person chooses and acts for what that person believes to be good. It is assumed that no one chooses evil because it is evil, with the possible exception of persons who might qualify as sociopaths.

Furthermore, it will be assumed that the exercise of the will depends on a knowledge of the good in the concrete and the possession of a character that permits the consistent pursuit of the good. The framework will be built on the concepts of the virtues of prudence, defined as the recognition of the good and the development of methods for achieving it, and justice, defined as the decision to pursue the good as it is identified by prudence. These two scales will provide the overarching structure on which key components of anthropological assumptions are identified and will be further defined below.

One further factor will be considered. The framework will attempt to judge whether a particular public administration theorist is consistent in the application of the virtues of prudence and justice. Campbell (1981) is helpful in pointing out that a “theory must not contradict itself by asserting or denying in one place what it denies or asserts in another” (p. 45) The goal is to determine if theorists believe that their assumptions are operational for everyone or if different sets of people fall along

different places on the continuum. More specifically, a public administration theorist might assume that the public, in general, is neither prudent nor just, leading to particular ways of structuring society through government intervention. However, the same theorist might assume that within the field of public administration, people are generally both prudent and just. This will lead to one approach for those who are served by public administrators and a completely different approach to those who work as public administrators.

It must be acknowledged that when the scales are further developed and applied to specific theorists, complete categorization will not be typical. It is more likely that theorists will tend toward one quadrant or another. It is also important to note that some theorists will have a stronger, more developed, or more readily apparent anthropology than other theorists. The goal is not to address which theorist has the right anthropology. Rather, the goal is to provide a functional scale that can be used to compare the operational anthropology of one theorist to that of another within the narrow categories of prudence and justice.

Creating a Framework

The Prudence/Imprudence Scale

Aristotle defines prudence (phronesis) as follows:

Those whom we call prudent deliberate well about what is good and advantageous to themselves and about life as a whole. One doesn't deliberate

about things which are unchanging or which are not in one's power to do. . . .

Prudence is a disposition with true reason and ability for actions concerning human goods. . . . Practical wisdom or prudence is a true disposition toward action, by the aid of a right rule with regard to things good and bad for men (i.e., it is the power of right deliberation about things good for oneself).

Practical wisdom is the quality of seeing what is good for oneself, or one's group in regard to any question, but it is not concerned with how particular things are made or how particular states, like health or strength, are produced, for these are among the objects of art. . . . In its particular manifestations, practical wisdom is the dominant element in such disciplines as political science, economics and household management, physical training, etc. (trans. by Oswald, 1962, Book 6, Section 5)

What, then, is imprudence? It is the opposite of prudence. It lacks reason and deliberation, thinking little about either the options available or the possible consequences to others. It is shortsightedness. It has no concern for others or obligations one might bear toward them. It does not take into consideration the common good. Imprudence does not spend time reflecting about whether something better might exist or be worth working toward. It is choosing a course of action based on emotion and passion that has not subjected to the constraints of reason.

For human beings to be prudent, according to Aristotle, they must have reason. The exercise of phronesis involves choice-making, "analysis of particulars in determining the best response to each specific situation," takes "into account the

wholeness of human nature” and addresses “matters of the public good” (Hariman, 2003, p. 3). None of these are possible without the ability to be reasonable.

Rationality, according to Mieczylaw Krapiec (1983), is the ability to know, to choose, to form thoughts and concepts, and to make judgments (p. 32). Irrationality, then, is a lack of the ability to know, to form thoughts and concepts, and to make judgments. The first question germane to this project is whether prudence is a common trait among human beings with a few exceptions or whether imprudence is to be generally assumed among human beings with a few exceptions.

Reason is required to reflect on current conditions, draw the conclusion that something better exists, and devise a plan to bring into reality what is determined to be better than current conditions. Of course, there will be differences of opinion as to what is “better” and for whom:

Prudence is the mode of reasoning about contingent matters in order to select the best course of action. Contingent events cannot be known with certainty, and actions are intelligible only with regard to some idea of what is good. As both such matters are always subject to dispute, they can be resolved rationally only through deliberation—that is, through reciprocal exposition, comparison, and evaluation of arguments that represent competing perspectives or purposes. (Hariman, 2003, p. 4)

Much in recent public administrative theory has narrowed the definition of rationality and, in doing so, has severely limited the percentage of people who can be said to be truly rational and, therefore, prudent. As Adams (1992) points out, “Our

culture of modernity has as one of its chief constituents technical rationality. Technical rationality is a way of thinking and living that emphasizes the scientific-analytical mindset and the belief in technological progress” (p. 63).

Hariman (2003) points out the two sides of this development. The benefit has been increased efficiency and effectiveness:

Whether known as Fordism, Taylorism, modernism, bureaucratization, or any of several other labels, modern social engineering has long been recognized to be a boon to human life, capable of large-scale disasters, and unstoppable.

Through the application of modern scientific rationality to the management of all material and human resources, both governmental and corporate organizations have achieved exponential increases in productivity and comprehensive investment within all areas of human life. From water to labor, industry to agriculture, architecture to urban design, and through every practice subject to accounting procedures, mapping, zoning, and a host of related technologies, the public space and common resources that once were the domain of politics have been remade in the image of a rational world. (p. 7)

The negative side is what such a conception does to the understanding of the place and purpose of human beings. The approach that emphasizes efficiency and effectiveness:

defines political actors as self-interested power maximizers, constrained by their resources for effective action to that end and regulated by their

perceptions of others' capacity to affect them in return. Political analysis consists in assessing all of the means for action according to calculations of gain and risk. By giving priority to material and especially coercive capabilities, and being suspicious of verbal statements, one can objectively determine the best possible course of action for survival in a world of force and fraud. (Hariman, p. 9)

There is no consideration of what is a good life and what is not.

Logical positivism—or what Frederickson and Smith (2003) call the behavioral position—has become the order of the day. While technical rationality and the scientific or behavioral method are useful, this approach elevates one form of reason and disregards “intuitive guesses, judgment, and wisdom” (p. 9). Michael Spicer (1997) provides a useful overview of the role of logical positivism which:

has manifested itself in a variety of ways including an emphasis on behavioral social science in the 1950s and 1960s. This was followed by an emphasis on policy analysis, cost-benefit analysis, management science, and systems analysis in the 1960s and 1970s. While this faith in the development of an empirical science of public administration is perhaps somewhat diminished nowadays, it remains an important element in the thinking of mainstream public administration. Its strength in the field, for example, is evidenced by repeated calls over the past decade or so for more rigorous empirical and quantitative research in public administration. (p. 19)

In this limited way of thinking about rationality:

All managerial tools assume the objective nature of organizational reality; in other words, there is an underlying belief that human situations can be explained and predicted through the application of the concepts and procedures of a technical and functional framework. Individuals' subjective ideas are supposed to be related to the functional requirements of a model or theory. Anything that does not fit into this objective framework tends to be ignored. (Jun and Gross, 1996, p. 112)

Such thinking leads to a firm belief in technical rationality done primarily by specialists who have observed, quantified, tested, and submitted their findings to their fellow specialists for review, using a language not accessible or comprehensible to most people outside their field. The ability to reason gained from experience, background, novels, art, or familial training have no place at the table. Because such groundings for rationality are dismissed as invalid for determining policy and its application, the gulf between public administration specialists and the populations they serve is wide.

Spicer (1997) points to the influence of Hume on the thinking of Herbert Simon as an example:

Humean ideas have . . . had an impact on public administration writing.

Particularly important here is the work of Herbert Simon because of his role in advancing logical positivism in public administration and the social sciences.

Simon strongly embraced the positivist idea that the only meaningful scientific

statements about the world are ‘statements about the observable world and the way in which it operates. (p. 241)

“Drawing on logical positivism,” writes Spicer, “Simon and others strengthened the belief among many that public administration could and would become a true science by following empiricist principles” (p. 243).

If rationality is narrowed to technical rationality, then prudence is limited to a handful of experts who understand and practice the scientific method. Recognizing the good can be achieved only by those who can apply the scientific method. Of course, this means that those who are unfamiliar with or untrained in the application of the scientific method are not capable of prudence because of their irrationality. They will not recognize what the good and, therefore, will not be able to choose it.

There are at least two ways of considering irrationality. The first is that of theorists like Hart (1972) who points out:

Study after study has demonstrated that the common man is not the rational, self-motivating, and thoughtful democrat of the Jeffersonian dream. Rather, the picture that emerges is of a lethargic, irrational, and prejudiced individual who neither understands nor is particularly committed to democratic principles. (p. 610)

There is some irony in the fact that Hart cites studies, and not experience, to demonstrate the point that people generally lack the ability to act in a reasonable fashion.

The second is a less negative understanding of human nature that accounts for emotion and passion. Akhlaque Haque (1997) uses as an example the thinking of Edmund Burke:

He distrusted reason because he believed human nature, tradition and received values, as part of “natural order” are always a better guide to practical action. He understood that human beings are not purely rational creatures, and that their passions, instincts and prejudices always play a vital role in their reasonable action. Therefore, for all practical purposes using pure reason to understand social and human behavior would be inappropriate and misleading. Burke noted that, ‘politics ought to be adjusted, not to human reasonings, but to human nature: of which the reason is but a part, and by no means the greatest part.’ Burke, therefore, believed that human reason is inherently limited and the possibility of error and uncertainty should always be in the minds of a prudent observer. (p. 258)

It is exactly this dichotomy between rationality and irrationality that introduces inconsistency into the understanding of human nature and capability. Such an approach creates a situation in which those in public administration are the only ones capable of rational choice because they are the only ones capable of putting their assumptions in scientifically acceptable language, developing models, gathering data, testing the model, and reporting their results. In this sense, the public has one kind of human nature (irrational and, therefore, operating with false prudence because of a

lack of technical rationality) while public administrators themselves have another (rational, and, therefore, prudent through technical rationality).

Barry Karl (1977) believes that this has led to the development of a elitism or classism which did not serve American society well in the twentieth century. He attributed the genesis of elitism to Woodrow Wilson and “his generation of Progressive leaders” who “ were trying to create a British-like, upper-middle class elite, to put themselves in control of it, and to co-opt others into it as a means of stabilizing the wildly growing American society of the late nineteenth century” (p. 29) Karl believes this led to a confrontation between the proponents of what he calls “class leadership” and those he refers to as advocates of “mass democracy” (p. 28).

Prudence, according to Aristotle, is not merely self-interested in that it reasonably considers only what is best for the individual doing the considering. His definition is explicit that “life as a whole” must be a part of the deliberating process in prudence and that what is good for “one’s group” must be measured as much as what is good for one’s self

Hariman (2003) agrees in his description of prudence classically defined: “prudence is the determination of what is good for both the individual and others” (p. 2). Prudence is not merely mulling over the needs of the self, but also weighing the obligations the person has toward others: “Prudence represents the ideal of the individual and the society advancing together rather than at the expense of each other” (p. 8).

It will also be important to watch for language in theorists that indicate another variation. It may be that some theorists believe the public in general is neither prudent nor foolish. Prudence, in this way of thinking, is gained through education, specialization, and the application of the scientific method to decisions and choices that will be made among public administrators. While not denigrating the public by holding it in general as foolish, this version still retains a limited role of the public in decision-making, at least until they are better informed and educated.

Before considering the nature of justice and then beginning to map out the available options for how prudence and justice might be used to access and then evaluate the operative philosophical anthropology in some of the leading public administrative theorists, it should be admitted that the consideration of prudence in the field, both as it operates in the general public and among public administrators specifically, will not be easy. As Hariman points out:

If willing to consider prudence, moreover, we have to grant that it immediately runs afoul of basic criteria of modern rationality: prudence antedates the fact-value distinction; it is difficult to quantify; it is largely retrospective; it is necessarily parochial; it is prescriptive; it is too general; it focuses too much on individual personality; it can be a stalking horse for political advocacy. (p. 6)

There is some truth in this. Measuring prudence is not a simple task. It does not acclimate itself easily to pie charts or bar graphs. Those accustomed to and

comfortable with seeing the world through quantitative eyes might find the exercise to be the cause of some degree of discomfort. Hariman explains why:

There is no cogito, no controlled experiment, no phenomenological method, no falsification rule. Worse yet, there is no hierarchy of decision rules.

Contrary to the rational organization of a philosophical investigation or scientific research program, prudential knowledge is organized more in the manner of a crossword puzzle: one may begin at any point, will work with a hodgepodge of deeply enculturated cues, will have to integrate both formal constraints and factual knowledge from an enormous social field, and should know when to quit. (p. 11)

Because something causes discomfort or does not fit into what is broadly considered to be the normal realm of public administrative theory, however, does not necessarily mean it should be ignored. It is important to recall the comments of some public administrative theorists who see a gap that has yet to be filled. Storing decries the lack of comprehensive statements relating to the underlying principles of public administration. Stillman refers to the exercise of theorizing about public administration as a continual trek in the wilderness. Hart bemoans both the fragmented assumptions of public administrative theory as well as the absence of metaphysical speculation that occurs within it. Ostrom speaks of an intellectual crisis. Perhaps the place to begin to address the crisis and find the way in the wilderness is to focus on the metaphysical speculation as to the nature of the human person, prudence, and justice.

The Just/Unjust Scale

The key question for the just/unjust scale is not one of knowledge but rather one of volition. Knowing the good, will most people commit themselves to doing it? Aristotle's definition is helpful: "The commonly accepted opinion with respect to justice is that it is a disposition to be just, to do what is just, and to wish what is just" (trans. by Oswald, 1962, Book 5, Section 1).

Although prudence, as mentioned above, begins to consider the matter of others and social responsibility, it is justice where such consideration finds its natural home. As Aquinas (trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 1947) wrote:

Now the proper matter of justice consists of those things that belong to our intercourse with other men. . . . Hence the act of justice in relation to its proper matter and object is indicated in the words, "Rendering to each one his right," since, as Isidore says, 'a man is said to be just because he respects the rights [jus] of others.'" (Second Part of the Second Part, Question 58, Article 1)

Because of the social concerns of justice, it is a natural area of inquiry for those committed to theorizing about public administration. How does the individual relate to the whole? How does the whole relate to the individual? Who will adjudicate in the inevitable conflicts between the individual's demand and the requirements of the whole? Whose concern is first? Is neutrality to be assumed on the part of the adjudicator or could it be that even those who adjudicate must deal

with the demands of their own self-interest versus the obligations they bear to others and their society? All of these are important questions that pertain to justice.

What, then, is a view of the human person who posits that most or all persons are unjust? It is the opposite of justice. It is thinking, acting and living only for self (and perhaps a small circle of family members or friends). It lacks an eye for or an interest in seeing the rights, claims, and needs of others. To those who hold an anthropological perspective that emphasizes injustice, human beings are generally irresponsible. Even if such a thing as “the common good” existed, it would not hold much sway over individuals for, as Campbell (1981) points out, in this way of thinking, “only individuals matter: the interests, wishes, and happiness of individuals are what count in the determination of moral and political priorities” (p. 37).

Most theorists who lean into this camp, as will be seen, do not actually assert that all human beings are unjust. If this were the case, it would make an argument in favor of no government because it would be better to give no one power over another. Rather, in this way of thinking, only the vast majority are unjust. There are a small number of people who are just and must infuse justice into social systems. Hume’s comment on lawful government is a solid example: “When we [philosophers] assert that all lawful government arises from the consent of the people, we certainly do them a great deal more honour than they deserve, or even expect and desire from us” (p. 478). Who is the “us” and who is the “they”?

McGregor’s Theory X person (Hill, 1997) is also illuminating. According to those who hold such views:

1. The average human being has an inherent dislike of work and will avoid it if he can;
2. Because of this human tendency characteristic of dislike of work, most people must be coerced, controlled, directed, threatened with punishment to get them to put forth the adequate effort toward the achievement of organizational objectives;
3. The average human being prefers to be directed, wishes to avoid responsibility, has relatively little ambition, wants security above all;
4. In its basic conceptions of managing human resources . . . management appears to have concluded that the average human being is permanently arrested in his development in early adolescence. (pp. 34–35)

Even if people appear to be just—that is, concerned about what is good with an eye for others—it is only a cover for their real intentions. What appears to be cooperation is actually coercion. Manipulation, not justice, instructs individuals as to how they live in society. There is power, will, and competition. All else is just an illusion. In this Darwinian perspective, “cooperation is merely a way of maximizing value as alliances and coalitions form to defeat environmental forces” (Campbell, 1981, p. 38). Dennard (1996) is even more colorful in her description: “from a Darwinian perspective, we might see life in the jungle [bureaucratic or otherwise] as ‘red in tooth and claw’ as Tennyson did. Creatures devour each other; not everything survives” (p. 497).

Is human nature naturally inclined to know what is good (prudence) and then to do what is good (justice)? The implications for public administration are practical and profound as the possible combinations of prudence and justice demonstrate.

Possible Combinations

High Prudence/High Justice

In practical terms, where a public administrative theorist believes most people fall on the continuum of prudent/foolish and just/unjust will have a profound influence on the kinds of policies and practices developed. If theorists assume people are generally prudent and just, then government and public administration specifically will prescribe filling in any holes in knowledge or justice that might exist in a society because of limited imperfections.

In this conception, the role of public administrators within their organization and in their relationships with the public will be generally limited. It might involve itself with raising up people who have both of these virtues through public education or other means. It might also become involved in protecting the public from a small minority of people who will not acknowledge what is prudent or, despite the knowledge, choose what is not good. The role of government in general and public administrators specifically might be to gather the people of communities together to frame issues and make decisions. Citizen participation would be the mantra and would determine both the goals to be set and the means to achieve them. Communication would be multi-directional and open. Those making decisions would

be more like facilitators than decision-makers. Sticks and carrots would be rarely used because most human beings know the good and do it, motivated more by their morals than by materialism.

Gordon Clapp serves as an example. He began working in the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) as an office boy and was eventually named chair by the United States Senate in 1946. Harry Case (1964) describes him as follows:

In short, Clapp respected the other fellow; he expected the other fellow to know why he was there and what he was doing there, and he expected him to behave responsibly, intelligently and energetically. This in itself is almost an entire theory of administration. He himself was confident that this was based on sound assumptions about human nature: 'The message is this: a high level of performance in the public service requires an administrative environment where courage, honesty, and dignity are assumed to be the common rule . . . and where a tough and persistent faith in one's fellow men will survive the consequences of mistakes, disputes, and even the perfidies of the occasional renegade or the cheap tasteless character.' (p. 88)

Clapp's optimism in the people with whom he worked is seen in his understanding of his role as chairman, which was "freeing the people in an organization to do the job of which of they are capable: to create the conditions which encourage the employees to grow and develop" (p. 89). He believed, according to Case:

Too many experts see human beings as units of energy to be manipulated by devious means or enticed by extrinsic favors and rewards. Successful administration carefully prepares the site quietly, without ceremony puts the key foundation stones in place—a faith in the feasibility of the enterprise and a faith in one’s associates—and builds upon it an organization held together in a framework with ample tolerances for individual difference, growth, and dignity. (p. 91)

Did Gordon Clapp believe that human beings tend toward both prudence and justice? It is clear that he did believe that, at least, about those with whom he worked. It is not known what he might have thought of the people who actually lived in the Tennessee Valley, but it is possible that he could have had a radically different opinion of them.

David Hart (1972), in describing those calling for more citizen participation, wrote that they did so from a specific anthropological perspective in which the citizen is:

capable of handling all of the requirements; he will invariably participate when given the opportunity; he receives his greatest satisfactions from participation; he and his fellow participants will arrive at a consensus in the resolution of policy matters; and, most important, he understands that his full human potential can only be realized through participation. (p. 604)

In fact, says Stephen Bailey, “Because of the ultimate capacity of American citizens to make wise, fundamental value choices, attempts to induce them into

making superficial technical choices are ill-advised” (as quoted in Frederickson, 1982, p. 503). An operational anthropology that holds to a theory that human beings are neither generally prudent nor just will backfire.

At the core of this anthropological perspective, write Roy Kaplan and Curt Tausky (1977), “is the belief that man is basically good, infinitely malleable, and capable of perfectibility, and therefore organizational goals and individual interests should be compatible. Humanist approaches stress the importance of developing meaningful work routines which afford workers an opportunity for decision making” (p. 171).

McGregor’s Theory Y human being is most descriptive of this approach. The following assumptions are made about most people:

1. The expenditure of physical and mental effort in work is as natural as play or rest;
2. External control and the threat of punishment are not the only means for bringing about effort toward organizational objectives. Man will exercise self-direction and self-control in the service of objectives to which he is committed;
3. Commitment to objectives is a function of the rewards associated with their achievement;
4. The average human being learns, under proper conditions, not only to accept but to seek responsibility;

5. The capacity to exercise a relatively high degree of imagination, ingenuity and creativity is widely, not narrowly, distributed in the population;
6. Under the conditions of modern industrial life, the intellectual potentialities of the average human being are only partially utilized. (Hill, 1997, pp. 47–48)

According to Hayek, at the base of such a perspective is “the respect for the individual man *qua* man, that is, the recognition of his own views and tastes as supreme in his own sphere, however narrowly that may be circumscribed, and the belief that it is desirable that men should develop their own individual gifts and talents” (p. 17). In this construct, conflict is “only a surface matter” (Campbell, 1981, p. 39). The reality is that there are large areas of agreement or consensus “on basic values and the prime models of social organization” (p. 39).

Order, rather than being imposed on society, occurs with little planning by a centralized and empowered body. It occurs as a result of individuals who exercise their reason to both know and do what is prudent and just. Fragmentation is not the natural order of things. Instead, wholeness and interrelatedness are the normal for, as Dennard (1996) writes, “social interdependence exists before interests, goals, and even thought” (p. 496). This is an interesting comment regarding thought because it makes unnecessary the exercise of reason within determining what is prudent and what is just. Such things are simply known as they are part and parcel of human nature. No rational process is required for its genesis.

If such assumptions are true, the exercise of authority and especially coercion are unnecessary most of the time. Human beings are naturally entrepreneurial and will provide for themselves and for others:

Public administrators must learn to support democracy as it occurs rather than planning for it as something that *might* occur once conditions have been perfected. Self-organization . . . *implies* that change is easier than administrators have been trained to believe. Perhaps classical management theory, concerned as it is with imposing order instead of discovering it in relationships, has always bucked the natural system in this way. (Dennard, 1996, p. 500)

What is needed is participatory decision-making and only when decisions need to be made at a group or community level. It should be possible and even likely that individual interests and organizational goals be compatible and complimentary. This would be the norm. Incompatibility would be abnormality with causation usually laid at the feet of the organization rather than the individual.

David Hart (1972), in discussing participatory democracy, writes:

Implicit in the assumption that through full citizen participation a universal sense of commonality will be discovered, which will (1) cause all men to view one another as brothers, and (2) be the source of all laws and organizations. This will, of course, eliminate conflict, for when citizens disagree they can look inward to that common core and will know what they ought to do. (p. 613)

If conflict does exist, the problem is not to be found in some general fault common among human beings. Instead, “conflict is unnatural and indicates institutional illnesses” rather than anthropological ones (Scott, 1983, p. 187). While the source of such altruism is not the primary focus, Hal Rainey and Paula Steinbauer (1999) attribute it to the evolutionary process which has “fostered in human beings motives and attitudes conducive to communal and collective behavior, including trust, reciprocity, and identification with organizations” (p. 24).

Community and society, then, are not restraining forces where coercive powers are collected to hold back the natural false prudence and injustice that would occur without them. Instead, community becomes that “which will enable not only the creation of objective values that surpass the potentiality of particular individuals, but also is a guarantee of an internal, personal development of particular individuals” (Krapiec, 1983, p. 244). It is “a gathering, a bond of categorical relations, binding human persons so that they can develop, in the most possible, comprehensive manner, the dynamism of their personality for the purpose of fulfilling the common good of every human person” (p. 251). Without community, “man would not be able to develop his personal potentialities” (p. 330).

Some historical evaluation is useful. The bloodiest century in modern times has only recently ended, threatening some of the optimism inherent in the high prudence/high justice scale. Technological knowledge and expertise were employed in a fashion that was neither prudent nor just but was, in many instances, highly efficient and effective in its destructive ability. From Stalin’s Soviet Union to Hitler’s

Germany, from Pol Pot's Cambodia to racism, classism, genderism, and a host of other social ills and destructive patterns of behavior, it can be difficult to square the thoughts of advocates of the theory that human nature is generally prudent and just with humanity's most recent history.

On the other hand, according to the 1997 United Nations Human Development report, "poverty has fallen more in the past 50 years than in the previous 500" (Friedman, 2000, p. 350). Comparing 1960 to 1995, the progress in only 35 years is remarkable. Globally, people were living 16 years longer in 1995 than in 1960. It is important to remember that it took developed countries over 100 years to accomplish this. Infant mortality rates dropped with 90% of children being immunized against TB, diphtheria, polio, and measles.

Prior to the Industrial Revolution, poverty was the norm for human history. While poverty is still rampant globally, there are encouraging signs: rising literacy levels, rising caloric intake and fat intake, better and more available health care, and a drop in child labor rates from 20% in 1980 to 8% in 1997 (Rosenberg & Birdzell Jr. as quoted in Heath, 2003, p. 10). Furthermore:

The move from poverty to wealth is, in a social sense, an advance in material well-being. It is not adequately captured in statistics of gross national product, national income, or real wages. Death has always been the ultimate threat, and the move from poverty to wealth is first of all a move away from death. Its first indicators are statistics on life expectancy, death rates, and infant mortality. Famine and hunger are next on the list: again the move from

poverty to wealth is a move from famine and hunger, as indicated statistically by a declining incidence of malnutrition and its related diseases. Plague is the next of the ancient afflictions, and it may be taken as symbolic of all fatal or disabling diseases; the move away from them is another move from poverty to wealth. . . . A life of poverty is a life in which survival is the first and almost the only order of business, in which housing is so crowded as to make privacy unknown, and in which choices are narrowly restricted. The move to wealth is a move toward greater possibilities of privacy and individual choice. (p. 13)

Voting and political rights have expanded in the United States and around the world from what they were only 100 years ago. In 1975, only 8% of counties had free-markets which allowed for private ownership and the relatively free flow of goods and services. By 1997, that percentage had increased to 28% (Friedman, 2000, p. 9).

To whom the destruction or the advancement of the last 100 years should be attributed remains to be seen. Those who advocate for a high degree of prudence and justice spread across humanity would likely argue that as freedom increased and tyranny and central control decreased, the natural outcome was the social, medical, and economic benefits mentioned above. They could also make the connection between tyranny and destruction in some of the more monstrous regimes around the world, arguing that control in the hands of a few leads to the destruction of the many. Stephen Bailey argues that “Because of the ultimate capacity of American citizens to make wise, fundamental value choices, attempts to induce them into making

superficial technical choices are ill-advised” (Frederickson, 1982, p. 503). Wilcox (1969) paints a more vivid picture of the high prudence/high justice understanding of the individual and the organization: “The basic conception of this social hierarchy is simple: Man is good. Hierarchy is evil. If man in organization is evil, hierarchy is at the root of his devilry” (p. 54). Attempts at control are the problem and freedom is the solution.

This paradigm both confirms and denies recent history. The question for this project is not whether this operational anthropological perspective is the correct one. That is for others to decide. Instead, the focus is on creating a framework regarding the distribution of prudence and justice in human nature. The diagnosis is that there is little in human society that needs to be administered or controlled because the natural tendency is for people to control and administer themselves through the application of the prudence and justice that is inherently with them. The prescription is a minimalist government and public administrative sector with the general population as heavily involved in decision-making and implementation as possible. The prognosis for human society, then, is excellent as long as control and, ultimately, tyranny is reduced or eventually eliminated. The view of the human person, in this construct, is this:

He is capable of handling all of the requirements; he will invariably participate when given the opportunity; he receives his greatest satisfactions from participation; he and his fellow participants will arrive at a consensus in the resolution of policy matters; and, most important, he understands that his full

human potential can only be realized through participation. (Hart, 1972, p. 604)

In the graph below, the proponents of a high degree of prudence and justice widely distributed across the human population would be in the upper right hand quadrant.

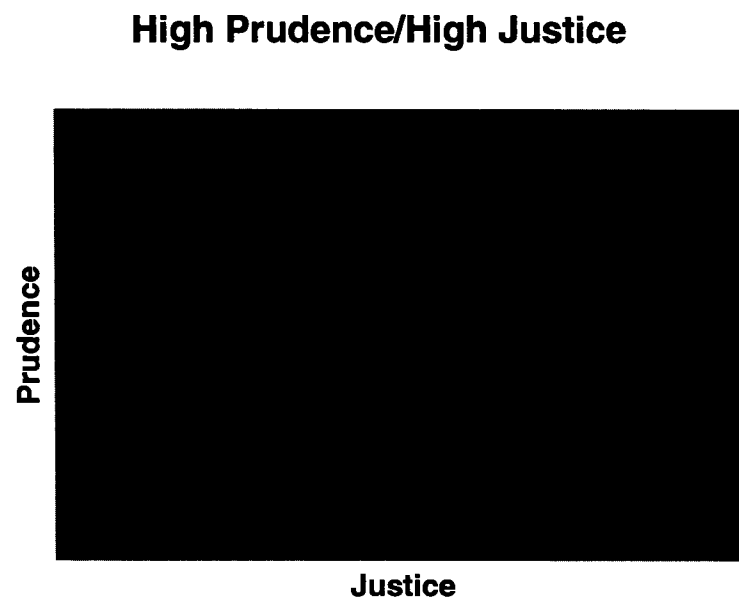


Figure 1. High Prudence/High Justice

Low Prudence/High Justice

Changing the assumptions changes the focus and role of government and public administration. Suppose a public administration theorist believes that, in general, human beings are just in that they tend to do the good when they know and

can identify what is good and what is not good. The diagnosis of the public administration theorist is that the moral component is not what is lacking. Rather, what is missing is prudence or wisdom or perhaps knowledge. The prescription, then, follows quite naturally. Sticks and carrots are not, overall, the primary means of getting people to do what is good. However, the public tends to lack knowledge of what is good and what is not good. To rectify this situation, public administration's prescription would naturally be to provide or teach information that is unattainable to the general public. Once the public knows the good, they will do it with little encouragement or threat.

The source of the knowledge needed to do what is good will not come from culture or familial relationships or experience. In the past, perhaps the source of prudence might have been from a type of Aristotelian philosopher king. One wise person or group of persons decided what ought to be done. In the modern era, however, the source of prudence has become the scientific method for public administrative theorists. It is no longer normative reasoning that asks questions about what ought to be done. Instead, it is instrumental reason that is more concerned with what is most efficient and effective. As Adams (1992) points out, "Instrumental reason is the narrow application of human reason solely in the service of instrumental aims. Until the modern era, reason was conceived as a process incorporating ethical and normative concerns as well as the consideration of merely instrumental aims" (p. 366). But this is no longer the case. Simon goes so far as to conclude that, "reason is wholly instrumental. It cannot tell us where to go; at best it can tell us how to get

there. It is a gun for hire that can be employed in the service of whatever goals we have, good or bad” (p. 3).

In the public administrative sector, the “ought” question seems quite beside the point and are rarely considered. It is political leaders who make the decisions about what ought to be done through the creation of public policies with input from its various actors. Public administration’s contribution is not to the why or what questions. Rather, its contribution is focused on how things ought to be done. The end is created by policy. The means is the arena of the public administrator and it is all about instrumental reason, which White and Adams (1995) define as:

The coordination of means to ends in the domains of thought and action. Thinking is rational to the extent that it follows the rules of deductive inference to calculate the correct means to a given end. Action is rational when it follows a prescribed set of rules to coordinate means to given ends. . . . This type of reasoning is particularly useful when technique is paramount—finding the one best way of accomplishing something. (pp. 2–3)

The public administrative sector, then, exists to discover the single best means for doing what it is told. The political realm where decisions are made regarding what is to be done is completely separate from the public administrative sector in which discoveries are made as to how things are best to be accomplished. In this way, the public administrative theorist and researcher provides the structure and means for prudent living, trusting that others have already decided what is prudent and what is not. The bureaucracy and rules under which the people in culture live provide them

with guideposts to do what is just. They are not freely choosing between various options of what is and what is not prudent. They are much more focused on doing what is right as determined by others than they are on considering what is right. This structure provides safety and security for citizens. It often provides incentives and disincentives to citizens for following the law or regulation. There is no free or self-actualized individual. Instead, what ought to be done is determined by lawmakers and how it ought to be done is determined by public administrators. Citizens under this construction, in general, are believed to be generally just in that they tend to follow the laws and the procedures set for them without a significant amount of coercion. While some small percentage of the population may be designated as a criminal element, most people do what the laws and procedures dictate most of the time. Most people are concerned about their neighborhood, their community, their state, and their county and will act in accordance with those concerns as long as they are told the best means for such actions.

In this construction of the prudence and justice scale, government is expansive and pervasive both politically in creating the laws and regulations and in public administration which seeks to carry out the laws and regulations. To enable people to know what the right thing to do is, regulations and laws must cover as much societal territory as possible. The emphasis is not so much on government as authority, which wields power, control, and threat. Rather, it is on technical bureaucracy that builds mechanisms to lessen the effect of individual human influence and extend predictability and control. The chief concern, then, is knowing the rules. Education

and dispersing information will be king and queen. Hierarchy and rules, instead of being disdained, are welcomed and embraced. Data, modeling and econometrics, with the emphasis on certainly above the 95th percentile, are what matter. Thinking is linear and precise. Chaos is minimized. Cause and effect are measured and manipulated by some for the advantage of all. Researchers and technical experts transcend their own biases and values and maintain objectivity. Dynamic complexity and theories of chaos do not describe what is at the core of human society. These are simply words for situations that scientific approaches have not yet mastered. Put coldly, it is necessary to “alter social phenomenon by intervening in the causal process in such a way as to obtain more desirable outcomes” (Campbell, 1981, p. 41).

Determinism is a necessary foundation in the low prudence/high justice construct. It is the theory “that every event is cause. This entails the view that whatever happens has to happen and cannot happen otherwise unless the events and conditions which cause it are different” (Campbell, 1981, p. 234). It

rests on three fundamental assumptions: reality is made up of discrete categories; the relations between things and events are linear; and by using appropriate tools science can know the nature of things and their relations precisely and in their entirety. (Marcol, 1996, p. 317)

Events, then, can be changed by altering causation. Predictability is high because of modeling and the use of complicated statistical analysis. The more math, the better. There is little room for unintended consequences. Determinism aims

toward simplicity rather than complexity and known-ness rather than randomness. It is unlikely that the same cause will not evoke the same response in most people.

Organized humanity is that which will be both prudent and just. It is a place of rules and procedures, of set sequences and known outcomes. It is secure, rational, predictable, and optimistic. Adams (1992) describes the sanguinity at the opening of the previous century:

What could have been more plausible than to apply technical rationality to the social world in order to achieve science-like precision and objectivity?

Frederick Taylor found a ready audience for the notion of scientific management during the Progressive Era. Technical rationality became the vehicle of hope in the social and political world and created a wave that before World War II prompted new professionals, managers, behaviorists, social scientists, and industrial psychologists toward a world view in which human conditions appeared as problems fit for engineering solutions. (p. 366)

According to White (1989), this engineering approach has led to the development of a “bias within the public administration literature for centrism and control and a wariness of diffused authority” (p. 525). As an example, she quotes Richard Stillman’s comments that Public Choice Theory or other populist concepts will lead to “an enfeebled, even nonexistent state that may have serviced the eighteenth-century needs of America, but one finds little to recommend it for dealing with the awesome tasks faced by this nation at the end of the twentieth century and beyond” (p. 525).

Richard Stillman's fear is instructive in that it reveals his core belief that the average person will have no idea (no prudence) in understanding or addressing the complexities that face modern citizens in the United States. White (1989) concludes, "Traditional public administration theory emphasizes that public institutions are the principle vehicles for expressing common and public concerns. Weakening them by diffusing authority means that important issues are ignored" (p. 525). Without a strong public administrative sector, it is the knowing that will be lacking.

Low Prudence/High Justice

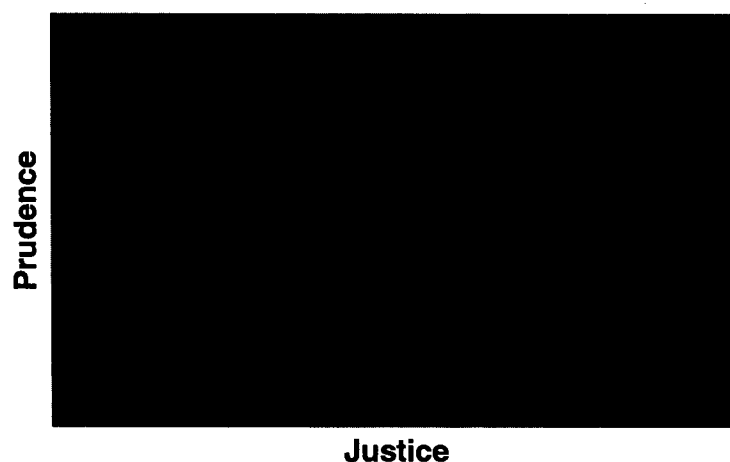


Figure 2. Low Prudence/High Justice

High Prudence/Low Justice

An additional variation of the scales would be that those working in the field of public administration and the public at large generally know what is good. The

problem is not knowledge or the ability to determine what is prudent. Instead, what people in general lack is the willingness to commit themselves to doing what is good. In this diagnosis, more information will not bring about what theorists might believe to be good. Rather, what should be prescribed is a structure focused on justice where people are encouraged through reward to do what is generally accepted as good and threatened with punishment to avoid what is considered not good. Everyone knows that smoking is not prudent, but millions still smoke. Everyone knows that, generally speaking, wearing a seatbelt while driving is more prudent than not wearing a seatbelt, but many people either forget or refuse to buckle up. Earning a living and avoiding sloth are generally agreed to be wise and productive approaches to life, but many decide to avoid work and embrace the deadly sin of slothfulness.

This is one version of the nanny state. Individuals, families, and fraternal or economic relationships are not what drive people to do the right thing. Instead, the government takes a more direct, a more hands-on role. Centralized decision-making is one chief characteristic.

It is a culture of sticks and carrots. Most people realize that charitable work is good and that those who are more materially fortunate bear some level of responsibility for those who are less materially fortunate. Unfortunately, not enough is done to assist them. The government can use the carrot of tax incentives for particular kinds of charitable work or the stick of the Internal Revenue Service to collect money which various government agencies then dole out to those in need. The question is not whether most people agree that charitable work is good. The issue is

whether they will do it. In the high prudence/low justice construct, the role of public administrators is to carry out or coerce citizens to carry out what is widely accepted as good.

Lane Davis might cross over into other categories, but he at least allows for citizens to choose those who will control them:

Responsible government refers primarily to the accountability of a creative and active governing elite to those who have been the objects of its policies. The citizen has only a minimal involvement as a creative actor in what he judges. He must necessarily judge governors, their records, and their promises, largely as a passive object of the action of others. To the extent that this notion of responsibility is accepted and the citizens are considered primarily as objects rather than as creative actors, they must be considered essentially irresponsible. (Hart, 1972, p. 611)

Note that judgment or prudence in selecting those who will focus on action is believed to be acceptable in this construct. Expecting the general public to be active is simply asking too much of them. Instead they choose who will act on their behalf and in relationship to them.

Consistency is problematic in the high prudence/low justice construct. Barry Karl (1987) points to Woodrow Wilson and his fellow progressives as examples of those who “were trying to create a British-like, upper-middle class elite, to put themselves in control of it, and to co-opt others into it as a means of stabilizing the wildly growing American society of the late nineteenth century” (p. 29). It is

administration not merely by knowledge, as in the low prudence/high justice construct. Rather, it is administration by those who are more morally sensitive to the needs of society and the demands of justice. This “means that the fate of a democratic society rests on the moral sensibilities of a comparatively few elites” (Hart, 1972, p. 612). Public administration becomes a class rather than an occupation. Those in it serve because of a noble obligation they bear to the rest of society, while being unaffected by the lack of justice that is most prevalent among human beings.

Mass democracy, if justice is narrowly distributed among the masses, is not likely to succeed simply because of the nature of the human person. Instead, a ruling class built on a morally superior sense of justice is most likely to succeed.

High Prudence/Low Justice

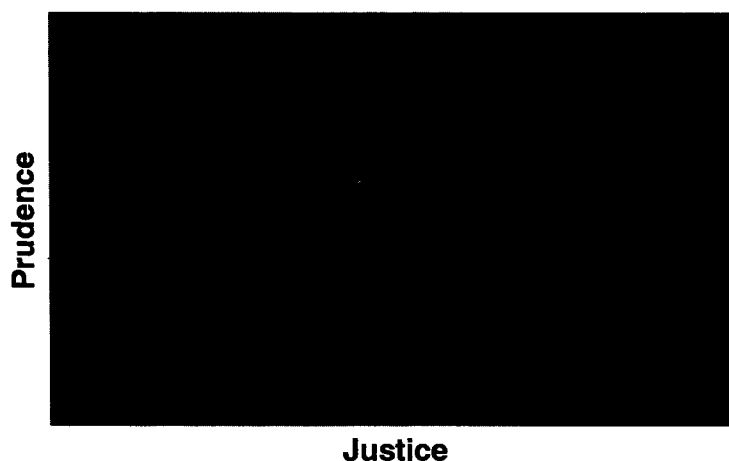


Figure 3. High Prudence/Low Justice

Low Prudence/Low Justice

In this variation, human beings are generally neither prudent nor just in their nature. Ideals are an illusion. People respond to stimuli, not norms. Mass democracy

is neither desirable nor advisable as it would quickly disintegrate into anarchy. As a matter of fact, according to Hart (1972):

Some contemporary theorists go so far as to insist that the processes of democratic policy making must be protected from the masses. . . . In other words, individual citizens cannot realistically be trusted to govern themselves and need benevolent, but firm, guidance from an informed and politically active minority. The participation of individual citizens is reduced to the inferior role of periodically selecting their political stewards. (p. 611)

In its most extreme version, it is only the government and social pressure which keep people from tearing each other apart. As Hume puts it, “it is impossible for the human race to subsist, at least in any comfortable or secure state, without the protection of government” (as quoted in Spicer, 1997, p. 241). Concepts such as prudence and justice are not operative nor are they real. Human beings, according to Nietzsche, are “beyond good and evil, whose existence is meaningless, whose questions about truth are meaningless, and whose morality founded on these questions is a slave morality” (as quoted in Krapiec, 1983, p. 78).

Society is a myth, apart from the control of the government and its public administrative arm. It is a rejection of the idea that “man lives in union with other people and this union is necessary for the preservation of being and the creation of conditions for man’s further development” (Krapiec, 1983, p. 50). Instead, society is the arena of competition to survive. It is Machiavelli and Nietzsche: “Society as some kind of reality is a fiction; only people exist, of whom some have power and others do

not (Krapiec, p. 263). Radical individualism is at its core: “Proponents, in fact, have an almost visceral reaction to any arrangement in which some individuals can tell others what is good for them or what is in their interest (White, 1989, p. 523). There is no “common good” because “only individuals matter: the interests, wishes, and happiness of individuals is what counts in the determination of moral and political priorities” (Campbell, 1981, p. 37).

Plato’s story of the “Ring of Gyges” is illustrative. The main character, Gyges of Lydia, is a shepherd. Discovering a cave entrance, Gyges enters and finds the corpse of a man wearing a ring, which he promptly steals. Wearing the ring, he discovers that when positioned in a particular way, he becomes invisible. Using his new-found power, Gyges eventually seduces the queen, murders the king, and takes over his position.

The point of the story, told to Socrates by Glaucon, is to posit that no one is actually virtuous. People only act virtuous because it is to their benefit. When virtue no longer is beneficial, people will lose any moorings of justice and do as they please. Socrates, of course, disagrees and argues that ethical people will choose justice simply because it is the just thing to do.

With little sense of justice or prudence, conflict ought not to be avoided. Instead, it should be embraced and encouraged. According to Ramos (1878), “Clashes of the personal and the social, the economic and the emotional are part of the human condition” (p. 552). Attempting to do away with them “will, if successful, create distorted individuals” (Campbell, 1981, p. 187).

Differences are resolved by conflict and competition through the use of domination, coercion, and manipulation. Life is an exercise in building power and forcing one's will through economics, politics, religion, or a host of other possible means. Darwin's ontology is operative in that cooperation is an apparition employed to disguise real intentions and maximize future value. At their core, communities are made up of current or future adversaries, not mutually interested individuals.

Another potential version of this concept is that society is not the arena of competition and domination because human beings simply are not driven by much at all. Instead, people are more akin to the two-toed sloth than they are to Superman. McGregor's Theory X human being is reality. Apart from controls, the average human person will not work, prefers to be directed, avoids responsibility, lacks ambition, and is treading water in a sea of perpetual early adolescence. Most people neither know what is good nor would they choose it even if they did. What is needed is the exercise of authority and control by those few who possess "the knowledge and moral qualities which citizens lack in order to be capable of directly controlling their lives in the best way possible" (Rojas, 2001, p. 31). Apart from significant structure, most people would be completely lost. Coercion is not regrettable but is instead the most common and useful means of administering. It is an authoritarian approach to leadership. As Hackman and Johnson (2002) point out, "Many authoritarian leaders believe that followers would not function effectively without direct supervision. The authoritarian leader generally feels that people left to complete their work on their own will be unproductive" (p. 34). Those in authoritarian positions set the goals,

control the discussion, dominate interaction, and make heavy use of carrots and sticks (p. 38). There is little interest in participatory decision-making because people lack the prudence and sense of justice required to decide what to do and then actually do it.

Of course, this perception would lead naturally to the conclusion that there must be inconsistency between those within the field of public administration and those in the general public. Were this not the case, public administration would simply not be possible or desirable. If all people had low prudence and a low sense of justice, society would be Nietzschean in that all of life for every human being would be an existence made up of merely the will to power.

David Hume's anthropological perspective (1748) is illustrative. In his treatise *On the Original Contract* Hume lands on the side of those who believe that most people are unjust: "Our primary instincts lead us either to indulge ourselves in unlimited freedom or to seek dominion over others" (p. 3). According to Hume, it does not much matter whether someone is prudent, as prudence matters little in the reality of human social life. In actual practice, people will not do what is prudent even if they could define it. Rather, they will do what is expedient and beneficial to them only or what will extend their control over another. Because this is the case, Hume concludes, "it is impossible for the human race to subsist, at least in any comfortable or secure state, without the protection of the government" (p. 3). A more modern expression of this perspective is found in the writings of Leopold Kohl, whose life spanned most of the twentieth century. According to William Scott (1983), "Kohl felt that people were essentially rotten and that they would stay that

way no matter the size of the unit that contained them” (p. 185). His approach, however, was that “that evil people in small containers do not have the power to create the same amount of social misery they do in large containers” (p. 185). This might be described as the Tower of Babel approach to public administration.

Clearly, in this philosophy it matters little whether human beings can define what is prudent because prudence will not overcome in people who are inherently unjust and self-centered. Individuals operate on a Rawlsian cost-benefit analysis where only the self is considered. Hal Rainey and Paula Steinbauer present an example regarding the nature of motivation in the actions of a civil servant. They ask:

How much is a module manager in a public service center of the Social Security Administration motivated by a belief that her actions contribute to something worthwhile and important to the nation as a whole and how much is she motivated by a belief that sound management of her module will contribute to the mission of providing income security for the retired people who have earned it through their contributions to the program? (p. 26)

Adherents of the low prudence/low justice variation would dismiss both potential answers and claim that the most obvious choice is being ignored: this woman’s actions are motivated by a desire to get a positive review, maintain or expand her portion of the budget, and move up the chain of command into a position of greater power and compensation with more staff and a larger budget. Magnanimity has nothing to do with it.

What is required is a heavy-handedness that can only come through the actions of centralized power, either by offering rewards to those who act against their nature and threatening punishment for those who act in accord with it. Lawrence Martin (1997) puts Jeremy Bentham squarely in this camp:

As a reformer, Bentham's central focus was on political, legal, and social reform. The central question for Bentham and the utilitarians was: "Who are the savages and how can they be civilized?" The utilitarian answer was the creation of the welfare state that would set up a series of rewards and punishments to regulate human behavior. (p. 274)

Savages are neither prudent nor just and are unlikely to develop either trait. The focus, then, is control not reorientation, education, or social development.

As evidenced in Bentham's comment, this approach has built into it an inconsistency where it is assumed that a handful of elites through some means have risen above the rottenness inherent in them. If all humans are rotten, there will be no one to determine that "units" need to be built to contain them nor how large such units are to be. Human nature would dictate that no one be given centralized power because it would be used in a fashion consistent with Hume's concept that people use what they have to have dominion over others.

But this is not the case. In its most optimistic form, those who have power through their political or public administrative roles take the position of benevolent paternalists. They are the trustees. They understand that human nature is generally neither prudent nor just and so they provide the voice of prudence and justice for

societies that lack both. Simon, Drucker, and Waldo (1952) notice this dichotomy and wish that those who hold this position would bring out some of the “underlying concepts of the social scientists which explain why such a strong tendency towards a manipulative and purely paternalistic despotism runs through their approach. There is the fact that so many of them start out from abnormal psychology, with its assumption that everyone else is ‘maladjusted’” (p. 496).

This perspective includes the nanny state but moves beyond it to what Rojas (2001) calls the “guardian state” built on “an extraordinarily pessimistic or indeed destructive view of human nature, a view of mankind which fundamentally permeates every single measure restricting the liberty of individuals and essentially implying that people need a guardian so as not to be injured by their own shortcomings or inherent viciousness” (p. 31). It is built on “three fundamental assertions about human beings” which include moral weakness making people incapable of “taking charge of their own lives,” inherent stupidity in that “we would, quite simply, make the wrong choices, harm ourselves, be far too short-sighted and generally unintelligent in the choices we made,” and a belief in the human being’s “own malicious egoism, his viciousness towards his fellow-beings, his lack of any natural sense of solidarity beyond the narrowest confines of his family” (pp. 32–34). Because this is the case, “the state has to force goodness upon people” (p. 34).

Government and those who administer it are like the Wizard of Oz, according to Mulgan (as quoted in Rojas, 2001). He states:

The dominant idea that has shaped thinking about governments and societies over the last century is the idea of the machine. . . . Well-oiled, efficient and measurable, the ideal machine had a clear purpose or function which it carried out perfectly. Everything could in principle be conceived as a closed system, consisting of cogs and wheels, instructions and commands with the . . . government at the top, pulling the requisite levers and engineering the desired effects. (p. 173)

People don't really need to understand what is happening to them nor do they need to have input into the decisions that are being made. They need to do what they are told (p. 55). As Frederick Taylor allegedly told some of his subjects, "You are not supposed to think. There are other people paid for thinking around here" (Rojas, p. 57).

Will those who adhere to this perception of human nature be consistent in their application to all human beings? One of the first heresies of the early Christian church was Gnosticism. While Gnosticism came to its fullest expression in Christianity, its roots predated the life of Christ. As its name implies, its focus is on "knowledge." A small number of people, through experience or transcendence, gain secret knowledge. The rest, tied to the material world, are deeply flawed. At its essence, Gnostics believed that this mystical knowledge lifted a small number of people out of the flawed morass of all other human beings and elevated them to a different class of being, unhindered by the ignorance and immorality of typical human persons. Gnosticism and proponents of the low prudence/low justice perspective

share this view. If all human beings lack prudence and justice, then these virtues are unlikely to be found in any human beings. As soon as an exception is made, a different class of humanity rises above the rest which can claim both prudence and justice enough to determine the paths of everyone else.

Hill (1997) notices this inconsistency in Taylor's work, especially as it applies to the business setting, but the observation is equally applicable to the realm of public administration. He writes, "By making only line employees accountable, [Taylor] placed too much confidence in company executives and engineers. They too are fallible, imperfect beings, capable of making poor economic and moral choices. By arrogantly ignoring employee input, many companies have gone awry" (p. 155). Such a perspective, "denigrates the value of human persons. Workers are not oxen who are trimmed to fit the job" (p. 153). Unless, of course, they are exactly like oxen who must be fitted to the job by those who are not.

Low Prudence/Low Justice

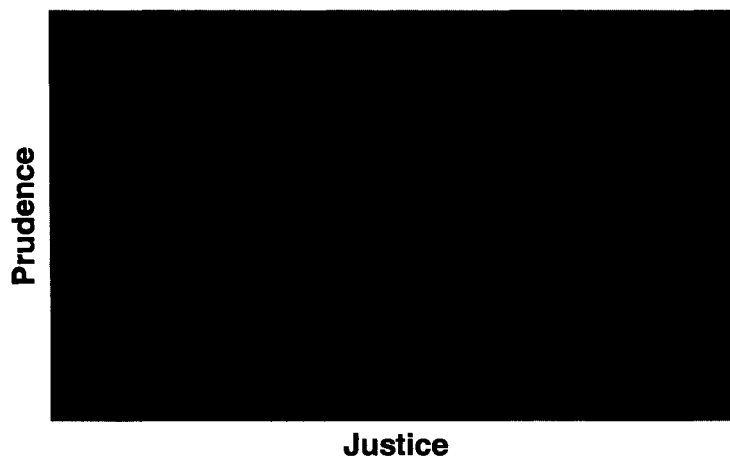


Figure 4. Low Prudence/Low Justice

It Depends

It is, of course, possible to land in the center of the prudence/justice scale or even completely outside it. Functioning in the center are those who advocate a kind of determinism in which choice, despite appearances, is either extremely limited or not actually possible. John Locke is often credited as this perspective's genesis and patron saint, as Griffith (1983) points out:

For Locke the origins of ideas are experience, sensation, and reflection; therefore, morality has a rational basis. All ideas people develop come from their individual learning, experiences, and growth. This concept separates Locke's ideas from Christian and natural law traditions, which held that some kind of underlying basis for human understanding existed —such as first principles, God, or natural order—beyond human history and experience. (p. 224)

While Locke might be the Western founding father, similar perspectives are found in other thinkers. Mencius, the Chinese philosopher who was born in 372 BCE and studied under the grandson of Confucius, spent much of his life traveling, speaking, and teaching. While not a proponent of a blank slate, Mencius

maintains that all people are good at birth, in the sense of being endowed with tendencies toward benevolence, dutifulness, observation of rites, and wisdom. But these tendencies need to be preserved and developed; they can be corrupted by a bad environment or by allowing one's heart to be overcome by

lower desires or appetites. An important implication is that everyone, given the proper environment and with sustained personal effort, can become a sage. (Abel, 1991, p. 74)

Cooper (1996) if unfamiliar with Mencius, would likely claim himself to be a disciple upon reading him. Cooper is clear as to his anthropological perspective when he writes:

I believe that we are born with both capacities (negative and positive) and the kinds of relationships we experience in families, associations, workplaces, and communities help us to become more socially constructive or influence us toward self-interest, antagonism, and hostility. This anthropological perspective leads me to see the need for controls of various kinds, the best of which are self-controls emerging out of both rational and affective development in social setting. Nevertheless, external restraints such as rules, and laws are ultimately necessary because, unfortunately, in the world as it is, self-control of this kind is not universally achieved. (p. 604)

Scott and Hart (1973) refer specifically to newer public administration theorists who lean heavily toward or fully embrace the amorphous position as to human nature. They believe:

Proper theory must reflect the fact that what administrators do is contingent upon environment and technology. . . . We contend that this conviction about the adaptive potential of administrators (and man is general) has grown out of the contemporary image of human nature in administration. This image is

predicated on the belief that man is by nature neither good nor bad, but is by nature nothing. If man is nothing, he has the potential to be made into anything. Therefore, man's institutions must be designed to build him, since there is nothing in principle about man's nature that prevents his adaptation to the various exigencies that the environment presents. (p. 419)

Naturally, those in this camp place their emphasis on education, moral formation, and the role of community in molding the nature of human beings. People are born neither prudent nor imprudent. They are neither just nor unjust. Mencius would argue that there are, at best, tendencies toward prudence and justice, but they have little influence in the reality that is the fully grown human being. Rather, people are more akin to lumps of clay that can be shaped into most anything. Cultures and societies, therefore, create themselves anew each generation. In this conception, as Krapiec (1983) points out, human persons are "lost" in their communities because:

Society exerts total control over man's thoughts, his technical and artistic ability. The social authority established man's goals and the means for attaining these goals so that, as a result, he is deprived of the possibility of realizing his personal goals and, thereby, the means which could assure him of some kind of independence in relation to society. (p. 263)

A second possible perspective from the "it depends" camp comes from those who would reject determinism and a *tabula rasa* perspective in which society creates human persons according to their own images or desires. For them, there is no such thing as a human nature; there are only individuals and individual choices. While it

might be possible to predict the behavior of a single person, predictions as to what a group of people might or might not do are built on faulty logic. H. Roy Kaplan and Curt Tausky (1977) express something of this perspective when they write, “Generalizations aimed at nearly encapsulating the motivation of all workers regardless of occupational levels, classes, or job functions are likely to prove spurious, and decisions predicated upon them could be conducive to heightening organizational conflict, rather than its diminution” (p. 178). Kaplan and Tausky seem to indicate that there might be classes of people about whom some assumptions can be made. But he rejects the idea that there is a kind of human nature about which predictions or assumptions can be made. As a matter of fact, the belief in such assumptions may be the root of all evil, if such a thing exists, rather than its cure. As far as can be ascertained, there are no serious or unserious theorists holding the belief that human beings have no nature to discuss.

No Prudence/No Justice



Figure 5. No Prudence/No Justice

CHAPTER III

TESTING MAJOR THEORISTS

Choosing Theorists and Their Books

The goal of this project is not to test every important theorist's writings against the framework created in chapter two. Rather, it is first to create an intellectual and philosophical framework focused on the two classically defined virtues of prudence and justice and then to apply the framework to a select group of theorists. For each of the leading theorists chosen, the focus will be primarily on their key book and will not include their articles, lectures, or other written material other than to occasionally supplement what is found in their book. It is certainly possible that the authors selected were inconsistent in their operational philosophical anthropologies or that their views evolved over time, but that is a matter for additional research. If this model works and is helpful to those conducting research into the philosophical and historical theories that support the public administrative practices as they have developed in the United States over the last century, then it can be expanded and applied in different ways by those doing such research. This model can also be applied to other theorists who are not considered in this project.

But which theorists and which books should be chosen? Gathering individual opinions as to which books are "classics" is likely to produce as many choices as

there are opinions. Rather than conducting a poll of current public administration theorists, this paper will rely in part on an article written by Frank P. Sherwood in 1990 entitled “The Half-Century’s ‘Great Books’ in Public Administration,” printed in the *Public Administration Review* in 1990 upon the 50-year anniversary of the journal. Obviously, it contains no material written in the last one and a half decades, which might be perceived as a short-coming for this project, but it does avoid the designation of the “instant classic” which turns out later to be misapplied after some time and thought have passed.

In preparing his list of “great books,” Sherwood first argues it is books, rather than articles, that have been the “critical benchmarks” since 1940 (p. 249).¹ He selected a panel of 20 advisors he believed to be experts in the field of public administration: “The panel consists entirely of academicians, is very well published, and the majority of them have been around for most of the 50 years in which the *Review* has appeared” (p. 250). He asked them to focus on books and not theorists, limited their choices to “academic” books, and asked them to consider the “influence” of the book rather than whether they happened to agree with the author (p. 251). The books were to have been published in the period from 1940 to 1990.

For the sake of a sense of historical development, this project will focus on five books, which will be addressed in the order of their appearance. Three of them find their way into Sherwood’s list while two of them are outside the chronological

¹ Because of the limits of considering only material published from 1940 to 1990, two other books will be included in this project and act as chronological and theoretical bookends. The first is Frederick Taylor’s *Scientific Management*. The second and most recent book to be considered is Amitai Etzioni’s

scope of Sherwood's limitations. The first will be Frederick Taylor's *Principles of Scientific Management*, first published in 1911, only four years prior to his death at age 59. It is chosen because it represents a significant movement, is still in print, and is frequently referred to in public administrative theory, despite being under 100 pages in length. It also presents a fairly clear understanding of the nature of the human person as an example of one mechanistic extreme. Quotes such as "You are not supposed to think. There are other people paid for thinking around here" certainly give a window into Taylor's view on humanity in general (as quoted in Rojas, 2001, p. 57). He may be the poster child for the *homo hierarchicus* perspective.

The second book to be included in this project, and the overwhelming winner of Sherwood's survey, was Herbert Simon's *Administrative Behavior*. First published in 1947 when Simon was only 31 years old, it sold an unimpressive 1,900 copies in its first 12 months. Its influence, however, has grown over time. By 1990, it had sold over 150,000 copies, had been translated in 12 languages, and was still in print. The fourth edition was published in 1997, only four years before Simon's death. It is the only book on the list whose author won a Nobel Prize, awarded in 1978. Simon is "an example of the rational model of organization. A utilitarian decision-making calculus is at the center of Simon's view of behavior, and much mischief is caused by orthodox administration's acceptance of this narrow, but powerful, explanation of motivation" (Scott, 1983, p. 185).

Rights and Responsibilities: The Communitarian Agenda. They are included both for the school of thought they represent and for their leading positions in public administrative theory.

The third book to be compared to the model is Frederick C. Mosher's *Democracy and the Public Service*, first published in 1968 when Mosher was 52 years old and had spent his entire life studying public administration. It was number five in Sherwood's survey of the most influential books. For the purpose of this project, it represents some aspects of the thought being discussed during the period in which the first Minnowbrooke Conference was held. It focuses more on the public servants within the public administration sector and their place within a democratic political system.

The fourth book to be considered is Vincent Ostrom's *The Intellectual Crisis in American Public Administration*. Ostrom's book first appeared in 1973, when Ostrom was 53 years old and, like Mosher, was steeped in the study of public administration. The book was released, as Sherwood points out, "at the time Watergate was unfolding and the Nixon presidency was becoming unglued" (p. 259). In Sherwood's survey, even those who rejected public choice theory and describe it as "morally pernicious" still include it in their list of the most influential books (p. 258). It is a rejection of the argument for a strong executive and advocates instead for "multiple decision centers, power diffusion, and a market discipline" (p. 259).

The final book to be considered is Amitai Etzioni's *Rights and Responsibility: The Communitarian Agenda*, first published in 1995 when Etzioni was 66 years old. While not included on the Sherwood list because it postdates the survey by five years, it is an important book because it demonstrates further movement away from a strong executive into the realm of communitarian thought with an emphasis on rights and

their corresponding responsibilities. Strength is found in the community rather than in any single individual or the government. This is a complete swing of the pendulum from what Frederick Taylor would have considered desirable or even advisable. While Etzioni's book is the most recent and, therefore, a candidate for the sometimes mislabeled "instant classic" category, it is now more than 12 years old, time enough for significant examination and criticism.

The examination of the anthropological assumptions operative in each theorist's book will not result in an either/or choice as to whether the authors believe human beings to be prudent or just. Instead, their thoughts will be along a continuum of greater and lesser degrees. After each book examined, a conclusion will provide an overview to determine whether there has been a shift in anthropological assumptions and consider some potential reasons for whatever shift has taken place. Finally, the conclusion will suggest possible areas of additional research for consideration by those interested in moving the theoretical ball further down the field.

Frederick Taylor's *The Principles of Scientific Management*

Frederick Taylor's life revolved around management and engineering done in the context of industrial work sites. Bright enough to be accepted at Harvard, his poor sight caused him to drop out of the school and begin a career in industry, starting as an industrial apprentice in 1873. Five years later, Taylor became a machine shop laborer at Midvale Steel and was quickly promoted to gang-boss, foreman, and finally

chief. As he moved up the ranks, he spent much of his effort seeking to improve efficiency through time-studies. In 1890, he took a position as general manager of the Manufacturing Investment Company, eventually became a Dartmouth professor, and ended his career as a consulting engineer to a myriad of industrial firms. His broader influence came from his time serving as the President of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, through his published journal articles, and primarily via the book for which he is most well-known: *The Principles of Scientific Management*.

Several components of his upbringing, education, and career provide clues to his thinking about the nature of the human person. He was raised in a Quaker household that valued simplicity, order, and the philosophy of a place for everything and everything in its place. Self-control and discipline are the hallmarks of the Quaker faith, which seemed to fit his personality. According to Mary Ellen Papesh, “Taylor was a compulsive adolescent and was always counting and measuring things to figure a better way of doing something. At age twelve, he invented a harness for himself to keep from sleeping on his back, hoping to avoid the nightmares he was having (undated, p. 1).

His education, after leaving Harvard, focused on engineering. He was graduated from the Stevens Institute of Technology while simultaneously holding a full-time job, demonstrating discipline and effective use of his time, something he would bring to bear in his work in factories throughout his career.

The focus of his career was efficiency. Repetitive tasks ought to be categorized, observed, timed, and redesigned to bring about the maximum benefit to both the workers and the owners. According to Papesh:

Taylor's work was taking place in a time period when there was much industrial change happening after the Civil War. National industries grew out of local trades—steel, glass, textiles, and shoes—and what were small factories became large plants. Owners of capital became wealthier with mass production, and workers received little for their efforts. Problems included carelessness, safety, inefficiencies, and soldiering (worker foot dragging) on the job. Taylor sought to get past the futile incentive bonuses that management thought would remedy the problems. He believed that incentive wages were no solution unless they were combined with efficient tasks that were carefully planned and easily learned. (p. 2)

The Principles of Scientific Management was not the work of a theorist sitting undisturbed in a library or a laboratory. After more than 25 years working in factories, doing time-studies, and searching constantly for more efficient ways to produce goods in an industrial setting, Taylor gave lectures that eventually became a short book extolling what he had learned through trial and error.

It is impossible to know with certainty the effect his upbringing, education, and career had on his general world and life view and, more specifically, his understanding of human nature. It is possible to speculate that a fastidious, strict, and disciplined childhood in combination with a degree in engineering in which things are

made to fit, and a career spent squeezing efficiency from human labor would tend his views of human nature toward a rather mechanistic perspective. Waldo (1952) expresses his suspicion of this perspective when he writes that in Taylor's lifetime:

Administration absorbed a spirit of cold, scientific self-calculation and condescending good will toward the employee. Both of these qualities are clearly evident at the dawn of the movement in the work of Frederick W. Taylor at Midvale Steel. It is hardly too much to say that Taylor regarded his laborers essentially as draft animals. Yet he proclaimed piously again and again that his system of management was designed to benefit the laborer [at least "the first class man"] as much as management, and there is no reason to doubt his sincerity. The phrase that best describes the spirit of private administration at the turn of the century is harsh paternalism. (p. 83)

Whether Waldo's assessment is accurate or fair is for others to determine. For the purposes of this examination, it is best to focus attention on Taylor's written work to see what can be gleaned from this simple, sometimes troubling, and profound little book.

Taylor begins his introduction with a reference to President Theodore Roosevelt who held office from 1901–1909. Taylor believed that Roosevelt's abiding legacy would be his conservationist streak expressed in his preservation of some of America's natural resources. In speaking of his conservationist agenda, Roosevelt broadened the topic beyond merely the realm of natural resources and extended it to the combined resources of the United States when he said, "The conservation of our

natural resources is only preliminary to the larger question of national efficiency” (p. 1). It was a comment perfectly suited to Taylor’s way of thinking. Taylor uses this as his launch pad to his true interest in the book: how to make the most of labor within the industrial setting. “Our larger wastes of human effort, which go on every day through such of our acts as are blundering, ill-directed, or inefficient, and which Mr. Roosevelt refers to as a lack of ‘national efficiency,’ are less visible, less tangible, and are but vaguely appreciated” (p. 5). Clearly he believes what he has learned has national implications

In some ways, Taylor’s work is a strange inclusion in a project focused on public administrative theory given that he virtually never addresses the subject. His focus is industrial engineering and central planning within the context of the factory. Two factors warrant its inclusion in the discussion of public administrative theory. The first is that his theory had a profound effect on the practice of government and is a reflection of the enthusiasm and optimism of the pre-World War I trust in all things scientific. The second is that despite the book’s rather narrow focus, Taylor clearly intended that the lessons he learned should be applied to virtually every social and vocational area of human existence:

This paper was originally prepared for presentation to The American Society of Mechanical Engineers. The illustrations chosen are such as, it is believed, will especially appeal to engineers and to managers of industrial and manufacturing establishments, and also quite as much to all of the men who are working in these establishments. It is hoped, however, that it will be clear

to other readers that the same principles can be applied with equal force to all social activities: to the management of our homes; the management of our farms; the management of the business of our tradesmen, large and small; of our churches, our philanthropic institutions, our universities, and our governmental departments. (pp. 7-8)

Every theorist begins with a diagnosis and Taylor is no exception. The first problem he identifies is the shortage of what he calls “competent men”: “The search for better, for more competent men, from the presidents of our great companies down to our household servants, was never more vigorous than it is now. And more than ever before is the demand for competent men in excess of the supply” (p. 6). He believes that industrialization brought with it profound changes not only in the nature of work but also in the kinds of persons needed to become efficient in manufacturing and production.

In previous generations under different working conditions, perhaps it was acceptable to rely on what Taylor refers to as the “great man” or the “competent man,” but this is no longer the case. He is not content to wait. Such persons must be developed in light of the changes facing his society.

If the diagnosis is a shortage, then training is the prescription: “It is only when we fully realize that our duty, as well as our opportunity, lies in systematically cooperating to train and to make this competent man, instead of in hunting for a man whom someone else has trained, that we shall be on the road to national efficiency” (p. 6).

The introductory section of his book sheds light on his understanding of the character, ability, and makeup of the human person. On the one hand, he believes that competency can be taught which means that most human beings have at least the ability to learn and do as they have been taught. Indeed, as he says, such people must be created in the industrialized world. Nurture matters. But he is not ready to give up on the “great man” theory in which certain persons or a class of certain persons are “born right.” He does not see this as an either/or proposition. In fact, Taylor argues that both are needed:

In the future it will be appreciated that our leaders must be trained right as well as born right, and that no great man hope to compete with a number of ordinary men who have been properly organized so as efficiently to cooperate. In the past the man has been first; in the future the system must be first. This in no sense, however, implies that great men are not needed. On the contrary, the first object of any good system must be that of developing first-class men; and under systematic management the best man rises to the top more certainly and more rapidly than ever before. (pp. 6–7)

Competency is not common. It is occasionally to be found in those who are well-born, but even they are in need of training and development in light of the post-industrialization economy and government. There is still a class distinction between persons, something that he consistently clings to throughout his work. But instead of class warfare, Taylor is an advocate for class cooperation. Those who are born well, by which he means having both genetic superiority and proper childhood formation,

needed to also be properly trained so that they may lead the charge in bringing the masses, who are neither, to the level of competency. The goal is to create a system that in turn creates competency. While not a full repudiation of the “great man” theory, Taylor’s is a transitional anthropological ideology where great persons are still needed but cannot be relied on entirely to meet the challenges facing society. As he points out, one of his chief goals in putting his thoughts on paper is “To try to convince the reader that the remedy for this inefficiency lies in systematic management, rather than in searching for some unusual or extraordinary man” (p. 7).

In taking this approach, Taylor’s first concern is neither scientific nor managerial. It is, rather, social. Class warfare is what he seeks to avoid. He hopes that by raising the competency, productivity and wages of workers, he will be able to create a future in which class warfare is not the norm. It is likely that at the root of his considerations is Marxism, as it had come to expression in Europe and the United States in his lifetime. It is clear to him that a system of owners versus labor or management versus workers would not be viable. Those who propose a continual clash between classes are mistaken:

The majority of these men believe that the fundamental interests of employees and employers are necessarily antagonistic. Scientific management, on the contrary, has for its very foundation the firm conviction that the true interests of the two are one and the same; that prosperity for the employer cannot exist through a long term of years unless it is accompanied by prosperity for the employee and *vice versa*; and that it is possible to give the workman what he

most wants—high wages, and the employer what he wants a low labor cost—for his manufactures. It is hoped that some at least of those who do not sympathize with each of these objects may be led to modify their views; that some employers, whose attitude toward their workmen has been that of trying to get the largest amount of work out of them for the smallest possible wages, may be led to see that a more liberal policy toward their men will pay them better; and that some of those workmen who begrudge a fair and even a large profit to their employers, and who feel that all of the fruits of their labor should belong to them, and that those for whom they work and the capital invested in the business are entitled to little or nothing, may be led to modify these views. (p. 10)

Both employer and employee are part of the same struggle, but the battle is not one against the other. Instead, Taylor hopes to connect their mutual concerns in a way that will be beneficial to each rather than all the benefits going to one or the other. In his mind, class warfare will not serve the economy or the nation as a whole. As he writes, “The principal object of management should be to secure the maximum prosperity for the employer, coupled with the maximum prosperity for each employee” (p. 9). The concept of “maximum prosperity” means more for Taylor than just material wages for:

Prosperity for each employee means not only higher wages than are usually received by men of his class, but, of more importance still, it also means the development of each man to his state of maximum efficiency, so that he may

be able to do, generally speaking, the highest grade of work for which his natural abilities fit him, and it further means giving him, when possible, this class of work to do. (p. 9)

Such comments, scattered throughout the text, call into question dismissals such as Waldo's that Taylor believed laborers were in essence "draft animals" (p. 83).

In Taylor's conception, do the workers possess either prudence to know what the right thing to do is or the sense of justice needed to do the right thing? This is where his anthropological assumptions become clearer, at least regarding the common worker. He begins with a sports analogy:

Whenever an American workman plays baseball, or an English workman plays cricket, it is safe to say that he strains every nerve to secure victory for his side. He does his very best to make the largest possible number of runs. The universal sentiment is so strong that any man who fails to give out all there is in him in sport is branded as a 'quitter,' and treated with contempt by those who are around him. (p. 13)

In leisure, laborers are both internally motivated and externally pressured to do their "very best." Their natural drive to perform at the highest level possible is reinforced by their peers.

At their jobs, however, things are entirely different:

When the same workman returns to work on the following day, instead of using every effort to turn out the largest possible amount of work, in a majority of the cases this man deliberately plans to do as little as he safely

can—to turn out far less work than he is well able to do—in many instances to do not more than one-third to one-half of a proper day's work. And in fact if he were to do his best to turn out his largest possible day's work, he would be abused by his fellow-workers for so doing, even more than if he had proved himself a 'quitter" in sport.' (p. 13)

The dynamic is completely opposite. Even if motivated to perform to the best of their abilities, workers will not simply because the possibility of the contempt of their peers that pressures them to do their best in their leisure conversely slows production and produces great inefficiency at work. In intentionally under-producing, laborers fail to meet one of the requirements of just behavior in that they do not give a full day of work for a full day of pay.

Taylor does not necessarily assign this injustice to the person as much as he does to the system within which the laborers operate. In other words, most of the failure is the result of external pressure and not some internal moral weakness. At the root are a series of faulty premises upon which the laborers operate. They lack the prudence to know better. Their assumption is that their high productivity would result in the loss of jobs for others:

The great majority of workmen still believe that if they were to work at their best speed they would be doing a great injustice to the whole trade by throwing a lot of men out of work, and yet the history of the development of each trade shows that each improvement, whether it be the invention of a new machine or the introduction of a better method, which results in increasing the

productive capacity of the men in the trade and cheapening the costs, instead of throwing men out of work make in the end work for more men. (p. 15)

They lack the ability to understand what might appear to them to be counter-intuitive; that is, that more productivity actually increases work opportunities for others. They hold this position:

Because they are ignorant of the history of their own trade even, they still firmly believe, as their fathers did before them, that it is against their best interests for each man to turn out each day as much work as possible. Under this fallacious idea a large proportion of the workmen of both countries each day deliberately work slowly so as to curtail the output. Almost every labor union has made, or is contemplating making, rules which have for their object curtailing the output of their members, and those men who have the greatest influence with the working-people, the labor leaders as well as many people with philanthropic feelings who are helping them, are daily spreading this fallacy and at the same time telling them that they are overworked. (p. 17)

Labor unions, in other words, instead of encouraging workers to reach their maximum productivity, are perpetuating a lie that is neither prudent nor just.

Between the owners and the laborers is a class of persons whose role and abilities uniquely qualify them to restore prudence and justice:

As engineers and managers, we are more intimately acquainted with these facts than any other class in the community, and are therefore best fitted to

lead in a movement to combat this fallacious idea by educating not only the workmen but the whole of the country as to the true facts. (p. 18)

These are the well-born and naturally gifted whose abilities exceed those of the common laborer. Managers drive productivity. Their role is to increase the productivity of both human beings and the machines with which they work for the benefit of owner and laborer. This they accomplish through proper training of each employee under their supervision:

The most important object of both the workmen and the management should be the training and development of each individual in the establishment, so that he can do [at his fastest pace and with the maximum of efficiency] the highest class of work for which his natural abilities fit him. (p. 12)

This is a significant theoretical move. The laborers cannot be counted on to be prudent or just in their work. Even their sense of justice as it pertains to slowing productivity for the benefit of their fellow laborers is misguided. It is important to remember that Taylor is not limiting the applications of his theory to industry alone. He intends that the lessons of Scientific Management will be learned by those in education, business, religious organizations, and government. The engineers, then, make up the class of those in society who are to educate all not only on true and right perspectives but also on the one best way to do everything, discovered through the application of science to the management of any human endeavor. There is a sense in which, despite his rejection of Marxism's class warfare, he embraces the concept of central planning not only in the workplace but in society as a whole. Even the

employers operate with a false prudence: “It is impossible in a few words to make it clear to one not familiar with this problem why it is that the *ignorance of employers* as to the proper time in which work of various kinds should be done makes it for the interest of the workman to (work to less than their full capacity)” (p. 18). Managers, then, are the only hope for achieving the kind of national efficiency spoken of by Roosevelt and embraced by Taylor. The relationships between the three classes are crisp, clean and logical and, in being so, are consistent with Taylor’s Quaker and engineering roots. A place for everyone and everyone in their place.

The knowledge of the managerial class cannot be limited to the big picture alone. Indeed, there is “great gain, both to employers and employees, which results from the substitution of scientific for rule-of-thumb methods in even the smallest details of the work of every trade” (p. 24). The scope of implications is not limited to the field of operational engineers in a manufacturing plant.

Taylor intends that scientific management will revolutionize the world. There are no limitations to what it can do and no area of economic life that cannot be improved by it:

Among the various methods and implements used in each element of each trade there is always one method and one implement which is quicker and better than any of the rest. And this one best method and best implement can only be discovered or developed through a scientific study and analysis of all of the methods and implements in use, together with accurate, minute, motion and time study. (p. 25)

Scientific managers are not necessarily experts or even experienced in all the areas they study. Rather, they observe, measure, time, and design systems for improvement. In Taylor's mind, it is only rational that there a single, best way for everything exists. Discovering it is the realm of the manager and it is a realm to which very few have access. Managers are the determiners and keepers of both what is most prudent and just no matter whether the activity is drafting an article, blowing glass, stocking shelves, working a lathe, or being a bank teller.

If owners are ignorant and therefore cannot understand the complicated intricacies of labor, the laborers themselves are even less likely to discover the single best way to do their jobs. The science that underlies each act of each workman is so great and requires such great thought and planning that the workman who is best suited to actually doing the work is incapable of fully understanding this science without the guidance and help of those who are working with him or over him, either through lack of education or through insufficient mental capacity (pp. 25–26). What is needed is a professional technocracy of managerial experts whose specialty is not each individual task of every laborer but rather is studying the tasks and determining the most efficient means of accomplishing them, making the most of the resources in time and human capital so as to eliminate waste.

Statements such as those above can easily be used to support Waldo's assertion that Taylor viewed his laborers as draft animals. Some of this is mitigated by Taylor's insistence:

In order that the work may be done in accordance with scientific laws, it is necessary that there shall be a far more equal division of the responsibility between the management and the workmen than exists under any of the ordinary types of management. Those in the management whose duty it is to develop this science should also guide and help the workman in working under it, and should assume a much larger share of the responsibility for results than under usual conditions is assumed by the management. (p. 26)

Furthermore:

The body of this paper will make it clear that, to work according to scientific laws, the management must take over and perform much of the work which is now left to the men; almost every act of the workman should be preceded by one or more preparatory acts of the management which enable him to do his work better and quicker than he otherwise could. And each man should daily be taught by and receive the most friendly help from those who are over him, instead of being, at the one extreme, driven or coerced by his bosses, and at the other left to his own unaided devices. Close, intimate, personal cooperation between the management and the men is the essence of modern scientific or task management. (p. 26)

However, as admirable as it may be for managers to take more responsibility and assume a more hands-on, relationship-driven role in the work place, Taylor's assumption is that the laborer has little or nothing to contribute to this process other than his or her compliance. They lack the capacity to figure out the single best means

to accomplish a task on their own, so there is no reason to be harsh or coercive about it. They have simply run up against the wall of their mental abilities. If properly shown what to do without deviation and if properly motivated by the combination of increased wages and the pride of knowing they are producing at the maximum output, they will give the very best of which they are capable.

Although Waldo's characterization of Taylor's system as "paternalism" seems accurate, Taylor did not believe it was harsh. Instead, he believed that his system of scientific management for all human tasks reflected the reality of human nature, at least as it is found among those who are not born well and inclined to be great persons. From this perspective, Taylor's operational anthropology can be said to be inconsistent in that it is not applicable to all. Nowhere does he discuss the limitations of ability or motivation of managers. The assumption can be made from his silence that he believed the scientific managerial class suffered neither from a lack of ability or motivation. At best, he can be said to be a proponent of a viewpoint that holds, in general, at least among the working class, there is little prudence or justice.

This is confirmed through an examination of his comments as to why workers do not give their full effort in their work. In the introduction, Taylor lays most of the blame for this at the feet of previous generations of workers who passed along faulty reasoning about productivity and job loss, peer pressure to slow, and the ratifying message of the trade unions. But in discussing some of the underlying principles of scientific management, he makes it clear that the problem is not merely external. Rather, "this common tendency" which already exists in each laborer to "take it easy

is greatly increased by bringing a number of men together” (p. 19). The laziness naturally found in the human will is fanned into flame in the context of other laborers.

He writes:

This loafing or soldiering proceeds from two causes. First, from the natural instinct and tendency of men to take it easy, which may be called natural soldiering. Second, from more intricate second thought and reasoning caused by their relations with other men, which may be called systematic soldiering. There is no question that the tendency of the average man is toward working at a slow, easy gait, and that it is only after a good deal of thought and observation on his part or as a result of example, conscience, or external pressure that he takes a more rapid pace. (p. 19)

Does this same tendency exist in the wills of those who are well-born and are, therefore, the natural inhabitants of the scientific managerial class? Is this inborn tendency exacerbated when scientific managers are brought together in their workplaces or social circles? The fact that such questions never seem to occur to him provide an insight into the answers.

In Taylor’s defense, he does not conceive of every laborer, in his or her natural state, as the productive equivalent of a two-toed sloth whose inherent laziness is intensified by the presence of others of like mind and ability:

There are, of course, men of unusual energy, vitality, and ambition who naturally choose the fastest gait, who set up their own standards, and who work hard, even though it may be against their best interests. But these few

uncommon men only serve by forming a contrast to emphasize the tendency of the average. (p. 19)

For the common masses, the external pressure to soldier and the internal inclination toward laziness result in an ethical breakdown:

Unfortunately for the character of the workman, soldiering involves a deliberate attempt to mislead and deceive his employer, and thus upright and straightforward workmen are compelled to become more or less hypocritical. The employer is soon looked upon as an antagonist, if not an enemy, and the mutual confidence which should exist between a leader and his men, the enthusiasm, the feeling that they are all working for the same end and will share in the results is entirely lacking. (p. 24)

An inherent lack of moral fortitude becomes full-blown immorality in the context of modern industrial labor. At its base, soldiering is an injustice because laborers are, in essence, stealing from their employers with little thought given to what they actually owe those who have hired them.

This internal ethical weakness is not easily overcome. It is a flaw with deep roots in the human person; so deep, in fact, that in some hard cases, it simply cannot be uprooted:

It is not here claimed that any single panacea exists for all of the troubles of the working-people or of employers. As long as some people are born lazy or inefficient, and others are born greedy and brutal, as long as vice and crime are with us, just so long will a certain amount of poverty, misery, and unhappiness

be with us also. No system of management, no single expedient within the control of any man or any set of men can insure continuous prosperity to either workmen or employers. Prosperity depends upon so many factors entirely beyond the control of any one set of men, any state, or even any one country, that certain periods will inevitably come when both sides must suffer, more or less. It is claimed, however, that under scientific management the intermediate periods will be far more prosperous, far happier, and more free from discord and dissension. And also, that the periods will be fewer, shorter and the suffering less. And this will be particularly true in any one town, any one section of the country, or any one state which first substitutes the principles of scientific management for the rule of thumb. (p. 29)

While not quite a cure-all, Taylor believes that it is a cure-most.

At the core of his conception of human beings in virtually every endeavor is his commitment to the idea that for every task, there is a single best way. Once this premise is granted, it is a short leap to the conclusion that through time-studies and careful attention to every minute detail of even the smallest job is the logical means of determining it. Taylor does not claim that laborers do not learn on the job or that their techniques have not evolved and improved over time. He grants that each trade has advanced in the processes of their craft:

The ingenuity of each generation has developed quicker and better methods for doing every element of the work in every trade. Thus the methods which are now in use may in a broad sense be said to be an evolution representing

the survival of the fittest and best of the ideas which have been developed since the starting of each trade. (p. 31)

But what evolution has hinted at only comes into fruition through the lens of the application of science to management. The shortcomings of allowing the slow evolution of task management are obvious. If the natural resources of work were being fully utilized for every form of work, Taylor believes it would be logical to find that each trade had not only discovered it but also codified it. This is not the case:

Only those who are intimately acquainted with each of these trades are fully aware of the fact that in hardly any element of any trade is there uniformity in the methods which are used. Instead of having only one way which is generally accepted as a standard, there are in daily use, say, fifty or a hundred different ways of doing each element of the work. And a little thought will make it clear that this must inevitably be the case, since our methods have been handed down from man to man by word of mouth, or have, in most cases, been almost unconsciously learned through personal observation.

Practically in no instances have they been codified or systematically analyzed or described. The ingenuity and experience of each generation of each decade, even, have without doubt handed over better methods to the next. This mass of rule-of-thumb or traditional knowledge may be said to be the principal asset or possession of every tradesman. (pp. 31–32)

Rules of thumb developed by the slowly turning wheels of industrial evolution are no match for the bright light of science when it shines on labor techniques. This

should come as little surprise to those who believe that the vast majority of workers are not particularly intelligent, have a natural inclination to laziness, and work in a setting which only reinforces what only makes the incline steeper. They lack the drive to discover the one best way, the prudence to discover it even if they were so inclined, and the justice needed to actually commit themselves to do it:

Only those among the readers of this paper who have been managers or who have worked themselves at a trade realize how far the average workman falls short of giving his employer his full initiative. It is well within the mark to state that in nineteen out of twenty industrial establishments the workmen believe it to be directly against their interests to give their employers their best initiative, and that instead of working hard to do the largest possible amount of work and the best quality of work for their employers, they deliberately work as slowly as they dare while they at the same time try to make those over them believe that they are working fast. (p. 32)

Overcoming the lack of justice issue is a key component. If this were not so, the task of managers would be simply to discover the one best way and communicate it to workers, who would immediately implement it. But laborers will not commit to do their best even if they are told the techniques for doing so. Therefore, in addition to providing the study, knowledge, and techniques necessary for maximum efficiency, the managers are also responsible for providing incentives that will overcome the natural inclination laborers have to do less than their best even when they are told the means of doing so:

The writer repeats, therefore, that in order to have any hope of obtaining the initiative of his workmen the manager must give some *special incentive* to his men beyond that which is given to the average of the trade. This incentive can be given in several different ways, as, for example, the hope of rapid promotion or advancement; higher wages, either in the form of generous piecework prices or of a premium or bonus of some kind for good and rapid work; shorter hours of labor; better surroundings and working conditions than are ordinarily given, etc., and, above all, this special incentive should be accompanied by that personal consideration for, and friendly contact with, his workmen which comes only from a genuine and kindly interest in the welfare of those under him. It is only by giving a special inducement or incentive of this kind that the employer can hope even approximately to get the initiative of his workmen. (pp. 33–34)

Under older models of management, according to Taylor, it was believed that the managers provided the incentive while workers, properly incentivized, would provide the initiative, thus overcoming the justice deficiency inherent in most workers because of their inborn laziness. Taylor believes such systems had not worked and would not work in the future. The problem is that initiative is left up to the laborers and they simply lack the prudence to know what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. They are incapable of developing the one best way. It is here that the study and science of the managers is key for:

Under the old type of management success depends almost entirely upon getting the initiative of the workmen, and it is indeed a rare case in which this initiative is really attained. Under scientific management the initiative of the workmen (that is, their hard work, their good-will, and their ingenuity) is obtained with absolute uniformity and to a greater extent than is possible under the old system. (pp. 35–36)

It is actually unfair of managers to expect workers to be prudent and just in their work as these are beyond the capacities of most. The lack of efficiency, productivity and the waste of resources—a concern shared by Roosevelt and Taylor—is then actually the result of faulty management. The laborers cannot be expected to either discover or implement the single best way and so they bear little of the blame. Management's failure was robbing the nation of its true potential.

Taylor's focus is not a revolution for the common laborer. Instead, his challenge is laid squarely at the feet of managers who have not pulled their weight and done their job. According to Taylor, there were to be four new duties for managers:

“First. They develop a science for each element of a man's work, which replaces the old rule-of-thumb method. *Second.* They scientifically select and then train, teach, and develop the workman, whereas in the past he chose his own work and trained himself as best he could. *Third.* They heartily cooperate with the men so as to insure all of the work being done in accordance with the principles of the science which has been developed. *Fourth.* There is an

almost equal division of the work and the responsibility between the management and the workmen. The management takes over all work for which they are better fitted than the workmen, while in the past almost all of the work and the greater part of the responsibility were thrown upon the men. (pp. 36–37)

While such an approach might be initially appealing to laborers because the true blame for their lack of productivity is attributed to management, not to them, it is important to think carefully about what Taylor is claiming about the majority of laborers who encompass the majority of human adults. The lack of productivity and the waste of resources have, at their root, an overly optimistic assessment of both the intellectual capabilities and the ethical makeup of labor. Management has left too much up to people who are simply incapable of rising to the occasion. Management is to blame and their principle mistake has been the assumption that people are generally prudent in that they will know what is good and just and will do it. The waste of resources in industrial society came about because of faulty assumptions about the nature of most human beings. Taylor's operational anthropology posits that neither of management's assumptions about people in general are true. Taylor intends to cast this in the context of a benefit to laborers who have been unfairly asked to do something that they are simply incapable of doing. For true efficiency that makes the most of the resources available, management must change. The fourth of these elements—"an almost equal division of the responsibility between the management and the workmen"—requires further explanation for "the philosophy of the

management of initiative and incentive makes it necessary for each workman to bear almost the entire responsibility for the general plan as well as for each detail of his work, and in many cases for his implements as well. In addition to this he must do all of the actual physical labor. (p. 37)

What Taylor advocates is:

The development of a science which involves the establishment of many rules, laws, and formulæ which replace the judgment of the individual workman and which can be effectively used only after having been systematically recorded, indexed, etc. The practical use of scientific data also calls for a room in which to keep the books, records, etc., and a desk for the planner to work at. Thus all of the planning which under the old system was done by the workman, as a result of his personal experience, must of necessity under the new system be done by the management in accordance with the laws of the science; because even if the workman was well suited to the development and use of scientific data, it would be physically impossible for him to work at his machine and at a desk at the same time. (pp. 37–38)

When workers are asked to manage themselves and their own work, they are being asked to do two tasks, one of which is simply beyond their grasp. If industry is to be efficient, one core belief will have to be accepted and that is that “in most cases one type of man is needed to plan ahead and an entirely different type to execute the work” (p. 38). A place for everyone and everyone in their place.

Taylor's description of some of his experiments with pig-iron handlers is meant to illumine how the principles he is describing can be put into action. His phraseology is ill-chosen as he describes the work:

The pig-iron handler stoops down, picks up a pig weighing about 92 pounds, walks for a few feet or yards and then drops it on to the ground or upon a pile. This work is so crude and elementary in its nature that the writer firmly believes that it would be possible to train an intelligent gorilla so as to become a more efficient pig-iron handler than any man can be. (p. 40)

At first glance, the offensiveness of his statement is what catches the eye. But it is important to note that Taylor observes this scene and sees profound and complicated science at work. Taylor continues his thought and describes the core of his book:

It will be shown that the science of handling pig iron is so great and amounts to so much that it is impossible for the man who is best suited to this type of work to understand the principles of this science, or even to work in accordance with these principles without the aid of a man better educated than he is. (p. 40)

Again, there is a mixed anthropological message. The pig-iron handler might take pride in the idea that his task is, at its base, a matter of a significant amount of science. But he might also be equally ashamed that he lacks the capability to comprehend that science despite spending 50 hours a week doing it.

Taylor does not limit this concept to pig-iron workers humping pieces of metal from location A to location B. He intends to give additional illustrations that, will make it clear that in almost all of the mechanic arts the science which underlies each workman's act is so great and amounts to so much that the workman who is best suited actually to do the work is incapable [either through lack of education or through insufficient mental capacity] of understanding this science. This is announced as a general principle. (p. 41)

In the theoretical discussion, Taylor seems to lean toward a rather low impression of the abilities and morality of workers in general. When he begins to describe actual cases, he plunges into a kind of anthropological position that borders on treating laborers as fancy animals. His treatment of one laborer is such as might offend an intelligent gorilla if he were to be so treated. Taylor tells the story of a Pennsylvanian Dutchman who handles pig iron. The Dutchman is cheap and stupid. His Dutch brogue is phonetically spelled out to enhance the perception of ignorance. He is allowed no "back-talk" which means he is not allowed to express an opinion (p. 46). Taylor seems to know that his description of this laborer might be offensive to some, but he justifies it as follows:

This seems to be rather rough talk. And indeed it would be if applied to an educated mechanic, or even an intelligent laborer. With a man of the mentally sluggish type of Schmidt it is appropriate and not unkind, since it is effective in fixing his attention on the high wages which he wants and away from what,

if it were called to his attention, he probably would consider impossibly hard work. (p. 46)

Schmidt is not meant to be an exceptionally imprudent and unjust example. Instead, he is meant to be the archetype of the capabilities and capacities of the average laborer. In treating Schmidt in this manner, Taylor believes he is actually doing what is fair, right, and appropriate to Schmidt's class and type of human being.

Laborers' inability to innovate and take initiative is more than a lack of mental capability. It is a moral failure. Whatever creativity they possess is used for harm and not good, making their kind generally unjust:

Laborers use their ingenuity to contrive various ways in which the machines which they are running are broken or damaged—apparently by accident, or in the regular course of work—and this they always lay at the door of the foreman, who has forced them to drive the machine so hard that it is overstrained and is being ruined. And there are few foremen indeed who are able to stand up against the combined pressure of all of the men in the shop. (p. 50)

It is not that they believe such actions to be immoral. Rather, their conception of what is right and wrong is inherently flawed in that they believe it is a good act to destroy or disable company equipment. Taylor says that their inverted understanding of the good has even resulted in the threat of murder against those in shops who refused to soldier and do less than they were capable of doing (pp. 51–52).

For Taylor's system to work, there must be a place for everyone and everyone must be in their proper place. There is a certain class of person perfectly fitted for hauling pig iron and managers must understand both the job and person best fitted to do it:

Now one of the very first requirements for a man who is fit to handle pig iron as a regular occupation is that he shall be so stupid and so phlegmatic that he more nearly resembles in his mental make-up the ox than any other type. The man who is mentally alert and intelligent is for this very reason entirely unsuited to what would, for him, be the grinding monotony of work of this character. Therefore the workman who is best suited to handling pig iron is unable to understand the real science of doing this class of work. He is so stupid that the word 'percentage' has no meaning to him, and he must consequently be trained by a man more intelligent than himself into the habit of working in accordance with the laws of this science before he can be successful. (p. 59)

While it might be assumed that such knuckle-dragging, ignorant, phlegmatic human persons make up only a small percentage of the population in Taylor's mind, the reality is that he found no shortage of such people. According to his story, "we had not the slightest difficulty in getting all the men who were needed—some of them from inside of the works and others from the neighboring country—who were exactly suited to the job" (p. 60).

As a matter of fact, what he found was that only one person in eight currently working as a pig-iron handler was capable of the job, which meant that the other seven were below that class (p. 60). Taylor vacillates between a lack of natural ability and a lack of education as the potential causes for what he sees among the common laborers, but comments such as that above demonstrate that it is his belief that the most common cause is an undeniable lack of ability.

This belief is further demonstrated in his comments that when workers are put into groups, as they were in post-Civil War assembly line industrial settings, the least productive workers are not inspired or challenged by the more productive. Instead:

A careful analysis had demonstrated the fact that when workmen are herded together in gangs, each man in the gang becomes far less efficient than when his personal ambition is stimulated; that when men work in gangs, their individual efficiency falls almost invariably down to or below the level of the worst man in the gang; and that they are all pulled down instead of being elevated by being herded together. (pp. 72–73)

Laborers are generally neither prudent nor just in their work. Even if they wanted to, they lack the natural ability to determine the one best way. Even if they were capable of discovering it, they would not do it. As Taylor sees it:

It is only through *enforced* standardization of methods, *enforced* adoption of the best implements and working conditions, and *enforced* cooperation that this faster work can be assured. And the duty of enforcing the adoption of

standards and of enforcing this cooperation rests with the *management* alone.

(pp. 82–83)

This is true not only because this is the task of management but also because they are the only ones capable of it.

After working his way through several examples involving multiple kinds of work sites, Taylor's summation of the content of scientific management is as follows:

To repeat then throughout all of these illustrations, it will be seen that the useful results have hinged mainly upon (1) the substitution of a science for the individual judgment of the workman; (2) the scientific selection and development of the workman, after each man has been studied, taught, and trained, and one may say experimented with, instead of allowing the workmen to select themselves and develop in a haphazard way; and (3) the intimate cooperation of the management with the workmen, so that they together do the work in accordance with the scientific laws which have been developed, instead of leaving the solution of each problem in the hands of the individual workman. In applying these new principles, in place of the old individual effort of each workman, both sides share almost equally in the daily performance of each task, the management doing that part of the work for which they are best fitted, and the workmen the balance. (p. 114)

Taylor's theory is not built upon anthropological assumptions unnamed or unexplored by him. He is aware that his research has been built on certain

assumptions and that his research has led him to concrete conclusions about the nature of the human person. In the final pages of his book, he writes:

There is another type of scientific investigation which has been referred to several times in this paper, and which should receive special attention, namely, the accurate study of the motives which influence men. At first it may appear that this is a matter for individual observation and judgment, and is not a proper subject for exact scientific experiments. It is true that the laws which result from experiments of this class, owing to the fact that the very complex organism—the human being—is being experimented with, are subject to a larger number of exceptions than is the case with laws relating to material things. And yet laws of this kind, which apply to a large majority of men, unquestionably exist, and when clearly defined are of great value as a guide in dealing with men. In developing these laws, accurate, carefully planned and executed experiments, extending through a term of years, have been made, similar in a general way to the experiments upon various other elements which have been referred to in this paper. (pp. 118–119)

Those who study and theorize about management must be students of human nature, not simply out of interest but because the results and conclusions of such studies relate directly to the science of management.

Taylor's concern is not only for an understanding of human beings as they are but also as they will become under his system. Clearly he had heard critiques of his theory that amounted to a charge of treating human beings like machines and, thus,

turning them into parts in a machine. He does not see it this way. Instead, he views scientific management as consistent with and most applicable to the newly industrialized world of specialization. The days of the generalist were ending. The era of specific people doing very specific tasks through division of labor had begun, rendering older models of management and work obsolete:

Now, when through all of this teaching and this minute instruction the work is apparently made so smooth and easy for the workman, the first impression is that this all tends to make him a mere automaton, a wooden man. As the workmen frequently say when they first come under this system, "Why, I am not allowed to think or move without some one interfering or doing it for me!" The same criticism and objection, however, can be raised against all other modern subdivision of labor. It does not follow, for example, that the modern surgeon is any more narrow or wooden a man than the early settler of this country. The frontiersman, however, had to be not only a surgeon, but also an architect, housebuilder, lumberman, farmer, soldier, and doctor, and he had to settle his law cases with a gun. You would hardly say that the life of the modern surgeon is any more narrowing, or that he is more of a wooden man than the frontiersman. The many problems to be met and solved by the surgeon are just as intricate and difficult and as developing and broadening in their way as were those of the frontiersman. (p. 125)

Generalists might have been the order of the day in a different economy, but in industrialization, if President Roosevelt's call for efficiency and an end to wasting of

resources was to be realized, people must be dividing according to their abilities. A place for everyone and everyone in their place. The industrial world should not view this as a compromise of human dignity. Instead, it should be seen as an opportunity to make the most of the abilities of the natural resources of human labor.

He believed his system was not the caste system some might think it to be. Instead, it was a meritocracy. Those few with high levels of ability who were occasionally found among the common workers had an opportunity for advancement. Taylor surely considered himself a prime example, moving from laborer to gang-boss, foreman, and finally chief engineer in a period of six years. Of course, a basic level of competency is required for such upward mobility, something he believed to be uncommon among laborers. Despite its infrequency:

The workman who is cooperating with his many teachers under scientific management has an opportunity to develop which is at least as good as and generally better than that which he had when the whole problem was “up to him” and he did his work entirely unaided. If it were true that the workman would develop into a larger and finer man without all of this teaching, and without the help of the laws which have been formulated for doing his particular job, then it would follow that the young man who now comes to college to have the help of a teacher in mathematics, physics, chemistry, Latin, Greek, etc., would do better to study these things unaided and by himself. The only difference in the two cases is that students come to their teachers, while from the nature of the work done by the mechanic under scientific

management, the teachers must go to him. What really happens is that, with the aid of the science which is invariably developed, and through the instructions from his teachers, each workman of a given intellectual capacity is enabled to do a much higher, more interesting, and finally more developing and more profitable kind of work than he was before able to do. The laborer who before was unable to do anything beyond, perhaps, shoveling and wheeling dirt from place to place, or carrying the work from one part of the shop to another, is in many cases taught to do the more elementary machinist's work, accompanied by the agreeable surroundings and the interesting variety and higher wages which go with the machinist's trade. The cheap machinist or helper, who before was able to run perhaps merely a drill press, is taught to do the more intricate and higher priced lathe and planer work, while the highly skilled and more intelligent machinists become functional foremen and teachers. And so on, right up the line. (pp. 126–127)

Despite his earlier described treatment of Schmidt, who was not allowed any “back-talk,” Taylor ends his book attempting to speak in more general terms of the contributions laborers can potentially make to the scientific analysis of the jobs they do daily:

It is true that with scientific management the workman is not allowed to use whatever implements and methods he sees fit in the daily practise of his work. Every encouragement, however, should be given him to suggest improvements, both in methods and in implements. And whenever a workman

proposes an improvement, it should be the policy of the management to make a careful analysis of the new method, and if necessary conduct a series of experiments to determine accurately the relative merit of the new suggestion and of the old standard, And whenever the new method is found to be markedly superior to the old, it should be adopted as the standard for the whole establishment. The workman should be given the full credit for the improvement, and should be paid a cash premium as a reward for his ingenuity. In this way the true initiative of the workmen is better attained under scientific management than under the old individual plan. (pp. 127–128)

Taylor fully expected the transition of older management models to scientific management to occur over time and cautioned against a quick implementation of his ideas. He believed that the workers needed to be brought on board gradually, “through the presentation of many object-lessons, which, together with the teaching which he received, thoroughly convince him of the superiority of the new over the old way of doing the work” (p. 113).

Perhaps anticipating the objections that would be raised as his theories were disseminated via his book, he ends by pointing out two important features. The first is that he believes that the good of the laborer is of central concern to his system. Reflecting on the transitions which took place in the industrial settings in which he implemented his theories, he highlights the prudence and justice of the managers with whom he had worked: “Those who undertook to make this change were men of unusual ability, and were at the same time enthusiasts and I think had the interests of

the workmen truly at heart” (p. 132). Their abilities made them prudent. Their concern for the laborers made them just.

To reinforce the issue of justice, Taylor points out that despite strikes that were occurring around the nation in his day of labor unrest, “during the thirty years that we have been engaged in introducing scientific management there has not been a single strike from those who were working in accordance with its principles, even during the critical period when the change was being made from the old to the new” (p. 135). To those who might be critical of his assumptions about and treatment of human beings as “draft animals,” his response was that the proof was in the mix of higher wages for laborers, greater profits for owners, and little social upheaval in the workforce.

Placing Taylor’s theory in the prudence/justice grid is more complicated than finding a single point of intersection. His theory of human depends on which class of humanity is being discussed: owners, workers, or managers. About owners, Taylor says very little. It is safe to assume that he places them above the worker class given the fact that they own rather than operate industrial plants, but he is silent as to their level of prudence or justice, only commenting that they lack the technical and specific knowledge necessary to directly the tasks done in the factories they own.

Laborers are, generally, people of little prudence or wisdom. A handful might have the ability to rise above their stations—Taylor himself is an example—but by in large, they cannot be expected to display either virtue. They will work at the lowest rate of production possible unless incentivized to live up to their potential. They do

not know what is good and, even if they did, are not inclined to do it. On the grid of prudence and knowledge, they are to be found in the lower-left quadrant.

Managers, in Taylor's view, are in the upper-right quadrant. Those who are especially adept managers approach Aristotle's philosopher-kings. They are generally both well-born and well-educated as a high station at birth is not sufficient for entering the managerial class. Managers are prudent in that they know how to determine what ought to be done. They hold the key to discovering the single best way to do a particular task through the application of scientific management. They will make the most of human and natural resources. At the same time, they are just, benevolent, and paternalistic in that they are fully cognizant of the mental and moral limitations so commonly found in laborers. They know what is prudent for people who are not capable of acquiring such knowledge and they are committed to using this knowledge to benefit even those who lack it and hold no prospect of gaining it.

Frederick Taylor

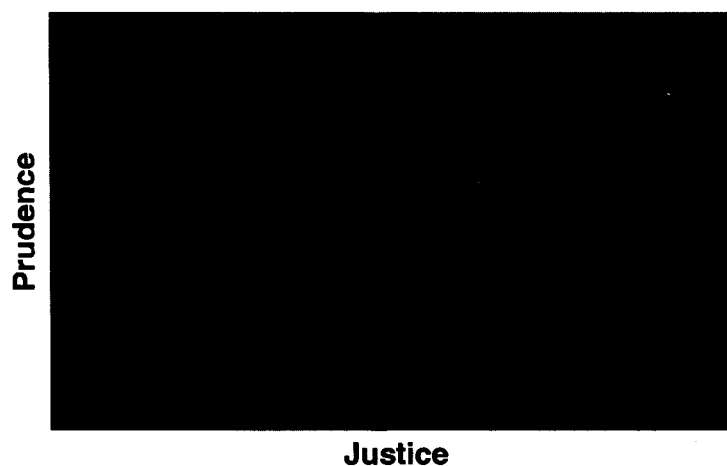


Figure 6. Frederick Taylor

Herbert Simon's *Administrative Behavior*

The second book to be included in this project, and the overwhelming winner of Sherwood's 50 greatest books on the theory of public administration survey, is Herbert Simon's *Administrative Behavior*. First published in 1947, it sold only 1,900 copies in its first 12 months. Its influence, however, grew over time. By 1990, it had sold over 150,000 copies, had been translated in 12 languages, and was still in print having gone through several editions. It is the only book on the list whose author won a Nobel Prize, awarded in 1978.

Whereas Frederick Taylor's professional interests focused primarily on developing and honing the tools and procedures of scientific management, Herbert Simon was a Renaissance man whose interests spanned public administration, philosophy, computer science, cognitive psychology, and economic sociology. He won awards for his work in artificial intelligence, psychology, and, in 1978, was awarded a Nobel Prize in economics.

Simon was raised in a bright and inquisitive home. His father was an immigrant from Germany with professional interests in engineering, design, and law. His mother was an accomplished musician. Following his childhood in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, he began his post-high school education at the University of Chicago in 1933, focusing on mathematics and social sciences. The combination of math and social sciences sparked an interest in organizational decision-making, an area that eventually would become the subject of his dissertation, which was printed as his first

and most influential book: *Administrative Behavior*. His career revolved around universities and research groups and focused on the intersection of microeconomics, decision-making, and organization structures. In later years, decision-making computer simulations occupied much of his attention.

In some ways, Simon's training and perhaps general outlook was similar to Taylor's. Both had a fondness for numbers, math, and modeling in their own way. Taylor would have had a deep appreciation for computer modeling, had the technology been available in his lifetime, and likely would have made great use of it in determining what he would have considered the single best way to accomplish a task or series of tasks. He would not have appreciated Simon's rejection of the search for a single best way based on environmental and situational variations.

The two share other similarities. Taylor's writing appears harsh to theorists whose work post-dates his. Waldo described Taylorism as being built upon a "spirit of cold, scientific self-calculation" (p. 83). The same can be said of Simon whose mathematical models and computer simulations were used to determine how human beings make decisions. His concept of "bounded rationality," however, demonstrates that he recognizes the limitation of pure reason in decision-making. While it might be largely rational, rationality is limited by other factors, including incomplete knowledge and the inability to process information.

In the introduction to the second edition, written in 1975, Simon describes his work as a voyage of "discovery into human-decision making" (p. ix). The "what" of decision-making is of lesser interest to him than the "how." It is his desire to break

decisions into their components the way a physicist might break atoms into their subatomic particles: “We regard human choice as a process of ‘drawing conclusions from premises’. It is therefore the *premise* [and a large number of these are combined in every decision] rather than the whole *decision* that serves as the smallest unit of analysis” (p. xii). It is Simon’s contention that too much attention has been given to matters of role and action.

There is something mechanistic about Simon’s conception of how human beings actually make decisions. He rejects the notion that decisions are made strictly depending on the roles that human beings play in their organizational life because “it does not leave any room for rationality in behavior” (p. xxxvii). The focus ought to be on the rationality of decision-making with specific focus on the premises not only because it can explain what has been done but also because, “Behavior can be predicted . . . when the premises of a decision are known [or can be predicted] in sufficient detail” (p. xxxvii). Predictability is key not only in public administration but to every form of human organization. The ability to say with relative certainty what decision a person or persons will make within an organization would greatly increase efficiency, how rules are made, and the manner in which training is done.

Simon’s focus is not on the individual. Instead, his attention is on how individuals function within an organization. He is aware that the relationship between person and organization is not a one-way street. The human person has an impact on the organization, but the organizational setting also has a profound influence on the person: “A man does not live for months or years in a particular

position in an organization, exposed to some streams of communication, shielded from others, without the most profound effects upon what he knows, believes, attends to, hopes, wishes, emphasizes, fears, and proposes” (p. xvi). Another way to think about this is that people in organizations are not unmoved movers of their organizations but are profoundly shaped by them:

Organization is important, first, because organizational environments provide much of the force that molds and develops personal qualities and habits.

Organization is important, second, because it provides those in responsible positions the means for exercising authority and influence over others.

Organization is important, third, because, by structuring communications, it determines the environments of information in which decisions are taken. (p. xvi)

Of course, Simon has said nothing of prudence or justice to this point. His human person within the organization appears to come to the organization akin to a computer with room for additional programs which will have an impact on everything that has already been downloaded to the hard drive. Simon’s organization human is changed by the organization at least as much as they change it. Those entering such a setting become part of a “complex pattern of communication and relationships in a group of human beings” (p. xvii). He has little to say about the state of human nature prior to entering such a complex entity. Instead, the organization,

provides to each member of the group much of the information and many of the assumptions, goals, and attitudes that enter into his

decisions, and provides him also with a set of stable and comprehensible expectations as to what the other members of the group are doing and how they will react to what he says and does. (p. xvii)

What role can rationality play in the decision-making that occurs within such a setting? The person in the organization is so deeply affected by operating within a setting where assumptions, goals, attitudes, and expectations are imposed that it is difficult to know how rationality might play a role. What he has in mind is not rationality as a kind of ontological sense of a person coming to the correct conclusions by considering the strengths and weaknesses of various options. Instead, his definition of rationality is whether a person makes decisions that are consistent with the assumptions, goals, attitudes, and expectations that already exist in the organization. It is as if the person in the organization brings little to it but is filled by it.

Simon seeks to avoid what he calls the two extremes of thinking about the role of rationality:

At one extreme, the economists attribute to economic man a preposterously omniscient rationality. Economic man has a complete and consistent system of preferences that allows him always to choose among the alternatives open to him; he is always completely aware of what these alternatives are; there are no limits on the complexity of the computations he can perform in order to determine which alternatives are best; probability calculations are neither

frightening nor mysterious to him. Within this past generation, in its extension to comparative game situations and to decision-making under uncertainty, this body of theory has reached a state of Thomistic refinement having great intellectual and esthetic appeal but little discernible relation to the actual or possible behavior of flesh-and-blood human beings. (pp. xxvi–xxvii)

In other words, human persons are limited in their capacity to be prudent and just given their inability to know and understand all options as well as how choosing one option might influence others.

However, not all can be assigned to the realm of the emotions either: “At the other extreme are those tendencies in social psychology traceable to Freud that try to reduce all cognition to affect. . . . The past generation of behavioral scientists has been busy, following Freud, showing that people are not nearly as rational as they thought they were” (p. xxvii).

The human person entering the organization is neither all logic nor all emotion. Simon hopes to land in the middle, which he believes is what “we should expect actually to see it in real life” (p. xxvii). This conception of the human person is more humane and less computer-like than might first appear to be the case. Human persons are neither information-processing systems nor are they pure emotion and instinct. They choose among options but with incomplete information. Affect plays a role, but assigning all decision-making to it would not represent real life. A fine line must be traveled between the two to come to a true understanding of the human

person within the organizational structure, for as Simon points out, “The central concern of administrative theory is with the boundary between the rational and the nonrational aspects of human social behavior” (p. xxviii).

The human person is a complex being who “deals with the real world in all its complexities” (p. xxix). In this world, prudence and justice cannot be perfectly achieved because rationality is limited. Economic Human is a fallacy. Reality is much more analogous to Administrative Human. In his comparison of the two, he writes, “Whereas economic man maximizes—selects the best alternative from among all those available to him, his cousin, administrative man, satifies—looks for a course of action that is satisfactory or ‘good enough’” (p. xxix). Prudence and justice, in this way of conceiving of the human person, can only be shades of gray. Rationality is operative, but it cannot escape the borders of the limitations of knowledge, affect, and the inability to process all possible options.

Administrative Man uses a “drastically simplified model” of human life, taking “into account just a few of the factors that he regards as most relevant and crucial” (pp. xxix–xxx). Why does Administrative Human limit herself or himself in such a fashion? Because “administrative man can make his decisions with relatively simple rules of thumb that do not make impossible demands upon his capacity for thought” (p. xxx).

In Simon’s perspective, it is not possible to seek a single best way to do a particular task. Human beings are bound in their rationality so that it simply is

impossible to consider all the options and find the very best one on which all could agree. In Taylor's search, he:

mistakenly sought to discover categorical and invariant 'principles' of organization, applicable unqualifiedly to all organizations at all times. The 'principles' have gradually been yielding to a vigorous stream of criticism and empirical research that has shown that an organization can be effective only if its design is appropriate to its functions and to its social and technical environment. (p. xxxviii)

What is determined to be the one best way in one setting, even if that were possible, could not be assumed to be the one best way in another. Whereas Taylor virtually ignores environmental influences in decision-making, Simon makes them royalty.

Human beings do have rationality that is operational in decision-making. If it were not, decision-making itself would not be possible. Making decisions means that people with limited knowledge and limited processing ability make choices within a specific environment. Clearly, prudence, which is the ability to consider options and choose what is **best**, and justice, which is the ability to consider the rightful claims of others, must be a part of choosing.

Simon identifies two parts or stages to decision-making:

An initial stage of problem formulation, during which the problem solver arrives at a way of representing the problem situation, and a subsequent stage during which he manipulates the problem situation, with the representation he has adopted, in a succession of efforts to find a solution. (p. xxxix)

While he does not make an explicit egalitarian claim that all people possess the same level of ability to know, process, and decide, it is clear that he believes these capabilities to be broadly rather than narrowly dispersed. He does not mention class or occupation or educational level where these abilities are higher functioning or lower functioning. He acknowledges there is a ceiling to knowledge and processing in making decisions but does not address the floor.

Simon's emphasis is on the process by which one arrives at a decision. Simon considers process to be at least as important as action within an organization because deciding "pervades the entire administrative organization quite as much as does the task of 'doing'" (p. 1). He acknowledges that various kinds of organizations have different levels of decision-making built into them because of the nature of the organization. He believes that decisions are made at every level no matter if the organization under the microscope is the military, an assembly line, or an office. He does not disparage the role of those at the lower end of the decision-making chain because he knows that they too make decisions daily. The person in the lower echelon of the organization is not the sheep that Taylor considers him or her to be. Simon readily accepts bureaucracy and hierarchy as playing a role in decision-making. His focus is really on the "administrative or supervisory staff." However, every person within the organization is an important link in the decision-making chain in that limited options are considered, choices are made, and potential actions are realized. In Simon's conception, there is little consideration that those within a hierarchical structure are both the influenced and the influencer. Decisions mostly flow down. It

does not seem to occur to him that influence and even decision-making might have an influence further up the decision-making ladder.

The role of rationality and Simon's understanding of it are significant. To be rational does not mean necessarily choosing that which is prudent or just. Rationality is not even always at the level of consciousness, for "all behavior involves conscious or unconscious selection of particular actions out of all those who are physically possible to the actor" (p. 3). Not all action is deliberate in that the person thought through several options first and then made a choice. Some decisions are clearly reflex, but even in these instances, "the action is, in some sense, rational" (p. 3). Simon's definition of rationality at this point seems to be stretched. If rationality involves making a choice among options—an action that seemingly needs to be done consciously and involves consideration of the options prior to action—how can reflex be said to be rational?

The answer depends on his definition of rationality. For Simon, rationality does not necessarily mean that all or even most of the options are considered. Instead, what is rational is that which is "goal-oriented" (p. 4). Ducking when an object is thrown at one's face is rational despite the fact that such an action might be described as mere reflex because it is consistent with the overall goal of self preservation. Applied to the context of the organization, decision-making "is purposive-oriented toward goals or objectives. This purposiveness brings about an integration in the pattern of behavior, in the absence of which administration would be meaningless" (p. 4).

Where do prudence and justice fit into this conception of the rationality of decision-making? If rationality is defined as that which is consistent with the goals and objectives of the organization and irrationality is defined as that which is inconsistent with the goals and objectives of the organization, do prudence and justice have a voice? Perhaps, but that voice is not easily discerned. Simon would likely agree that in considering which options should be chosen as the means most consistent with the goals or objectives of the organization, prudence and justice would have some minor role.

Their major role, if they indeed have one in decision-making, is more operational in what Simon calls “value judgments” as opposed to “factual judgments.” Value judgments are “decisions which lead toward the selection of final goals,” whereas factual judgments are those that “involve the implementation” of final goals (pp. 4-5). Value judgments are most often made at the highest level of an organization. In public policy and public administration, the “goals or final objectives of government organization and activity are usually formulated in very general and ambiguous terms—‘justice,’ ‘the general welfare,’ or ‘liberty’” (p. 5). He does not bother to flesh out what such general concepts might mean nor does he seem interested in exploring how they might be operative not only among those who are making value judgments but also among those who are implementing what has been chosen. For Simon, in most instances, someone else chooses the goals and objectives. His interest is in how decisions are guided by them and whether or not the decisions made are consistent with them. It is here that behavior is purposive or rational for

behavior is purposive in so far as it is guided by general goals or objectives; it is rational in so far as it selects alternatives which are conducive to the achievement of the previously selected goals (p. 5).

Such a construct leaves itself open to wonderings about the nature of ethics within an organization. A Jesuit ethic of the ends justifying any means could be defended within such a construct. Factual judgments, in Simon's understanding, are rational if only they are consistent with the achievement of goals set by those who occupy a higher level of decision-making and are those who are responsible for value judgments. The factual-judgment level implies that most persons operate at this level within their organizations and that they have little influence over what kind of value judgments are made. Their role is not to question why. Their role is to do or die.

In this conception, most people within an organization are worker bees who either are incapable of value considerations or simply do not think of such considerations. Their role is to decide how to implement and not whether the implementation of such a value judgment might be foolish, harmful, unjust, or simply wrong. Could the Nuremburg trials have rested on the illegality of crimes against humanity for anyone other than those at the level of value judgments? The defense of "I was just following orders" would hold water in Simon's dichotomy of value and factual judgments. Concentration camp administrators could be help account for how well or efficiently they carried out orders but not for the orders themselves.

Simon's value/factual judgments distinction can also be observed within the organization itself. There are two types of employees: "operative" employees whose

focus is making factual judgments and “administrative” employees whose responsibility it is to ensure that the value judgments are communicated to and embraced by operative employees who actually make on-the-ground decisions. The operative employee’s responsibility is to buy into the value judgments of those who lead the organization. The administrative employee’s role is “establishing in the operative employee himself the attitudes, habits, and a state of mind which lead him to reach that decision which is advantageous to the organization” (p. 11). Such establishment is realized by imposing on the operative employee decisions reached elsewhere in the organization. The administrator “does not seek to convince the subordinate, but only to obtain his acquiescence” (p. 11). It is not a matter of explaining the situation or explaining the choices as well as which one would be best in achieving the goals of the organization. The obedience of the operative “depends on the sanctions which authority has available to enforce its commands” (p. 12). It is carrots and sticks, but mostly sticks.

Taylor would have agreed and asserted that the carrot and stick are necessary to counter the influence of the group mentality that developed among workers which encouraged them to perform at the lowest level possible. Simon agreed that the influence of group mentality was formative, but he does not see this as something that must be broken. Instead, the administrator must use the group to guide the decisions of the operative.

Above the administrators are those who make the ultimate value judgments, be they owners, board members, or elected officials. Their role is to limit the range of values that will guide the decisions of the administrators, for:

If an administrator, each time he is faced with a decision, must perforce evaluate that decision in terms of the whole range of human values, rationality in administration is impossible. If he need consider the decision only in the light of limited organization aims, his task is more nearly within the range of human powers. (p. 13)

The chain of command, then, consists of owners, board members or elected officials who set the range of values that serve as the arena in which the administrators make decisions that guide the actions of the operatives who are motivated both by positive and negative reinforcement through reward, punishment, and the context within which they operate.

Simon recognizes that this uncomplicated system holds within it the possibility of significant interest conflicts in complex organizations. The larger the organization, the more likely conflicts become. In situations where an administrator has oversight over multiple sub-agencies, the administrator will likely be conflicted in that one will might receive more resources and one might receive less or what would benefit one might damage another.

In the context of public administration, “the higher we go in the administrative hierarchy, and the broader becomes the range of social values that must come within the administrator’s purview, the more harmful is the effect of valuation bias, and the

more important is it that the administrator be freed from his narrower identifications” (p. 14).

An interesting dynamic, then, occurs as one advances to the higher echelons of the hierarchy. At the level of the operative, the chief issue is compliance, which involves a minimal amount of consideration of either prudence or justice.

Administrators operate within a narrow range of choices set for them by those higher up the hierarchy. Their true focus is an applied but bounded rationality that makes use of the resources at their disposal toward the most efficacious achievement of the goals of the organization. They “enforce the conformity of the individual to norms laid down by the group” (p. 10). Prudence and justice are more operative here than at the level of the operative as administrators consider the most effective means of bringing about the desired compliance. They are not, however, involved in the selection of values: “the efficiency criterion is completely neutral as to what goals are to be attained” (p. 14). The role of the administrator is to be efficient, which “simply means to take the shortest path, the cheapest means, toward the attainment of the desired goals” (p. 14). For administrators to involve themselves in matters of value judgments would be neither prudent nor wise.

At the top of the hierarchy are those who must be most concerned with prudence and justice as they decide the values of the organization. In public administration, the range of social values includes things like justice and the common good, which certainly is a matter of prudence. Simon is least interested in how such value decisions are made and very nearly completely ignores this group. His

assumption is that these have been set and his focus is on how administrators work within the range of decision-making options that have been created for them by those above them and how they bring them to life for those beneath them.

There is a strong military sense about this structure. Operatives comply. They follow the orders they are given without question, discussion, or input. Those above them in the chain of command operate within a range of choices, but the range and the final objectives are chosen by a commander-in-chief. In many ways, Simon's system is not dissimilar to Taylor's. Taylor argues that the administrator's or manager's task is to scientifically study each movement of those down the chain of command to ensure that the single best way of performing the movement is discovered and implemented. For Simon, there is more room for discernment available to the administrator because different situations will require different techniques. But on the whole, the two systems appear to be variations on the same theme.

One significant difference does arise. Taylor's system is built on putting the "right man" in the right position. A caste system undergirds his conception of the workforce. Those at the lowest level must be constantly monitored, measured, and overseen. Without this oversight, workers would quickly revert back to their natural tendencies toward laziness and a minimalist approach. Simon is more positive. With the proper incentives and disincentives, operatives will internalize the procedures. He asserts that "training prepares the organizational member to reach satisfactory decisions himself, without the need for the constant exercise of authority or advice" (p. 14). Proper training will create bounded rationality which in turn will produce

prudence and justice in the limited decisions that administrators and operatives are allowed to make. If done properly, “training procedures are alternatives to the exercise of authority or advice as means of control over the subordinate’s decisions” so that “it may be possible to minimize, or even dispense with, certain review processes” (p. 15). Such training can be accomplished via a wide range of techniques. Those conducting the training “may supply the trainee with the facts necessary in dealing with these decisions; it may provide a frame of reference for his thinking; it may teach him ‘approved’ solutions; or it may indoctrinate him with the values in terms of which his decisions are to be made” (p. 16). Compared to Taylor, Simon holds a higher degree of appreciation for the talents of every level within the organization. There is no sense of caste. There is only proper training.

Taylor’s focus was the manager. Simon’s focus is the administrator. The two share much in common. Their mutual goal is efficiency. They both seek the elimination of the waste of resources. Simon’s ‘administrative man’ is rational and careful in the allocation of resources. He follows the simple guideline that “among several alternatives involving the same expenditure the one should always be selected which leads to the greatest accomplishment of administrative objectives; and among several that lead to the same accomplishment the one should be selected which involved the least expenditure” (pp. 38–39). Simon recognizes that what he is applying to administration has long been advocated by economic theorists:

Since this ‘principle of efficiency’ is characteristic of any activity that attempts rationality to maximize the attainment of certain ends with the use of scarce

means, it is as characteristic of economic theory as it is of administrative theory. The 'administrative man' takes his place alongside the classical 'economic man.' (p. 39)

Simon's interest and work in economics makes this the central focus of his administrative theory. By focusing on the rationality of decision-making, Simon wants to raise administration to the same footing as the study of economics. While Taylor sought to legitimize administration through the application of the principles of physical science and engineering, Simon seeks legitimization through the principles of classic economics. Relying on proverbs will render administration a second-class field of inquiry. Attention must be given to how administrators allocate scarce resources in achieving goals.

The rationality inherent in classic economics is what drives good or correct administration to a degree that renders Simon closer than he might have appreciated to Taylor's search for the one best way: "Two persons, given the same skills, the same objectives and values, the same knowledge and information, can rationally decide only upon the same course of action" (p. 39). Simon's rational administrator is computer-like: as long as proper programming is done and the correct dataset is provided, one computer will render the same conclusion as any other. In such a conception is found the key to moving the science of administration from a collection of loosely connected and frequently contradictory proverbs to a science where behavior can be both explained and predicted, similar to that of economics. Simon's organizational person operates with rationality within boundaries and is no more or

less rational than a human person within the context of economics. Both face the same limitations, which, in administration, Simon lists as the “speed of mental processes,” the person’s “values and conceptions of purpose” of the organization, and the “extent of knowledge of things relevant to his job.” Of course, with slight adjustment, each of these would be readily accepted by any classic economist.

Simon’s pragmatism is not lacking philosophical reflection, although he chooses to begin from a rather odd point. Instead of laying out and defending his philosophical underpinnings, he writes, “the conclusions reached by a particular school of modern philosophy—logical positivism—will be accepted as a starting point, and their implications for the theory of decisions examined” (p. 45).

It is important to understand some of the basics of logical positivism or, as it is sometimes called, logical empiricism to understand some of the a priori assumptions Simon accepts at face value, as if they need no defense. Without an entry level understanding of logical positivism, it is difficult to grasp what Simon is expressing in his distinction between fact and value in decision-making. Acceptance of the tenets of logical positivism, for Simon and most other adherents to the school, ends the discussion about the role of ethics, prudence, justice, or any other form of metaphysical consideration.

Logical positivism, at its core, is a combination of the empiricism and rationalism. The experiential and the rational are the basis of all knowledge that can be truly known. Metaphysics and ethics are in essence without meaning. Such things cannot be unknown, proven, or disproven. Rudolph Carnap was one of its leading

lights in the early twentieth century. Carnap attempted to develop artificial languages based on math and logic that could be used as a way of dealing with philosophical problems. It is not difficult to see that Carnap's conception was completely compatible with the development of computer languages built on ones and zeroes which could guide sophisticated computer generated models of logic.

Simon was a student of Carnap and held him in high regard. Simon's choice of logical positivism as the philosophical basis of his thinking on administrative decision-making produces a rather cold, computer-like, inhumane conception where, as for Taylor, there is "a place for everything and everything in its place." The metaphysical meaning or purpose of the work of a common person is of no consideration. What matters is measurable and efficient achievement of goals through the compliance of the worker.

Is there an ethical factor in decision-making? At first, Simon seems to agree that, indeed, there is:

Decisions are something more than factual propositions. To be sure, they are descriptive of a future state of affairs, and this description can be true or false in a strictly empirical sense; but they possess, in addition, an imperative quality—they select one future state of affairs in preference to another and direct behavior toward the chosen alternative. In short, they have an *ethical* as well as factual content. (p. 46, italics his)

It seems logical to him that in choosing one's preferred future, there must be some ethical component. Is the choice prudent? Is it just to others? Such questions do not seem outside of realm logic.

But on the very same page, Simon concludes:

The question of whether decisions can be correct and incorrect resolves itself, then, into the question of whether ethical terms like 'ought,' 'good,' and 'preferable' have a purely empirical meaning. It is a fundamental premise of this study that ethical terms are not completely reducible to factual terms. No attempt will be made here to demonstrate conclusively the correctness of this view toward ethical propositions; the justification has been set forth at length by logical positivists and others. (p. 46)

According to Simon, "there is no way in which the correctness of ethic propositions can be empirically or rationally tested," and this, of course, is the kiss of death for a logical positivist who dismisses anything that cannot be tested via logic or experience (p. 46). Evaluating decisions on an ethical basis is unscientific, illogical, and can be considered a waste of time.

How does he square these? He agrees that as a person chooses a preferred future, ethics must be part of the discussion. But then he proceeds to reject any role for considering the ethics of a particular decision because they cannot be empirically or rationally tested. His solution is as follows: "The important point for this present discussion is that any statement that contains an ethical element, intermediate or final,

cannot be described as correct or incorrect, and that the decision-making process must start with some ethical premise that is taken as a ‘given’” (p. 50).

The questions quickly arise as to which “givens” ought to operate and who ought to choose them. This is where Simon’s hierarchy serves him well. Within the organization, the “givens” are truly given. Administrators decide how to most efficiently achieve the givens. Operatives merely comply with the plans of the administrators. Neither has input into the givens, which do not appear to be negotiable. It is for this reason that they are givens. Those who give them are the owners and board members in business and legislators in the government: “The ethical premise [the given mentioned above] describes the objective of the organization in question” (p. 50).

There remains in Simon a separation between public administrators and legislators. Public administrators remain apolitical and neutral. It is not their place to question the ethical givens or the organizational objectives that come from them. As Simon writes:

In order for an ethical proposition to be useful for rational decision-making, (a) the values taken as organizational objectives must be definite, so that their degree of realization in any situation can be assessed, and (b) it must be possible to form judgments as to the probability that particular actions will implement these objectives. (p. 50)

Prudence and wisdom, as was already made clear, are matters of consideration for those at the top of the hierarchy. These must be made crisp and clear for both

administrators and operatives. Ethical considerations are directly connected to objectives, not to means. If means have an ethical component, it is only so far as they are connected to the objective. In this construction, means have only derived ethical components, not direct, for as Simon comments, “most objectives and activities derive their value from the means-ends relationships with them with objectives or activities that are valued in themselves. By a process of anticipation, the value inherent in the desired end is transferred to the means” (p. 52).

At first glance, it appears that Simon is a defender of a philosophical oligarchy where a handful of legislators, owners, and board members set the objectives and make the necessary moral decisions in culture. This assertion is true of Simon who locates most prudence and justice in the managers who, through science, know not only what the right thing to do is but also the one best way to do it. Simon’s conception is not so simple. He loops back around to democracy and denies any such role for his administrators/managers. They are specialists in one area and have no business involving themselves in determining the objectives which they are to seek to attain. In the realm of government:

Democratic institutions find their principal justification as a procedure for the validation of value judgments. There is no ‘scientific’ or ‘expert’ way of making such judgments, hence expertise of whatever kind is no qualification for the performance of this function. If the factual elements in decision could be strictly separated, in practice, from the ethical, the proper roles of

representative and expert in a democratic decision-making process would be simple. (p. 57)

Simon's conception of the relationship of public policy, public administrators, and citizens is a fascinating one. Legislators decide the objectives, which include a consideration of prudence, justice, and other ethical matters. Public administrators rationally seek the most effective and efficient means of achieving those objectives. They play the role of specialists and experts who can discover the best means of achieving the objectives but cannot be relied on to determine the objectives because to do so would be out of their realm of expertise. Administrators are not better persons nor does the existence of a specialized knowledge carry over into all decision-making so that they become philosopher-kings. The operatives lend their compliance to the administrators and, ultimately, to the legislators by simply doing what they are told. The system is given moral legitimacy and validation in that those legislators who determine the objectives are democratically elected and responsible to the citizens who have elected them.

This is a significant difference with Taylorism. Taylor believed that workers or operatives were not capable of deciding either objectives or means. Owners, in most instances, were too distant from the work to comment either on the objectives or the best means of achieving them, other than the overall objective of higher profitability. For him, the managers or administrators are the persons with the knowledge, fortitude, and science to determine what should be done and how it should be done.

It does not seem to occur to Simon that in his conception of democracy, the people granting moral legitimacy and justification to the decisions of the legislators, who determine the overall objectives, are, in most cases, the same people who are the operatives in most organizations who he believes have little input in the determination of objectives in the organizations in which they work. There is some inconsistency here. If not capable of participating in the determination of objectives because of lack of knowledge or education, what could possibly qualify the average person to determine by their vote who in their society should set these objectives?

Simon's main foci is on the administrative level and so perhaps it is unfair to ask such questions of his philosophical underpinnings, but his assumptions do work their way through every part of his administrative theory. Such assumptions determine what he means by decision-making and rationality in administrative behavior. Assigning the consideration of prudence, justice, and other ethical matters to metaphysics through adherence to logical positivism, to objective-setting, or to the legislative level in his hierarchical understanding of human society, he is free to consider decision-making from a purely rational perspective without all the messiness of ethical and moral considerations. At worse, he has removed consideration for what is good and evil or right and wrong. At best, he has made such considerations irrelevant. Either way, it aids in his project of making administration more of a hard science, but it guts his perception of administration of much of what might be considered humane or even human. Making choices is unplugged from ethics. As he writes:

Choice, in so far as it is rational and cognizant of its objective conditions, involves a selection of one alternative from among several. The alternatives differ with respect to the consequences that flow from them, and an analysis of decision-making in its objective aspects will refer primarily to these variable consequences of choice. (p. 61)

The ends justify the means and, for administrators, everything is means. The ends are set by those above them and are validated in the voting of those below them.

Classical economic theory had as one of its foundations that human beings always behave rationally. Simon does not agree. There are limits to rationality, which create the conditions necessary for his concept of satisficing:

Concentration on the rational aspects of human behavior should not be construed as an assertion that human beings are always or generally rational. That misconception, which permeated utilitarian political theory and a large part of classical economic theory, has been decisively refuted by modern developments in psychology and sociology. (pp. 61–62).

Human beings are not robots, so it is not uncommon to find people behaving irrationally.

Rationality is not a common denominator in all administrators. Instead, it is what separates good administrators from bad ones (or those that are not good). By using the term “good,” Simon is not making a moral judgment. Instead, he is merely addressing whether administrators use rationality in assessing the options available to them and make decisions that lead to the most efficacious means of achieving the

objectives set for them. In the context within which decisions are made, this is not always easily done. According to Simon, not all objectives are clear or final. One objective might conflict with another. One might supersede another.

Furthermore, not all of what can be known is always known. Administrators are constantly working with limited knowledge when considering alternative strategies. Even when attempting to decide between alternatives, the administrator is projecting into an unknown future and “cannot, of course, know directly the consequences that will follow upon his behavior” (p. 68). Some educated guessing is bound to occur in a situation where there are limits on “known empirical relationships, and upon information about the existing situation” (p. 69). Additional difficulty is introduced into the decision-making process when more than one person is involved, even when all are attempting to achieve the same objective, for:

In cooperative systems, even though all participants are agreed on the objectives to be attained, they cannot ordinarily be left to themselves in selecting strategies that will lead to these objectives; for the selection of a correct strategy involves a knowledge of each as to the strategies selected by the others. (p. 73)

Simon’s concept of bounded rationality is a reflection, then, of reality and not pure theory. This is the empiricism of his philosophical logical positivism. His belief in rationality will not allow him to discard it completely because he holds firm to the position that human beings have the capacity of reason, but it is not pure reason, something he learns from his adherence to the necessity of empirical evidence:

(1) Rationality requires a complete knowledge and anticipation of the consequences that will follow on each choice. In fact, knowledge of consequences is always fragmentary. (2) Since these consequences lie in the future, imagination must supply the lack of experienced feeling in attaching value to them. But values can only be imperfectly anticipated. (3) Rationality requires a choice among all possible alternative behaviors. In actual behavior, only a very few of all these possible alternatives ever come to mind. (p. 81)

While rationality is limited by empirical reality, this does not mean that human beings in general are unteachable or will not, on their own, learn to adapt for “the human being exhibits docility; that is, he observes the consequences of his movements and adjusts them to achieve the desired purpose. Docility is characterized, then, by a stage of exploration and inquiry followed by a stage of adaptation” (p. 85). He uses as an example a crane operator who:

first obtains information from someone skilled in its operation as to how it is controlled and what the functions are of the various instruments and levers. He then supplements his information by experimenting with the crane, gradually learning from practice what reaction he can expect from the equipment when he manipulates it in a particular way. (p. 85)

This capacity is not limited among the human population. Instead, Simon believes most or all people have it. This contrasts with Taylor who believed that most workers learn their skills from their predecessors and do little or nothing to improve upon what they have learned. Indeed, according to Taylor, there is environmental pressure

among the workers to reject innovation that might increase productivity which means the manager's job is to determine the single best way and then incentivize workers to adapt their operations to it.

For Taylor, workers in community are detrimental to productivity and profit. It is as if the traits of the laziest and least productive worker are assumed by all. Individuals within an organization are a danger to the organization and must be controlled and even broken by managers. For Simon, fullest human potential is only discovered within organizations because "organizations and institutions permit stable expectations to be formed by each member of the group as to the behaviors of the other members under specified conditions" (p. 100). Rationality is the greatest beneficiary of the group environment for, "Such stable expectations are an essential precondition to rational consideration of the consequences of action in a social group" (p. 100) and "Human rationality gets its higher goals and integrations from the institutional setting in which it operates and by which it is formed" (p. 101).

Rationality, while latent in all human persons, finds its fullest expression within organizations in which each person understands his or her role and accedes to their given tasks, whether they encompass administrative determination of the most efficient means of accomplishing a given objective or obeying instructions. Simon believes that "human rationality in any broad sense" can only be achieved within an organization (p. 102). An individual making his or her own decisions is far from the most rational being, for "a person's decisions must not be the product of his own

mental processes, but also reflect the broader considerations to which it is the function of the organized group to give effect” (p. 102).

Organizations develop habits and have institutional memory. The wheel does not need to be reinvented every time but can be recalled. Decisions can be made within an organizational context more quickly and easily when good training provides a sense of history and purpose and when options for decisions are limited. Simon is not advocating for instant decisions or reference to some kind of decision chart into which the individual within an organization is slotted. As a matter of fact, he argues for “hesitation” in decision-making because, “if rationality is to be achieved, a period of hesitation must precede choice, during which the behavior alternatives, knowledge bearing on environmental conditions and consequences, and the anticipated values must be brought into the focus of attention” (p 89). The organization functions to limit the number of options to be considered, clarify potential options for the various choices, and make explicit the values that must be at the core of decision-making. Without the organizational context, “The individual, realizing his inability to take into consideration all the factors relevant to his choice, and despairing of rationality, might vacillate among the available alternatives until the time for action was past” (p. 89).

Prudence and justice, at least as far as they can be considered as rational within Simon’s scheme, can be enhanced by the organization, which is clear in its operational memory and overall values. They can become patterns of behavior rather than merely individual acts, chosen in every decision-making opportunity.

Habituation within an organization enables an individual to do what is rational with

enough hesitation to consider the available options and operative values without so much hesitation that that person is rendered ineffective by the necessity of considering every possible option.

According to Simon, effectiveness comes through the division of labor, standardization, downward decision-making, communication channels, and training (pp. 102–103). Despite first appearances, Simon is not encouraging the development of an entirely top-down organization. While stating that downward decision-making is optimal, “lateral or even upward” transmission of decisions should not be ruled out (p. 103). While his mention of communication channels might appear to be highly bureaucratic and unidirectional, his conception is that “the organization provides communication running in all directions through which information for decision-making flows” (p. 103). Organizations which lack multi-directional communication are weaker for it. In many instances, “the ‘facts of the case’ may be directly present to the subordinate but highly difficult to communicate to the superior. The insulation of the higher levels of the administration hierarchy from the world of fact known at first hand by the lower levels is a familiar administrative phenomenon” (p. 238).

Therefore:

We may conclude, then, that some measure of centralization is indispensable to secure the advantages of organization: coordination, expertise, and responsibility. On the other hand, the costs of centralization must not be forgotten. It may place in the hands of highly paid personnel decisions which do not deserve their attention. It may lead to a duplication of function which

makes the subordinate superfluous. Facilities for communication must be available, sometimes at considerable cost. The information needed for a correct decision may be available only to the subordinate. . . . These are the considerations which must be weighed in determining the degree to which decisions should be centralized or decentralized. (pp.239–240)

Simon's contrast with Taylor is stark. There is even some evidence that the contrast between Simon earlier in his book and Simon around page 100 is stark. In his earlier comments, the hierarchy is clear. Board members, executives, owners, or elected officials determine values. He is sticking to this point and is not advocating that operatives or administrators involve themselves in setting the value agenda. But his conception of how the administrators relate to the operatives seems to have evolved within his own book. Earlier, operatives are those whose choices are limited to obedience or disobedience. There was little indication that the operative had much influence over how something would be done. It was the task of the administrator to decide the most efficient means of accomplishing the goals set by those above, making use of the limited resources available. But in later sections, Simon opens up communication channels so that operatives can communicate up the organizational chart. There remain limitations. Division of labor is limiting in that "By giving each a particular task to accomplish, it directs and limits his attention to that task" (p. 102). Standardization also binds the operative in that "By deciding once for all [or at least for a period of time] that a particular task shall be done in a particular way, it relieved the individual who actually performs the task of the necessity of determining each

time how it shall be done” (p. 102). While tipping his hat to ideas that might flatten the bureaucratic organization, his understanding of the organization itself remains focused on a properly functioning bureaucracy where there is a place for everything and everything is in its place.

While Simon’s logical positivism dismisses the role of ethics as unscientific and, therefore, not worthy of discussion, he does believe that ethics play a role in getting a person to accept the authority of another. Ethics and the role of authority within an organization are intricately linked. Simon rejects the notion that carrots and sticks, being the external motivators that they are, can explain why one person obeys the direction of another. Instead:

The person who accepts the authority of a legislature, a property holder, or a father within a particular institutional setting, is probably motivated much more by socially indoctrinated ethical notions than by fear of sanctions. That is, the individual in a particular society believes that he ought to obey the laws adopted by the constituted authorities and that he ought to recognize property rights. (p. 136)

This is a strange diversion from his philosophical logical positivism. The compulsion to obey is internal in most cases. There is a moral sense of “oughtness” which has little to do with either reward or punishment and is to be found widely distributed throughout the human population. Without it, there is little chance that society as a whole could function. Simon’s adherence to a strict classical economic model in

which cost and benefit analysis form the basic framework of all decision-making is called into question with his introduction of ethical oughtness.

Value questions cannot be disregarded: “to consider the administrative activity as valuationally neutral is an abstraction from reality which is permissible within broad limits but which, if carried to extremes, ignores very important human values” (p. 184). He does not list which human values are important nor does he make a defense for his claim. While strict logical positivists would reject ethics as part of decision-making, Simon gives it a role: “The ethical element in decision-making consists in a recognition and appraisal of all the value elements inherent in the alternative possibilities” (p. 184).

Simon’s examples focus primarily on matters of justice, a consideration of more than self:

(1) If cost is measured in money terms, then the wages of employees cannot be considered as a valuationally neutral element, but must be included among the values to be appraised in the decision. (2) The work pace of workers cannot be considered as a valuationally neutral element—else we would be led to the conclusion that a ‘speed-up’ would always be eminently desirable. (3) The social aspects of the work situation cannot be considered as a valuationally neutral element. The decision must with the social and psychological consequences of substituting one type of work-situation for another. (4) Wage policies, promotional policies, and the like need to be considered not only

from the viewpoint of incentives and result-efficiency, but also from that of distributive justice to the members of the group. (p. 185)

This is **not** consistent with his earlier comments that values are determined at the level of the **board**, the owner, or elected officials. Value considerations are real, important, and can be key to just decision-making, especially for administrators. There are limitations. Administrators do not bear the weight of considering every possible communal or public value but are responsible only for those germane to an administrator's specific area. Simon opposed the idea that:

The administrator, serving a public agency in a democratic state, must give a proper weight to *all* community values that are relevant to his activity, and that are reasonably ascertainable in relation thereto, and cannot restrict himself to values that happen to be his particular responsibility. (p. 186)

In a democratic society, such considerations are the responsibility of those who hold elected office. Perhaps prudence is knowing which values are and are not appropriate for consideration by an administrator within a particular setting.

So what is Simon's understanding of the nature of the human person as it relates to administrative theory? Simon's interest tilts heavily toward administrative decision-making within organizations and so the individual human person gets little attention. What thought he does dedicate to philosophical reflection on the human person is occasionally contradictory with what he has written in other places in the same book. He lacks consistency. However, some of his anthropological assumptions can be gleaned from his text.

First and foremost, Simon believes that humans are mostly rational beings. He holds the human ability to be reasonable in high esteem. A machine is no match for the human person because “the most powerful information-processing system . . . is the aggregate of memory that is distributed among 200 million human heads” (p. 297). Of course, the view of human beings primarily as information-processing systems is hardly a full-orbed anthropology but is consistent with his acceptance of logical positivism, although such an approach leaves little room for consideration of human emotion, ethics, or anything else that smacks of metaphysics. His desire is to raise the theory of administration to the level of physical science or at least classic economics, neither of which leave much room for non-rational human matters. His emphasis on rationality leads him to almost completely ignore other elements of human existence that might play a role in how an organization functions like emotion, aesthetics, religion, morality, calling, and relationships. Simon leaves the initial impression that human beings are like computers who, by joining an organization, become linked to other computers with more powerful and sophisticated operating systems, thereby becoming more powerful and efficient themselves.

Simon’s **appreciation** for rationality, though, is perhaps more limited than might be found **among** physicists or economists. Human beings are rational but in a limited fashion. **They** bear the capacity for reason but not as classically defined as prudence, justice, **or any** other virtue. Rationality, for Simon, is a method of operation which **seeks to determine** the most efficient means of accomplishing a specific goal (p. 240). **It is his empiricism** that leads him to conclude:

If there were no limits to human rationality, administrative theory would be barren. It consists of a single precept: Always select that alternative, among those available, which will lead to the most complete achievement of your goals. The need for administrative theory resides in the fact that there are practical limits to human rationality, and that these limits are not static, but depend upon the organizational environment in which the individual's decision takes place. The task of administration is to design this environment that the individual will approach as close as practicable to rationality [judged in terms of the organization's goals] in his decisions. (pp. 240–241)

Human beings on their own are limited in their rationality for, as Simon writes, the individual “is limited by his unconscious skills, habits, and reflexes; he is limited by his values and conceptions of purpose, which may diverge from the organizational goals; he is limited by the extent of his knowledge and information” (p. 241). It is the organization, specifically the administrator, whose role is it to develop the skills, habits and reflexes of the operative, make clear the organization's goals, and provide the knowledge and information that will make the organization efficient. Inefficiency, then, is not caused by the failure of an individual. Its root is administrators who have failed in their core responsibilities.

It is important to note that, by-in-large, Simon makes no mention of classism. There are no tiers or castes of human persons. There are no great men or women. There are people with the skills and necessary information who understand the goals of the organization. These people are efficient. Then there are those who have none

of these, for which they cannot be blamed. There is no class that is more efficient than another for:

The individual can be rational in terms of the organization's goals only to the extent that he is able to pursue a particular course of action, he has a correct conception of the goal of the action, and he is correctly informed about the conditions surrounding his action. (p. 241)

There is little consideration given to culture, taste, or preference. People's choices are not effected by such things. For Simon, there is rationality and irrationality. Indeed, "Two persons, given the same possible alternatives, the same values, the same knowledge, can rationally reach only the same decision" (p. 241). It is important to note that he does not mean personal values. Rather, he means given the same set of organizational values. Personal values have no part to play in efficiency or rationality.

The real enemy of the administrator is irrationality. The task of the administrator is to work to banish its existence from the organization. As Simon writes, "administrative theory is concerned with the control of the nonrational." It turns out that "the larger area of rationality" is "less important" (p. 244). The focus, then, is getting rid of what hinders. Administration is extermination of what is not rational as far as it is humanly possible. Administrators are not really decision-makers in the sense that they decide what must be done and how it must be done, as in Taylor's conception. The administrator creates an environment in which decisions are limited, specified, and made rationally. It is not specialized training that is needed.

Instead, “the proper training of ‘administrators’ lies not in the narrow field of administrative theory, but in the broader field of social sciences generally” (p. 247). Better that administrators be taught sociology or psychology than administration theory.

And yet, Simon has little use for human relations theorists:

The principle normative concern here was to create organizational environments in which employees would be motivated to join the organization, to remain in it, and to contribute vigorously and effectively to its goals. As a result of theory and empirical research in human relations, the factory and office came to be viewed as relatively impoverished human environments—starving both the human mind and the human emotions. . . .

‘Job enrichment’ and ‘democratic management’ are labels commonly applied to these emphases in organizational design. (p. 289)

It is enlightening that factory and office work are not in themselves occasionally impoverished. It is only human relationship theorists who have created such an impression within the minds of employees. Job fulfillment equals efficiency for, in fact, “the happy employee is the productive employee” (p. 289). Such statements are difficult to square with his assertion that administrators are best trained in social sciences rather than administrative theory. If the happy employee is the productive employee, then Frederick Taylor was right and the focus should shift to scientific management. Productivity, time-study, and physical science ought to be the sole tools

of the administrator who can safely assume that employee happiness will naturally follow in its wake.

There are distinctions within administration, specifically within very large organizations, by which Simon usually means public administrative systems. As he points out, “the content decisions of the higher administrator deal with more ultimate purposes and more general processes than the decisions of the lower administrator. We might say that the lower administrator’s purposes are the upper administrator’s processes” (p. 246). Such higher administrators often have responsibilities for multiple agencies or task forces with objectives that may be competitive or in opposition to one another.

Moral themes and ethical issues like prudence and justice find themselves mostly overlooked in Simon’s theory. Where they are mentioned, they are redefined:

It is sometimes thought that, since the words ‘good’ and ‘bad’ often occur in sentences written by students of administration, the science of administration contain an essentially ethical element. If this were true, a science of administration would be impossible, for it is impossible to choose, on an empirical basis, between ethical alternatives. Fortunately, it is not true. The terms ‘good’ and ‘bad’ when they occur in a study on administration are seldom employed in a purely ethical sense. Procedures are termed ‘good’ when they are conducive to the attainment of specified objectives, ‘bad’ when they are not conducive to such attainment. (p. 249)

Of course, there is an ethical component to both the means and the end. Simon would prefer to consider only the means as the administrator's chief responsibility. The ends are determined by others, creating a situation where administrators are in essence morally neutral. If the overall goal is to get rid of toxic waste and this goal is set by the board of directors, the administrator's job is to do so as efficiently as possible. Simon's ethically empty administrator might determine that the most efficient means is to dump it in a river so that it becomes someone else's problem. Prudence has no role to play. Neither do just considerations of what the administrator might be doing to the people living downstream. Unless the overall goals of the company specifically state an objection to such environmentally damaging behavior, the administrator who dumps waste into a stream might be said to be "good" in that he or she found a very inexpensive and effective means of ridding the company of its toxic waste. How is this possible? Because, as Simon writes:

We may summarize the conclusions we have reached with respect to a science of administration. In the first place, an administrative science, like any science, is concerned purely with factual statements. There is no place for ethical assertions in the body of a science. (p. 253)

So are people generally truly prudent and just or are they operating with a false prudence and unjust? To a large degree, for Simon, the answer does not matter for administrators and operatives. Actually, the question itself is invalid because the categories of justice and prudence cannot be established within the framework of logical positivism. People can be efficient or inefficient. They can be obedient or

disobedient. They can be rational or nonrational. They can be knowledgeable or ignorant. They may be skillful or they may lack skills. But they cannot be prudent or just any more than a computer can attain either or both of these designations.

Herbert Simon

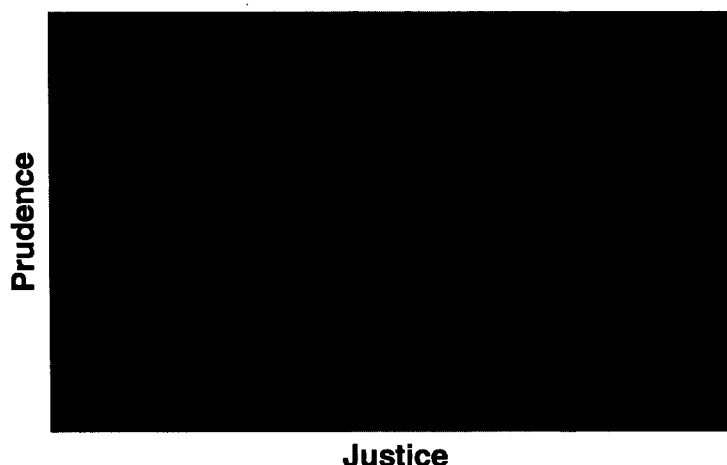


Figure 7. Herbert Simon

Frederick Mosher's *Democracy and the Public Service*

The third book examined in light of the prudence/justice model is Frederick C. Mosher's *Democracy and the Public Service*, first published in 1968. It was number five in Sherwood's survey of influential books. For the purpose of this project, Mosher's work represents certain aspects of thought being discussed during the period the first Minnowbrooke Conference was held and focuses more on the public servants within the public administration sector and their place within a democratic political system.

Mosher's career was almost entirely devoted to the study of public administration. Following his graduation from Dartmouth in 1934, he completed a master's degree from Syracuse and a doctorate in public administration from Harvard. Mosher's career primarily focused on teaching. He served on the faculties of the Maxwell School of Syracuse, the University of Bologna, the University of California at Berkeley, and the University of Virginia. He was the editor-in-chief of the *Public Administration Review* from 1951 until 1954, served on its board of editors and often served as a referee for journal entries. He authored, co-authored, or edited fourteen books in addition to the one considered here.

Toward the end of his career, Mosher put out a second edition of *Democracy and the Public Service*. He added a new preface, which he wrote in 1982. Since the first edition, written in 1968, the United States had been through the withdrawal from Vietnam, Watergate, the resignation and pardoning of President Nixon, the one term presidency of Jimmy Carter, and the inauguration of Ronald Reagan. It grated Mosher to hear the current president of the United States lay the blame for problems in the nation at the feet not just of elected officials, but specifically of public administrators:

"A government bureau is the closest thing to eternal life we'll ever see on this earth."

"A taxpayer is someone who works for the federal government but who doesn't have to take a civil service examination."

"Concentrated power has always been the enemy of liberty."

“Freedom prospers when religion is vibrant and the rule of law under God is acknowledged.”

“Government is like a baby. An alimentary canal with a big appetite at one end and no sense of responsibility at the other.”

“Government is the people’s business and every man, woman and child becomes a shareholder with the first penny of tax paid.”

“Government is not the solution to the problem. Government IS the problem.”

“Government’s view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it.” (Reagan, undated)

Mosher had dedicated his entire professional life to teaching public administration. The president’s comment drew a defensive response from the author in his newly penned preface:

The increasingly bitter and rancorous attacks upon the ‘bureaucracy’ and the ‘bureaucrats’ in recent years have been neither deserved nor constructive. It now seems that few aspiring political executives think they can run and be elected unless part of their campaigns consists of invectives against those appointive public servants upon who they will be—and in some cases have been—dependent in carrying out their responsibilities if elected or reelected . . . for not very many of the best

people in the public services are likely to want to stay there when they are paid far below their peers in the private sector and are the butt of repeated charges of incompetence, dishonesty, and laziness by their neighbors, the media, and indeed their own bosses. (p. xii)

Whatever enthusiasm generated by the first Minnowbrooke Conference in 1968 for making positive changes in the United States through public administration had been squashed by events within the government, many of which were unconnected to appointed public administrators and civil servants. Mosher's focus in his text:

is upon the public service, in its relation to democracy both as an idea and as a way of governance. My premises are relatively clear and limited, that (1) governmental decisions and behavior have tremendous influence upon the nature and development of our society, our economy, and our policy; (2) the great bulk of decisions and actions taken by governments are determined or heavily influenced by administration officials, most of whom are appointed, not elected; (3) the kinds of decisions and actions these officials take depend upon their capabilities, their orientations, and their values; and (4) these attributes depend heavily upon their backgrounds, their training and education, and their current associations. (p. 3)

There is much in this paragraph deserving of attention. The first is Mosher's causal linkages. The person of the public administrator has an impact upon the kinds

of public administrative decisions made. These decisions make up the largest part of operative government. Governing decisions influence societal development, policy, and the economy and, therefore, have a profound impact on American democracy.

The person in public administration is not a threat to democracy. Instead, public administrators are pillars of democracy. Their backgrounds, orientation, education, training, values, capabilities, and associations form much of the backbone of how democracy functions in the United States. They are not neutral errand boys and girls for legislators. They are not people who have little say over the values and objectives set by those in elected office. Their focus is not merely efficiency and effectiveness in carrying out what they are ordered to do. They are key players in democracy. Mosher would argue that they are, to some extent, even more influential than legislators in making democracy work.

Mosher's administrators are more fully human. They are not scientific managers, like Taylor's, whose central concerns are time-studies, the observations of every minute motion, and squeezing the most productivity out of the human animal. Nor are they Simon's eliminators of nonrationality whose central concern is to increase efficiency through bringing a higher level of rationality to the organizations and programs they administer.

Administrators do not appear, as they do occasionally in Simon's analysis, as bundles of human potential formed and molded by the organizations and environment in which they function. Instead, they appear as fully developed. Their ethics, beliefs, allegiances are formed by their values, education, experiences, and associations quite

apart from their organizational setting. While Simon's administrators are profoundly influenced by their organizations, Mosher's administrators have a profound influence on their organizations and, because they do, on society and democracy.

Because the influence of public administrators upon society and democracy is so substantial, the focus ought to be on the kinds of persons that assume such positions. Even if one had stopped reading after the first five pages of Mosher's text, it would be clear that education and training are going to be his major emphasis. If the links he espouses are real, then American democracy depends on the kinds of persons that assume these roles. There is, then, an administrative class. They might not be well-compensated, but surely they must be prudent, just, and perhaps many other things if democracy is to continue.

Mosher recognizes and addresses in his opening pages what appears to be the inherent conflict of an unelected administrative class as some of the key pillars of democracy: "How can a public service . . . be made to operate in a manner compatible with democracy? How can we be assured that a highly differentiated body of public employees will act in the interests of all the people, will be an instrument of all the people?" (p. 5). Again, in an even more direct manner, "How does one square a permanent civil service—which neither the people by their vote nor their representatives by their appointments can easily replace—with the principle of government 'by the people'?" (p. 7).

Mosher is clearly not an advocate of participatory or even direct democracy found in Etzioni and the communitarians only a few decades later. As a matter of fact:

Active representativeness run rampant within a bureaucracy would constitute a major threat to orderly democratic government. The summing up of the multitude of special interests seeking effective representation does not constitute the general interest. The strengths of different private interest groups within administration are vastly unequal, and the establishment of anything approaching equity among them would be nearly impossible. . . .

Thus there are very real problems in the development of a rounded concept of representative bureaucracy within our democratic framework. (p. 15)

Active representativeness would actually damage democracy because of special interest groups and a tendency toward a majority domination. Those representing a slice of American society would be neither prudent nor just. They would be unable to consider the options available and make the wise choices based on a concern not only for themselves, but for all citizens. Such neutrality is possible and most likely to be found in the administrative class. Mosher does not consider the possibility that the administrative class itself might have its own allegiances and biases. Their very neutrality is the balancing force in a society made up of pockets of more and less powerful special interest groups. They are the keepers of prudence and justice, at least in his initial conception.

Overcoming their inherent biases isn't easily achieved. Mosher acknowledges that public administrators are largely formed as persons when they enter public service. They are not created within the organization, as Simon might argue. The formative influences are their upbringing, experience, values, and education. He does not believe that the persons in public administration can truly be neutral for they are what they are when they assume leadership positions. How, then, can prudence and justice be operative?

Mosher's first attempt at an answer is to make the public administrative class representative of those they serve. He does not seek the elimination of bias and special interest among public administrators. Instead, through ensuring a diverse body of public administrators, he seeks to proliferate special interests with the group so that the interests of some are balanced by the interests of others. His idea is a public administrative representativeness by statistical analysis which:

concerns the origin of individuals and the degree to which, collectively, they mirror the whole society. It may be statistically measured in terms of locality or origin, for example, and its nature [rural, urban, suburban], previous occupation, father's occupation, education, family income, family social class, sex, race, religion. A public service, and more importantly the leadership personnel of that service, which is broadly representative of all categories of the population in these respects, may be thought of as satisfying Lincoln's prescription of government 'by the people' in a limited sense. (p. 15)

Public administrators, in this system, would not be hired based on their skills, previous employment, education, or the results of their civil service exam. Instead, they would be hired on assumptions made from their familial, racial, economic, geographic, religious, and social background. The civil service exam would more closely resemble a personality profile. Simon called for public administrators to reject specialization and instead be educated in the social sciences. If this initial scheme of Mosher's were to be put in place, the specific fields would be limited to sociology and psychology as human resource workers would bear the responsibility of determining which characteristics call for further slicing and which do not.

Such a system would also operate with the assumption that justice—that is, considering the rightful claims of others—is limited only to considering the claims of those who fall into one's own specific slice of society. Can a male consider the rightful claims of a female or someone born on a farm the rights of someone born in Brooklyn? If not, why not? The answer is that prudence and justice are truncated and curtailed by social, racial, religious, economic, and familial realities in each person's background. True prudence and true justice would not be possible.

Furthermore, if this is the case and various people from different backgrounds are all competing to represent their specific slice of American culture, majority rule will still be the order of the day. The groups with the largest number of people represented will also be the largest groups with the public administrative sector.

In the end, Mosher rejects this approach as one that will solve the dilemma of special interest groups in public administration. His rejection is not because such a

concept builds on a faulty view of the human person who limits their consideration of the just claims of others only to their class. Instead, it is his fear that those within each slice might not actually represent their specifically identified groups for having certain history and characteristics “does not necessarily mean that a public servant with given background and social characteristics will *ipso facto* represent the interests of others with like backgrounds and characteristics in his behavior and decisions” (p. 16).

Mosher provides a second ground for his rejection of such a system and, again, it is not a matter of building on a faulty anthropology that assumes human beings can act prudently and justly with an eye toward only those who share their background and social characteristics. Such a system might be possible. What stands in the way of moving toward such a system is not a perspective of the human person but rather a lack of knowledge at this point in history: “The fact is that we know too little about the relationship between a person’s background and pre-employment socialization on the one hand, and his orientation and behavior in office on the other” (p. 16). He does not address the issue of whether such an approach would be advisable if the knowledge gap was bridged.

Much of Mosher’s book focuses on the history and development of both public administrative theory and public administrative practice. His lens is primarily the educational system that produced an administrative class in European administration and the American system where the establishment of such a class is rejected and professionalism and specialization reign. He writes:

We have no substantial 'administrative class' of cultured gentlemen as in Britain or of legally oriented officials as in continental Europe. Where the problems of most European governments, as those of most of the underdeveloped countries as well, concern the dearth of well-qualified specialists, ours seems to be a surfeit of specialisms and professionals and a glaring need for generalists. (p. 55)

The difference in the two systems, according to Mosher, is education: The reluctance of American colleges in the nineteenth century to prepare their students for professional and administrative work, coupled with the Jacksonian denial of careers in the public service, may well have been the death knell of any administrative class in the United States. (p. 47)

European nations, meanwhile, created an administrative class by combining social class and an education system designed to foster their expertise so that they would remain in control of the levers of the government.

In the United States, during the nineteenth century:

The egalitarian drive which spurred and rationalized the spoils system proved decreasingly effective as a guarantor of popular direction and control of administration. Jackson and his successors reduced the influence of the gentry and opened the gates of public service to the common people. (p. 66)

Or, at least to the common people who could request spoils from those they helped elect or to whom they were related. The spoils system was not a fully open system, of course, but it did stunt the growth of the development of an administrative class

because it did not allow the permanency necessary to foster its growth.

Administrators were viewed as extensions of elected officials and often changed with the results of elections.

Mosher contends that during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the generally high character and caliber of the early administrations delayed the drive toward systematized merit systems. In the succeeding half century the egalitarian philosophy—centered in populism and equality of opportunity—made great strides. By the time of the Pendleton Act, a class-oriented, university-based civil service system was politically impossible. Hence ours was devised as an open system in which considerations of class or family or formal education were intentionally minimized. The corruption and scandal of the nineteenth century provided a moral groundwork for civil service reform. (p. 82)

The greatest structural change was the Pendleton Act which: accepted the principles of egalitarianism and of equal opportunity in the public service. . . . The impetus to civil service reform in this country did not derive from an effort to break a social class monopoly on the public service or to transfer civil service control from one class to another, as it had in Britain. The ideal of civil service reform in America was an open public service. (p. 67)

The egalitarian spirit, spurred on corruption in the spoils system and solidified in the Pendleton Act, meant the development of an administrative class would not

become part of the American system. The structure would be open. The focus of the government, though, would change significantly with the Great Depression. Until this point in American history, “most of government’s activities—and most thinking about its role—concerned the provision of fairly well-established services” (p. 85). A limited role for the government was one of the core beliefs of the Founding Fathers. They feared a strong and pervasive state. The division of power between three branches—executive, legislative, and judicial—and at least three levels—federal, state, and local—was an effective check on government’s involvement in much of American life. The government was inefficient by design. President Martin Van Buren eloquently expressed the same sentiment 60 years after the Declaration of Independence:

All communities are apt to look to government for too much. . . . But this ought not to be. The framers of our excellent Constitution and the people who approved it acted at the time on a sounder principle. They wisely judged that the less government interferes with private pursuits the better for the general prosperity. Its real duty is to leave every citizen and every interest to reap under its own protection the rewards of virtue, industry, and prudence”
(White, 1954, 443).

Van Buren, in summing up the thought of the Founders, believed that virtue and prudence are generally dispersed among the population. The greatest threat to them was the extension of the reach and power of government.

With the Great Depression and President Roosevelt's response to it, the thinking about the proper role of the government changed significantly. In the face of economic hardship, the government and its administrative apparatus would take the lead, claiming to "both define the content of the good life and control the institutional tools leading to it" (Rojas, 2001, p. 13). According to Mosher, "With the New Deal, government ceased to be merely a routine servant or a passive and reactive agent. It became itself an initiator of programs and change—for a while, almost the only one" (p. 83). What began in the New Deal was further extended during Roosevelt's presidency via the outbreak of World War II when, as Mosher's states, the "government, military and civic, dominated much of American life" (p. 83).

Neither the New Deal nor World War II led to the development of an administrative class, according to Mosher. During this period, administration was not dominated by specialists who had been educated in narrow topics limited to their profession. As a matter of fact:

There was widespread feeling against the narrowly conceived specialist and technician in administrative positions. Public administrators might or might not be trainable in administrative subject matter—the point was debated—but in any case they should be broadly educated, energetic men and women, developed through experience and protected by a merit system. (p. 85)

This concept was short-lived and quickly gave way to the next stage, which Mosher calls the specialization or, more particularly, the professionalization of public administration. Prudence and justice for determining the public good, originally

believed by the Founders to be best left to citizens who had them in sufficient quantity, were reallocated to the government who turned them over to specialists and professionals in public administration. Such specialists were not of a particular social class. Rather, their entrance was determined by their education.

Mosher recognizes that this was risky: "One may ask how we are to be assured that the President and his influential advisers and staff units—especially those that consist largely of career personnel—will behave responsibly for the good of the whole people" (p. 97). His answer does not completely satisfy for it is a combination of the accountability inherent to elected office, self-interest, loyalty to an individual who serves in a protective role, and the idea that public administrators would be able to balance all of the above with the restraints of their own sense of prudence and justice. As Mosher writes:

For the President, the nominating and electoral process, the aspiration for an honorable paragraph in history, and the constraints of the next elections provide some safeguard [in other words, the president's own self-interest]. For the political appointees, there is loyalty to the chief executive or political officers appointed by him. There is also the somewhat hopeful concept that conscientious, educated, and well-disposed public servants will behave in the general public interest. (p. 97)

Mosher is a realist in that he recognizes that the self-interest and self-preservation generally operative in all human beings is to be found also in the ranks of public administrators. Of course, not all public administrators are conscientious, well-

educated or well-disposed any more than all business people play by the rules or all employees give one hundred percent of their effort on a daily basis. Some do. Some don't. Most fall somewhere between.

What developed was a public administrative system built on trust for those in administrative positions. Mosher makes plain his discomfort with such a system for:

Heavy reliance upon the motivation of a relatively small group of anonymous individuals entails some confidence in their wisdom [or prudence], in their humanistic upbringing [or justice], and education and in their morality. . . .

Were not these high public officials a twentieth-century incarnation of Plato's philosopher kings or of Aristotle's virtuous gentlemen? (p. 97)

In Mosher's mind, what is true of the general public is true of public administrators. No dichotomy exists between the vast majority of the public who operate according to self-interest (or perhaps the rationality of an economist or the bounded rationality of Herbert Simon) and the much smaller number of those who are civil servants. Both operate, to some degree, from self-interest desiring an extension of their territory, financial reward, protection from threat, and enhanced status:

The professions—whether general or public service, established or emergent—display common characteristics which are significant for democracy and the public service. One of these is the continuing drive of each of them to elevate its stature and strengthen its public image as a profession. . . . A prominent device for furthering this goal is the establishment of clear and [where possible] expanding boundaries of work within which members of the

profession have exclusive prerogatives to operate. Other means include: the assurance and protection of career opportunities for professionals; the establishment and continuous elevation of standards of education and entrance into the profession; the upgrading of rewards [pay] for professionals; and the improvement of their prestige before their associates and before the public in general. (p. 117)

Against such concerns, it seems unlikely that concepts such as the common good, prudence, justice and selfless public service will provide much guidance for their decisions and their actions. Even if public administration was made up of a collection of selfless individuals, Mosher believes they are neither sufficiently trained nor focused to act in accordance with the common good. Public administrators in an age of specialization and professionalization are primarily attentive to matters of science and so “obscure the larger meaning of the profession in society” (p. 118). Their scientific tunnel vision prevents them from developing into Aristotle’s virtuous gentlemen or Plato’s royal philosophers.

The professionalization of public administrators has led to conflicts with elected officials and within the ranks of public administrators. According to Mosher, “Politics is to the professionals as ambiguity is to truth, expediency is to rightness, heresy is to true belief” (p. 119). It is important to note that Mosher’s claim is that public administrators understand themselves to be the standard-bearers of truth, rightness, and true belief over against those that are the polar opposite of these characteristics of prudence and justice.

Such claims, though, ring hollow when Mosher considers the relationship between public administrators and elected officials. If prudence and justice were common among public administrators, it could be expected that those in various agencies would see each other as assets and not competitors. To support staff, it would seem that the goal of serving the common good would generate an office environment where each respected the abilities and contributions of others. Mosher's lifetime spent studying public administrators leads him to reject both of these expectations. Ego is more active than considerations of the common good, prudence, or justice. As Mosher states, "my unproven observation is that the most conflictive situations arise between those in different professions [or segments] and in different personnel systems who are approximately equal in level or responsibility and pay, but where one is 'more elite' than the other" (p. 132). Such dynamics do not occur simply between those in different or competing agencies. According to Mosher, they are commonly found within agencies themselves:

Members of the same profession in an agency are 'colleagues,' like professors in a university; and the flavor of their work is similarly collegial. Toward members of other professions, their behavior is likely to be more formal, sometimes suspicious or even hostile. Toward paraprofessionals and other workers, the relationship may more frequently be paternalistic, patronizing, or dictatorial. . . . The 'climate' of an organization as well as its view of mission and its effectiveness in carrying it out are in considerable part a product of its professional structure and professional value system. (p. 133)

Conflict and status connect at the hip. Mosher believes that quarrels are not the result of difference of opinion as to what is prudent or just. Instead, disagreements are a matter of territory and stature. This is not to say that the same is not true within non-public administrative work settings, but it certainly rejects the idea that those within public administration operate at a higher ethical level than do the general public.

Mosher attributes this to the presence of professionals in the systems. Their concern is not the common good. Instead, their first consideration is their career, their territory, and their influence. The development of unions has set these concerns in concrete: "The idea of objective responsibility is increasingly threatened by both professionalization and unionization, with their narrow objectives and their focus upon the welfare and advancement of their members" (p. 229). The concept of the common good has been lost or, at least, mothballed. Mosher does not attempt to make a distinction between the persons in such unions and the unions themselves. Are the unions merely reflecting the true concerns of their members or are they creating such concerns among their members? In other words, is the problem one of human nature or organization? Such questions are not addressed directly. Mosher does appear to lay blame at the feet of how public administration and its employees are structured rather than at the feet of the persons themselves. Those placed in a system dominated by acquiring, maintaining, and extending power will have little time for consideration of what is prudent or just.

The unionization and professionalization of public administration has had some benefit to the operation of American government:

Among the larger units of American government, the older and more overt violations of individual honesty and trust have been minimized. In terms of the billions of dollars involved in governmental transactions every day, the amount of theft, fraud, bribery, and even expense account padding are today relatively small. Few sectors of American society are more carefully policed in these regards than the administrative arms of its larger governments. (p. 230)

But the larger and more important issues of American government, according to Mosher, have been ignored. Such a system has produced more honest power-grabbers and more fiscally-transparent public employees who still act in their own self-interest. What is least consequential has been addressed. What is most consequential remains ignored. Mosher does not see this situation changing: “For better or worse—or better and worse—much of our government is now in the hands of professionals. . . . It is unlikely that the trend toward professionalism in or outside of government will soon be reversed” (p. 142).

Taylor wanted scientists and time experts. Simon called for efficiency experts. Mosher marks a significant shift in thinking. It is not specialization that is needed. The shortcomings of public administration are not the result of a lack of scientific training. The focus should not be on scientific techniques but rather on human beings. The scope should not be narrowed but should be broadened. As Mosher writes, “The need for broadening, for humanizing, and in some fields for

lengthening professional education programs may in the long run prove more crucial to governmental response to societal problems than any amount of civil service reform” (p. 142). It would have been helpful had Mosher expanding on what he meant by the “humanizing” public administration education. Rather than merely searching for better techniques or means of carrying out their tasks, Mosher is calling for public administrators to begin to examine what they are doing when they do their tasks. What is the broader purpose or meaning? For Simon, such questions were out of bounds for administrators. For Mosher, they may be the key.

Education, not class, remains the answer for Mosher but the nature of the education must change:

As in our culture in the past and in a good many other civilizations, the nature and quality of the public service depend principally upon the system of education. Almost all of our future public administrators will be college graduates, and within two or three decades a majority of them will probably have graduate degrees. Rising proportions of public administrators are returning to graduate schools for refresher courses, mid-career training, and higher degrees. These trends suggest that university faculties will have growing responsibility for preparing and for developing public servants both in their technical specialties and in the broader social fields with which their professions interact. (p. 240)

Mosher’s anthropology seems to be, on the whole, quite positive. He does not believe that human persons are inherently selfish or only concerned about the

acquisition, maintenance, and extension of their power. He says nothing to indicate that he believes most people to be imprudent or unjust. People clearly have the ability to serve the common good. Taylor believed that most people lack prudence and are unjust. Placing human beings in an organizational setting simply brought everyone down to the lowest ethical common denominator. Even the few upstanding workers soon became as bad as the worst among them. Simon has little to say about the inherent ability, prudence, or justice of the human person. Such considerations, to him, are outside the arena of his interest or field of specialty. Unlike Taylor, he believed that organizational settings are not the problem. Instead, they are the solution. In organizational settings, people are given direction and guidance. It is there that they find values.

For Mosher, the problem is neither the human person nor the organizational setting in general. Instead, the genesis of the problem is the professionalization and unionization of public administration. These features have created a situation where self-interest—negatively conceived—reigns and the common good is largely ignored. The solution is not extending or eliminating organizations. Instead, the answer is developing a different kind of public administrator who will function within the organizational structure with a much broader and more humane perspective. In such a structure, human beings are the central concern, not scientific methodology. Psychology, sociology, philosophy, and perhaps even theology will be of greater importance and scientific specialization less significant. It is not different people that are needed. What is required is different training, different education, deeper

thinking, and more reflection. With the right focus in education, public administrators will be both prudent and just as they consider what is and what is not for the common good.

On the prudence/wisdom scale, Mosher believes that human beings begin in a neutral position at the center. It is not human beings that are prudent or imprudent, just or unjust. He also rejects the idea that organizations are primarily responsible for the kinds of people who operate within them. Instead, he proposes that human beings within public administration have the capacity to be placed in the upper right quadrant. What places them there is proper training. The creation of prudent and just public administrators is not accomplished by incentive or threat. It does not occur because of red tape or rules. If more prudent and just people are required, then theorists need to focus their attention on building them.

Frederick Mosher

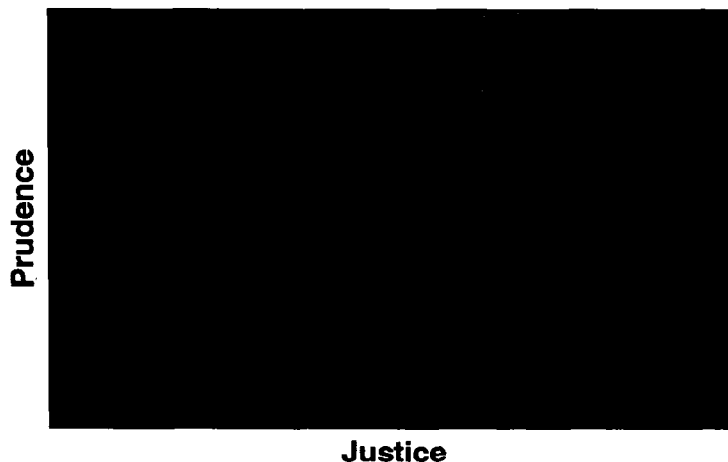


Figure 8. Frederick Mosher

Vincent Ostrom's *The Intellectual Crisis in American Public Administration*

The fourth book, Vincent Ostrom's *The Intellectual Crisis in American Public Administration*, first appeared in 1973, "at the time Watergate was unfolding and the Nixon presidency was becoming unglued" (Sherwood, 1990, p. 259). In Sherwood's survey, even those who rejected Ostrom's public choice theory and describe it as "morally pernicious" still include it in their list of most influential books (p. 258). It is a rejection of the argument for a strong executive and advocates instead for "multiple decision centers, power diffusion, and a market discipline" (p. 259).

Those in Sherman's survey who reject Ostrom's work because of its embrace of public choice theory have hit on Ostrom's key theme which marks a significant shift in philosophical anthropological thinking among theorists so far considered. For Taylor, the solution to administrative difficulties was the application of scientific methodology to determine the one best means of accomplishing a particular task. Overcoming the inadequacies, self-interest, and lack of production of the human person was a matter of science. For Simon, the solution is to be found in the organization itself. People are not necessarily at fault for their failures. Instead, people who fail belong to organizations that have failed them through their structure and decision-making processes. Mosher also rejects the idea that the failure to be prudent and just in public administration is rooted in the human person. According to Mosher, professionalization, unionization, and a lack of proper education are the basic causes of failure.

Ostrom's approach is radically different. He assumes that all human beings are essentially the same and operate from self-interest; that is, all persons make rational decisions that provide them with the greatest benefit. Education does not have the necessary corrective power and will not overpower self-interest. The application of scientific principles and centralized planning will not accomplish what needs to be done, according to Ostrom and, in many ways, actually contribute to the problems inherent in administration. Professionalization and unionization, with their central concerns for the personal advancement of public administrators, do not create the problems in public administration, according to Ostrom. Instead, at best, they merely reflect the reality that is the human person.

Ostrom is a student of and advocate for what is known as "public choice theory," and an understanding of its genesis and its core principles is important for comprehending the main points of Ostrom's theory. Of the theorists so far considered, Ostrom is the most concise in his thinking about the nature of the human person. This is primarily the case because public choice theory is based largely on a specific understanding of human beings

Public choice theory is a relatively recently developed school of thought. It began in the years immediately following the Second World War and its influence has grown significantly since. Its main proponents have been people like James Buchanan, Gordon Tullock, Mancur Olson Jr., and Gary Becker. Vincent Ostrom belongs to this group for his advocacy of public choice theory and its application to public administration.

James Buchanan, Director of the Center for Study of Public Choice at George Mason University and Nobel Prize winner in 1986, provides the most succinct definition of some of the core tenets of public choice. According to Buchanan (undated), "The hard core in public choice can be summarized in three presuppositions: (1) methodological individualism, (2) rational choice, and (3) politics-as-exchange" (p. 1). Each of these core beliefs is rooted in anthropological assumptions. Public choice theorists believe that all human beings, regardless of their position, education, or place in an organization, function as individuals who seek first their own good. This search is conducted in a rational fashion where options are weighed, taking into consideration that which will provide the most benefits to the individual. Finally, and most applicable to public administration, people who work in government do not remove themselves from methodological individualism or a rational approach to seeking what is best for them. In other words, there is no sense of the common good, even among those who are supposed to seek it in government. This is not to say that something like the common good does not exist. Buchanan would argue that when people operate from self-interest, their collective actions actually create a situation in which the most good is done for the greatest number of people.

Buchanan contrasts his theory with those of "social scientists and philosophers at mid-century. The socialist ideology was pervasive, and this ideology was supported by the allegedly neutral research program called 'theoretical welfare economics,' which concentrated on the identification of the failures of observed markets to meet

idealized standards” (p. 6). In sum, “this branch of inquiry offered theories of market failure. But failure by comparison with what? The implicit presumption was always that politicized corrections for market failures would work perfectly. In other words, market failures were set against an idealized politics” (p. 7). This dichotomy between economic realism and political idealism made government appear to be the logical choice for dealing with many of the perceived market failures such as economic inequality. The market could not be prudent or just. In instances where the individualist and rationalist market failed and prudence and justice were needed, the government was the natural choice for handling these issues. Of course, the assumption was that those within the government were operating with prudence and justice as they sought the common good via the levers of power found in government administration.

Buchanan’s challenge to this line of thought is primarily philosophical. If those in the market operated in a fashion that was rationally individualistic, why would not those in government operate in the same way? In the midst of dichotomist assumption:

Public choice then came along and provided analyses of politics, of the behavior of persons in public choosing roles whether these be voters, politicians, or bureaucrats, that were on all fours with those applied to markets and to the behavior of persons as participants in markets. These analyses necessarily exposed the essentially false comparison that had described so much of both scientific and public attitudes. In a very real sense, public choice

became a set of theories of governmental failures, as an offset to the theories of market failures that had previously emerged from theoretical welfare economics. (p. 7)

Buchanan claims his theory is not meant as “some illegitimate anti-government ideology” (p. 8). Instead, attempts to consider the criticisms commonly made of markets as they would be applied to the realm of public administration for “Public choice almost literally forces the critic to be pragmatic in any comparison of proposed institutional structures. There can be no presumption that politicized corrections for market failures will accomplish the desired objectives” (p. 7). This is because,

Public choice, as an inclusive research program, incorporates the presumption that persons do not readily become economic eunuchs as they shift from market to political participation. The person who responds predictably to ordinary incentives in the marketplace does not fail to respond at all when his role is shifted to collective choice. (p. 7)

If those operating government do so in a way that has much in common with those who function in a rationally individualistic market, what keeps society from developing into anarchy where the strong dominate and the weak are dominated? According to Buchanan, it is the development of a “Constitutional Political Economy” (p. 5). The “constitutional” aspect is that rules exist for how people may and may not rationally seek their own benefit and “have as their primary function the imposition of limits or constraints on actions that might be taken” (p. 5).

The question of ethics is an important one for Buchanan as it was for those who responded to Sherman's survey seeking the fifty most influential books in public administrative theory and had serious reservations about the "morally pernicious" theories of Ostrom. Buchanan does not attempt to make public administrators less virtuous than everyone else, but neither does he want to "proceed with analysis of politics under the illusion that persons do indeed become 'saints' as they shift to collective choice roles" (p. 8).

According to Buchanan:

By simple comparison with the climate of opinion at half century, both the punditry and the public are much more critical of politics and politicians, much more cynical about the motivations of political action, much less naive in thinking that political nostrums offer easy solutions to social problems. (p. 8)

At just the time Ostrom was writing his book, according to the Buchanan, "Governments everywhere, in both the socialist and the welfare states, overreached themselves, and tried to do more than the institutional framework would support. This record of failure came to be recognized widely, commencing in the 1960s and accelerating in the 1970s" (p. 9). Ostrom, then, is reflecting the intellectual crisis not only of the Watergate affair and its demonstration that people in elected or appointed government office do indeed act with their own self-interest at heart. He is also reflecting a broader and more complex sense that activist governments around the

world, regardless of which political or economic theory they embraced, were failing to provide what they promised in earlier decades.

Public choice did not create this situation. Instead:

Armed with nothing more than the rudimentary insights from public choice, persons could understand why, once established, bureaucracies tend to grow apparently without limit and without connection to initially promised functions. They could understand why pork-barrel politics dominated the attention of legislators; why there seems to be a direct relationship between the overall size of government and the investment in efforts to secure special concessions from government [rent seeking]; why the tax system is described by the increasing number of special credits, exemptions, and loopholes; why balanced budgets are so hard to secure; why strategically placed industries secure tariff protection. (Buchanan, p. 9)

In doing so, according to Buchanan, public choice theorists were not actually doing anything new or innovative. Instead, they were returning to their American roots:

Public choice, in its basic insights into the workings of politics, incorporates a presupposition about human nature that differs little, if at all, from that which informed the thinking of James Madison at the American founding. The essential scientific wisdom of the 18th century, of Adam Smith and classical political economy and of the American Founders, was lost through two centuries of intellectual folly. Public choice does little more than incorporate a

rediscovery of this wisdom and its implications into analyses and appraisal of modern politics. (p. 10)

It is, then, a reformation rather than a revolution.

Ostrom's book reflects Buchanan's thought, especially his presumption about human nature. He describes his intellectual life as one that began with an assumption of the truth and relevance of the prevailing thought at the beginning of his career only to become disillusioned over time with centralization and power being located in the hands of only a few:

Work with problems of educational administration fueled my skepticism regarding the traditional principles of public administration. The contention that independent school districts should be eliminated and integrated into a single general unit of local government was becoming less and less persuasive. Independent officials could collaborate without being subordinated to a single chief executive. (p. xii)

Simon's strong executive would not be the answer to the problems facing the United States government. The problem, according to Ostrom, was that one person lacked the necessary knowledge to run a large bureaucracy for "No master-general of American education could look at his watch and know what lesson students in each school would be studying at any one moment" (p. xii). If this were the case in bringing several small school districts together under one administrator, the prospects for centralized command and control within a national agency could not be promising.

This concern over knowledge naturally led Ostrom to include the study of economics in his consideration of public administration. The extremes of the economic spectrum, Marxism and free market capitalism, differ primarily in their perspective on who controls the economy. For the Marxist, the economy is centrally planned and controlled. For the adherents of free-market capitalism, such as Adam Smith, the economy is not chaotic as might first seem to be the case in the absence of centralized control. Instead, the market is controlled by what Smith and others referred to as an “invisible hand” which, in reality, was visible in the hands of many. It was an argument for an extremely decentralize economy where millions of small decisions made by the citizens of a nation provide control over the economy.

The issues of prudence and justice must not be left in the hands of only a few because they simply lack the information needed to make informed decisions on behalf of the many. Just as these issues play a central role in the function of economic reality, so Ostrom began to believe that they were central to all the functions of government for, “No one can ‘see’ the whole picture and accurately portray and understand social reality” (pp. xvi–xvii). The reason such whole-picture perspectives are impossible to see, know, and control is “human beings can draw upon different conceptions and systems of ideas to fashion different social realities” and coming to understand these differences within human societies “is a fundamental step to becoming a master artisan in public administration and in the study of human societies” (p. xix). It is not discovering that there is a single best way to do something and then determining what it is in the name of efficiency. Instead, according to

Ostrom, the key to public administration is understanding the complex tapestry that is the human person within society, making choices and applying reason. If public administration theorists refuse to get “hung up in trying to repudiate one another, we have the possibility of coming to a reasonable level of awareness of what human beings can and cannot do in fashioning their social realities” (p. xix). Ostrom’s choice of words is interesting. He is not calling for theorists to determine what human beings are and are not capable of doing. Instead, he simply wants theorists to observe, pay attention, and see what they can learn about how people function in reality.

Despite his call for collegial observation, Ostrom is not above laying a significant challenge at the feet of Simon and others in the traditionalist camp of public administration theory. If Taylor is right in applying science to determine the one best way and Simon is right in his belief that organizations and their structures have a great deal to do with human thriving and efficiency, then Ostrom believes a high level of predictability ought to exist enabling public administrative theorists to exert a great deal of control over society. To put it succinctly, if one knows the good and understands how to bring it about, then good should flourish. Ostrom challenges these assumptions at both the level of knowing what is prudent and just for human beings and of knowing how to bring prudence and justice into existence in human societies (pp. 1–2).

First of all, then, is the matter of knowing what is prudent and just. Ostrom writes, “We are . . . confronted with a substantial question of whether the bodies of knowledge used by those who practice public administration will lead to an

improvement in or an erosion of human welfare” (p. 3). Do those who practice it spend time considering what is and what is not in the interest of human welfare? What are the boundaries of human welfare and who should determine them? What is the operational worldview of those who have determined that they should play a leading role in determining what is in the interest of other human beings and what is not? Ostrom writes that, although such worldviews are vitally important, they are often the least examined aspects of theorists:

An intellectual construct is like a pair of spectacles. We see and order events in the world by looking through our spectacles and by using intellectual constructs to form pictures in our mind’s ‘eye’—an intellectual vision. We are apt to neglect a critical examination of the spectacles or the constructs themselves” (p. 18).

Theorists must know the end.

Assuming that such examinations have been done and the matter of what is and what is not in the interest of human welfare is made clear, do public administrative theorists, using scientific methodology and reason, understand how to bring it about? As Ostrom puts it:

If the practice of public administration is based on a knowledge of the organizational terms and conditions that are necessary to advance human welfare, then those of us who teach public administration should be able to indicate what those terms and conditions are. In short, we should be able to specify the consequences that follow from different organizational conditions.

... We should be able to indicate the conditions and consequences that derive from the choice of alternative organizational arrangements if theories of organization have scientific warrantability. (p. 2)

If public administration is a science that can clarify what it wants to achieve in the interest of human welfare, it ought to be able to state the means best fitted to its goals. Cause and effect chains, if known, can be controlled. If known and centrally controlled by people who are prudent, just, and in government, then human beings should have been thriving globally. Ostrom's context, though, as noted above, was post-Watergate when big government optimism had faded and pessimism was the order of the day.

Ostrom borders on mocking those who believe strongly in central planning, control, and command using medical terminology:

If we have a body of knowledge that enables us to estimate the probable consequences evoked by different organizational arrangements, we should be able to pursue two forms of analysis. One form uses theory to draw inferences about consequences to be anticipated. These inferences can be used as hypotheses to guide empirical research and test the predictive value of theory. We can have some confidence in a theory that has predictive value for indicating consequences that can be expected to flow from specifiable structural conditions. A second form of analysis derives from the first. When relationships between conditions and consequences can be specified and when any particular set of consequences is judged to be detrimental to human

welfare, we should then be able to specify the conditions that lead to that set of consequences. Consequences of organizational arrangements that are detrimental to human welfare can be viewed as social pathologies. If the conditions leading to those pathologies can be specified, then the basis exists for diagnosing the organizational conditions of social pathologies. If conditions can be altered so as to evoke a different set of consequences, then different forms of remedial action can be considered. By altering the appropriate conditions, one set of consequences judged to be pathological might be avoided and another set of consequences judged to be more benign might be realized. (pp. 2–3)

It seems simple, but it is not. Human beings do not function in a laboratory setting where most things can be controlled, known, and predicted. If it were, it seems to Ostrom, the role of public administration theorists would be to hypothesize, test, observe, draw conclusions, and control. Such a society would be made up of a handful of people who understand how to manipulate the levers of government to exert control over the rest of the citizens. Ostrom clearly rejects this proposition. According to Ostrom, the assumptions about what is and what is not in the interest of human welfare as well as the best means of bringing it about are wrong: “We are... confronted with a substantial question of whether the bodies of knowledge used by those who practice public administration will lead to an improvement in or an erosion of human welfare” (p. 3).

The intellectual crisis in public administration theory is not among the practitioners. Ostrom believes that those teaching public administration are at least partially to blame: "Dare we contemplate the possibility that the contemporary malaise in American society may have been derived, in part, from the teachings of public administration?" (p. 4). It is interesting that he expands the intellectual crisis within public administration to "American society" at large. In other words, the crisis has implications for the entire nation.

What is most troubling is that Ostrom thinks the influence of public administration in the American society is actually increasing:

We would expect that the practice of public administration will increase in importance as the domain of choice is extended to include an increasing range of opportunities. I doubt that there are many who anticipate a decline in the relative importance of the practice of public administration as long as the opportunities exist for continued advancement in human welfare. (p. 3)

It is not clear whether he is still addressing human welfare within the United States or whether he intends to broaden its circle of influence to a global context. Either way, the lack of knowledge about what is and what is not in the best interest of human thriving as well as a deficiency of understanding in how to bring it about is disturbing. If public administration is a source of malaise because of its lack of clarity while, at the same time, its influence is waxing, there is little optimism that the situation will improve:

Perhaps this is an occasion on which we should entertain an outlandish hypothesis: that our teachings include much bad medicine. I have reached this conclusion after considerable agonizing about the problem. I once hoped that I could be proved wrong. I have since abandoned that hope; and I have attempted to work my way through to alternative resolutions. I am now persuaded that the major task in the next generation will be to lay new foundations for the study of public administration. If these foundations are well laid, we should see a new political science join a new economics and a new sociology in establishing the basis for a major advance upon the frontiers of public administration. (pp. 4–5)

The combination of political science, economics, and sociology should be informing and molding new models of public administrative theory. All three sciences have deeply held and sometimes completely opposite assumptions about the nature of the human person. Are human beings, in their essence, prudent and just? Not only would each discipline provide a different answer, but within each discipline, various schools of thought would have widely divergent philosophical assumptions about the human person. Ostrom believes such a search is important and necessary.

His quick review of the history of thought regarding American public administration paints a picture of theorists who have swallowed—hook, line, and sinker—a bureaucratic approach to public administration as the solution to virtually all issues in American society:

Building on the precepts in the Wilsonian paradigm, students of public administration gradually articulated several principles of administration. Such concepts as unity of command, span of control, chain of command, departmentalization by major functions, and direction by single heads of authority in subordinate units of administration are assumed to have universal applicability. Strengthening of the government is viewed as the equivalent of increasing the authority and powers of the chief executive. General-authority agencies are preferred to limited-authority agencies. Large jurisdictions are preferred to small. Centralized solutions are preferred to the disaggregation of authority among diverse decision structures. (p. 30)

Such concepts were set in dogmatic stone by the President's Committee on Administration, which reported in 1937:

The principles of efficient management 'have emerged universally wherever men have worked together for some common purpose, whether through the state, the church, the private association, or the commercial enterprise.' The committee implied that principles of efficient management apply to all associations alike. The principles of management, summarized as 'canons of efficiency,' were assumed to require, 'the establishment of a responsible and effective chief executive as the center of energy, direction, and administrative management; the systemic organization of all activity in the hands of a qualified personnel under the direction of the chief executive; and to aid him

in this, the establishment of appropriate managerial and staff agencies. (pp. 30–31)

These assumptions became the spectacles through which all administrative reality was viewed.

According to Ostrom, Simon could be credited with introducing the economic measurement of efficiency and cost-benefit analysis to decision-making, but his attempts at reform merely created a slight adjustment in older models and did not cause the necessary revolution:

Simon's theory was essentially cast within the same mold as the traditional theory of administration. It was an alternative articulation of the old theoretical paradigm. Neither is a viable alternative. Simon's effort to reconstruct organizational theory made a number of critical breaks with tradition. His reconstruction gave a new emphasis to psychology of decision making and to considerations bearing upon a model of organizational man. His formulation of the criterion of efficiency proposed the application of a cost calculus that would allow for an independent test of efficiency other than presuming the efficiency of bureaucratic structure. (pp. 15–16)

Ostrom concludes that: "More than a half-century of intellectual effort in American study of public administration was predicated upon an assumption that perfection in the hierarchical organization of administrative arrangements is synonymous with efficiency" (p. 36). The assumption proved to be untrue. Old models failed as had any attempts to retool them. New models involving other

disciplines had not yet been developed. In the midst of the transition from old to new, Ostrom calls for humility:

The practice of a profession rests upon the validity of the knowledge it professes. When the confidence of a profession in the essential validity of its knowledge has been shattered, that profession should be extraordinarily modest about the professional advice it renders while keeping up its appearances. (p. 10)

What Ostrom seeks is a new pair of “spectacles” for public administration theorists that will bring order to observed reality by means of “intellectual constructs” informed by political science, economics, and sociology (p. 18). The basic building blocks for a new perspective must be philosophical assumptions made clear and bright. He is the first theorist considered to be explicit not only in his call for clarity but also in putting forward his own assumptions in an unambiguous fashion. While he assigns the following assumptions to the discipline of political economy, he clearly embraces them as essential to public administration theory:

Work among most political economists is usually based on an explicit model of man. They adopt a form of methodological individualism which makes self-conscious use of the perspective of a representative individual or set of representative individuals in the conduct of analysis. . . . Assumptions about individuals normally include reference to (1) self-interest, (2) rationality, (3) information, (4) law and order, and (5) the choice of a maximizing strategy. (p. 44)

His embrace of this set of anthropological assumptions places him squarely within the camp of those who advocate for public choice theory. Ostrom does not discuss alternatives to these assumptions nor does he defend them. Rather, he assumes they will be accepted by his readers.

Ostrom does not directly address whether ethical behavior is probable or even possible in a construct where each person utilizes his or her rationality to maximize the self given the information available to them. It can be said that his emphasis on “law and order” creates the boundaries within which this pursuit is to be made so that each person plays within the laws established in a particular setting. These boundaries are more applicable to justice than to prudence. He assumes people will seek their own benefit through their reason using the information available to them. To ask them to act in opposition to this is to ignore the reality of the human person. Ostrom makes his case by beginning with the market and then moving to public goods, the arena of the public administrator. In the market of private goods, “Individualistic choice is characteristic and . . . occurs whenever the only requirement is the willing consent of those individuals who freely agree or contract with one another to exchange some good or undertake some action” (p. 49).

It is imprudent to think that human beings will change their stripes when in the arena of non-private goods for:

If each is free to decide for oneself in the pursuit of one’s own interest concerning a common-property resource or a public good, serious problems will occur. Each individual will presume to maximize one’s own net welfare

if one takes advantage of the common property or public good at a minimum cost to oneself. In the case of a public good, the cost minimizer would have no incentive to pay his or her share of the costs for provision. (pp. 49–50)

The failure of the commons is a failure of assumptions about the human person. This will be true not only of private citizens who seek to take advantage of the commons but also of those in public administration whose task it is to oversee it. According to Ostrom, there is little possibility of escaping the self-maximizing, rational tendencies of human nature with the commons because, “Each person will calculate only his or her own individual costs and will ignore the social costs imposed on others. Many individuals will . . . pursue their own advantage, and disregard the consequences for others (p. 50). Even if attempted, plans or structures that seek to force others to consider the common good will fail for “some individuals will be motivated to conceal information about their intentions. Should others propose joint action, those who conceal information may remain free to take advantage of opportunities created by the joint actions of others” (p. 50). The last sentence is telling in that Ostrom believes even those who claim to have clean hands and pure hearts in seeking a prudent and just means of making use of public goods can and probably do in order to gain an advantage.

Self-interest and competition work in the arena of private goods. Attempting to set aside this basic characteristic of human nature when entering the public arena will only lead to complete failure:

Social costs will escalate to a point at which continued operations will yield an economic loss for the community of users. Individuals in weak economic positions will be forced out. The neighborhood effects that are generated may include poverty, deprivation, threats, and even violence. Individualist decision making applied to common-property resources will lead inexorably to tragedy unless the common property can be portioned into separable private properties or decision-making arrangements can be modified to enable persons to act jointly in relation to a common property. (pp. 50–51)

Ostrom is not making the argument that a few bad apples will spoil the barrel for the rest who are not primarily self-interested self-maximizers. His argument is that all human persons function this way and to deny it is to deny the reality of the human person. As he says, “Because of this competitive dynamic, individuals cannot be expected to form large voluntary associations to pursue matters of common or public interest” (p. 51). In other words, relying on the voluntary prudence and justice of individuals is bound to fail.

The best hope for justice will be found within law and order or, as Buchanan expresses it, “constitutional political economy” where rules exist for how people may and may not rationally seek their own benefit and “have as their primary function the imposition of limits or constraints on actions that might be taken” (p. 5). Constraint on self-maximization is not found within human persons except in that they choose to obey the law. Prudence is not about using reason to choose what is right. Instead, it is about using the tools of rationality to bring the highest possible benefit to self in any

given situation, whether public or private. The community or society creates the rules by which benefits are pursued. Law determines ethics so that the question of whether an action is prudent or just does not really apply to the individual. Instead, ethics becomes a matter of whether something is legal.

It is the invisible hand of Adam Smith at work. Centrally planned economies will not work because, in most cases, human beings are not asked to apply their reason to the information that is available to them, they will not be working to maximize what is in their own best interest, and law and order may or may not exist. Human beings are not built to think or work this way, according to Ostrom. Even if they were, organizations are too diverse for any single approach to be universally applicable:

No single form of organization is presumed to be 'good' for all circumstances. Rather, any organizational arrangement can generate a limited range of preferred effects. Every organizational arrangement will be subject to limitations...Thus any particular organizational arrangement will have certain capabilities and will be subject to sources of weakness or failure. The essential elements in the analysis of organizational arrangements are to (1) anticipate the consequences that follow when (2) self-interested individuals choose optimizing strategies within the structure of a situation that has reference to (3) particular structures of events [goods] in the context of (5) some shared community of understanding. The optimal choice of

organizational arrangements would be that which minimizes the cost associated with institutional weakness or failure. (pp. 48–49)

For this reason, the bureaucratic approach cannot be assumed to be the correct and most fitting one for every organization. Actually, in Ostrom's mind, it may well be wrong for most or even all organizations.

Bureaucratic organizations rely, "upon hierarchy requiring subordinates to defer to the commands of superiors in the selection of appropriate actions and subject to sanctions or discipline for failure to do so" (p. 51). In doing so, they remove from those further down the chain of command the opportunity to rationally consider the available information and make a decision that might be in their own best interest but not in the best interest of the organization. In acting this way, bureaucracies limit the choice of what is in the best interest of an employee to one of two things: obedience, which is encouraged by the promise of a carrot, and disobedience, which is discouraged by the threat of a stick. This is exactly what Frederick Taylor envisioned in his scientific management system. Workers either will not know or will not do what is best for the organization. Such decisions are better left in the hands of those who apply science to work. Simon's system varies little from Taylor's in that operators are generally neither prudent nor wise. If employees are going to pull together in a direction beneficial to the organization, their choices must be limited to obedience and disobedience.

While perhaps functional within private enterprise, Ostrom rejects such an approach as being workable within the public arena. With purely public goods, there

is no way to limit those who are able to make use of them. If there were, argues Ostrom, the good would be private:

When principles of bureaucratic organization are applied to the conditions prevailing in the provision of public goods and services, a number of sources for potential institutional weakness or institutional failure become apparent. In the absence of an exclusion principle, the competitive force of a product market will not exist for most public organizations. (p. 52)

The result of such a dynamic within public administration is that, “entrepreneurs in such organizations will be less sensitive to diseconomies of scale that accrue from increasing management costs as the size of a public organization increases” (p. 52). Despite the claim of traditional theorists that increased centralization, command and control will lead to greater efficiencies, Ostrom believes exactly the opposite is true due to the improper anthropological assumptions utilized by those theorists.

Incorrect thinking about human persons and their motivations not only creates inefficiency, it also distorts information. Even if public administrators were able to rise above their natural inclinations and attempted to act in a selfless manner designed to contribute to the common good, the information on which they would be relying would be skewed by those reporting to them. Ostrom uses the example of ,
an ambitious public employee who seeks to advance his or her career opportunities for promotions within a bureaucracy. Since career advancement depends on favorable recommendations by one’s superiors, a career-oriented

public servant will act so as to please his or her superiors. Favorable information will be forwarded; unfavorable information will be repressed. Distortion of information will diminish control and create expectations that diverge from events generated by actions. Large-scale bureaucracies will thus become error-prone and cumbersome in adapting to rapidly changing conditions. (p. 53)

Self-interested, rationalizing self-maximizers are not limited to the public sector but can be found in equal proportions within the realm of public administration. There is no class of persons who are immune. There is no educational system which will undo or minimize these natural inclinations. People who choose to work in public administration are not acting for the common good of those who use their services because their self-interest is the same as everyone else's. Ostrom echoes Mosher in considering that the professionalization of public administration might actually have contributed to rather than reduced the social ills of modern society so that, "an analyst would not be surprised to find a positive relationship between the professionalization of the public service and the impoverishment of ghettos in big cities" (p. 54).

This is not the end of Ostrom's pessimistic estimation of the state of public administration. Those who work with public goods do not face competition from other potential suppliers of those goods, so there is little connectivity to self-interest and self-maximization of people who work in the private sector who must provide goods and services at ever-lower prices and with ever-greater service. There is no

motivation to increase productivity or efficiency because “producer efficiency in the absence of consumer utility is without economic meaning” (p. 54). Furthermore, increased demand in public goods is not met with increased supply as it would be in the private arena where new suppliers would be created or the initial suppliers, working in their own self-interest, would do everything possible to increase supply.

Instead:

Public goods may be subject to serious erosion or degradation as demands change. In the absence of a capability to respond with modified supply schedules and regulations for use, a public ‘good’ may come to be a public ‘bad’ and the tragedy of the commons can reach critical or explosive proportions. (p. 55)

In the end, Ostrom believes that the existence of and demand for public goods is inherently at odds with the nature of the human person, whose central interest is self and who maximizes every opportunity using rationality and the information available at the time within the bounds of the rule of law. Individual choices in the public sphere will not work. Bureaucracies provide no answer. Anyone who accepts these two premises as facts is “confronted with the task of conceptualizing alternative institutional arrangements for the organization of collective or public enterprises” (p. 56). The old spectacles have been smashed under the boots of the nature of the human person. Appealing to the common good or attempting to counteract the common lack of prudence and justice in human persons through bureaucratic structures will not work.

Of course, not all is lost. Instead of battling the inclinations of the human being toward self-interest and self-maximization or hoping that class or education will overcome them, the public sector must attempt to put them to use in the same way the private sector does, or at least as closely as is possible given the lack of competition in the public sector. The best way to get human beings to be prudent and just is to create a system where individuals, acting in their own self-interest, rationally decide to operate in a just and prudent fashion that will be beneficial to all. This is no easy task:

If the object of interest can be identified, courses of action can be examined to determine which alternatives will enhance the welfare of that community of individuals. If some form of joint action is available that would leave each individual better off, provided that all members of the community were required to contribute proportionally to that activity, each person will be motivated to devise and agree to a set of decision rules authorizing action on behalf of that community of individuals. Such rules would require some form of coercion to ensure that each individual will discharge a proportionate share of the burden. (p. 57)

Actions of persons operating in the sector of public goods will be just and prudent only if their self-interest and the carefully defined common good intersect.

The common good will be reinforced by rules put in place by those whom citizens have voluntarily put in authority over them. Since no market exists to reward or punish those who make the rules:

The constitution of public enterprises must depend instead on the development of political mechanisms such as voting, representation, legislation, and adjudication for people to express their interests by signaling agreements or disagreements as the basis for ordering their relationships with one another.

(p. 58)

Voting out of office those who make unpopular laws is one way to correct their self-interest and self-maximizing tendencies. What about unelected public administrators? This is where Ostrom picks up Buchanan's concept of "constitutional choice" which:

is simply a choice of decision rules that specify the terms and conditions of government. . . . The organization of a public agency, when viewed as a problem in constitutional choice, is the choice of selection of an appropriate set of decision rules to be used in allocating decision-making capabilities among the community of people concerned with the provision of public goods and services under reasonably optimal conditions. (p. 58)

Public administrators are held accountable by rules created by elected officials who are held accountable by those who elected them. Such a structure, in Ostrom's mind, is the most effective means of countering the self-interest and self-maximization of public administrators. Democracy and the rule of law trump self-interest. Again, it is important to note that this is no attempt to develop the concepts of prudence and justice as internal checks to the natural tendencies of those in the public sector. The primary way of countering these tendencies is external.

In addition to accountability through democracy and the rules it produces, Ostrom advocates for the proliferation of organizations and agencies rather than the drive for centralization and consolidation that had been the pattern for the previous fifty years. He recognizes that “This solution is the antithesis of the proposed in the classical public administration tradition. Instead of chaos and disorder, these political economies perceive a pattern of ordered relationships being sustained among diverse public enterprises” (p. 61). His is democratic administration rather than the bureaucratic administration of Taylor, Weber, Simon, and others.

Ostrom’s defense for democratic administration is full of anthropological assumptions, which he is more than willing to make clear and bright:

(1) an egalitarian assumption that everyone is qualified to participate in the conduct of public affairs, (2) the reservation of all important decisions for consideration by all members of the community and their elected representatives, (3) restriction of the power of command to a necessary minimum, and (4) modification of the states of administrative functionaries from that of masters to that of public servants. (p. 71)

These assumptions reject the idea of an administrative class not only in that every person is qualified to participate but in the more subtle rejection of the accumulation of power. There is no Aristotelian philosopher-king who, because he is both prudent and just, can be trusted with the reins of power. All humans are subject to their own self-interest, reason, and tendencies to self-maximize. If this is true, then no person is worthy of total or even substantial command. Furthermore, even if such

a person were found or created who was neither self-interested or a self-maximizer, centralized control would still fail for lack of information and ability: “Presumptions of omniscience and omnicompetence cannot hold in the design of national institutional arrangements any more than presumptions of frictionless motion can hold in applied mechanics” (p. 109). There simply are limits to what human beings can be expected to do: “Beyond the limits of some threshold, variable among human beings, to do more means doing other things less well. Human beings who have not learned this fundamental constraint in life cannot be responsible either to themselves or to others” (p. 132).

The goal is not to raise up people through birth, class, or education who can overcome the trappings of power for “individuals who exercise the prerogatives of government are no more nor no less corruptible than their fellow citizens” (p. 98). There is consistency to human nature. Rather, the goal is to diffuse power. In a democratic administration:

Instead of a fully integrated structure of command, we would expect to find substantial dispersion of authority with many different structures of command. The exercise of control over the legitimate means of coercion would not be monopolized by a single structure of authority. Democratic administration would be characterized by polycentricity and not by monocentricity. (p. 71)

Leviathan is controlled, then, by means of overlapping circles of authority and democratically structured means of accountability. No matter what system is in place, “The exercise of political authority—a necessary power to do good—will be usurped

by those who perceive an opportunity to exploit such powers to their own advantage and to the detriment of others” (p. 98). Systems must be in place continually to counter this tendency of the human heart so that “authority is divided and different authorities are so organized as to limit and control one another” (p. 99). In Ostrom’s conception:

Fragmentation of authority among diverse decision centers with multiple veto capabilities within any one jurisdiction and the development of multiple, overlapping jurisdictions of widely different scales are necessary conditions for maintaining a stable political order that can advance human welfare under rapidly changing conditions. (p. 99)

It is interesting that recognizing that human beings tend to lack prudence and especially justice, and putting in place structures that realistically counter these tendencies is Ostrom’s answer to the question of how human beings who are self-interested and self-maximizers can create a just society, political order, and the common good.

In the end, Ostrom returns to his central theme of the intellectual crisis in public administration. Its cause is the failure of public administration theorists and teachers to think seriously about the nature of the human beings as they operate within organizations:

The first priority in acquiring and teaching such skills is not management. A prior order of skills has to do with the way that human beings constitute themselves into mutually respectful and productive relationships. . . . This is

the process that is constitutive of human endeavors. Persons who function as public entrepreneurs in democratic societies can only do so when they think of themselves as citizens working with others to build enduring patterns of association in which the community of persons involved achieves self-governing capabilities. This is how democracies can develop and remain viable over successive generations. Democratic societies cannot achieve long-term viability if democratic processes are viewed only as a struggle to win and gain dominance over others. Administrators who conceive of themselves as good shepherds exercising management prerogatives can create only recalcitrant and reticent masses. Human beings are not sheep. (pp. 157–158)

The idea of an administrative class, whether created by birth, education, specialization, science, or any other means must be rejected because such a concept is inconsistent with human nature. As a whole, people are self-interested and self-maximizing. According to Ostrom, those who claim they are not subject to either are likely making the claim in the interest of gaining some advantage in acquiring, maintaining, or extending their power. There is no person committed wholly to the common good. His tone softens toward the end of the book where he writes:

A critical aspect turns upon the question of how observers of and participants in self-governing societies think of and experience themselves as they relate to other human beings: as individuals struggling for advancement to gain positions of dominance and become masters of others; or as fellow citizens

[colleagues, comrades] pursuing courses of inquiry in addressing and resolving problematic situations in human societies. (p. 168)

But this comment has more to do with ending on a positive note than it does with being consistent with what is contained in the previous 167 pages. It is not thinking of self in communal terms that will bring about the common good.

For Ostrom, human nature is primarily concerned with self-interest and self-maximization through the use of reason applied to the information available. Placing responsibility for the common good in the hands of such an individual is an inherently foolish thing to do and virtually guarantees failure and corruption. The common good, or justice, can only be achieved by placing it as far away from the individual in power as possible. Prudence and justice are to be found in the rule of law. They are guaranteed through the diffusion of power, not through its accumulation. They are to be found in overlapping circles of authority and the proliferation of interest groups, not through centralized command and control. Bureaucratic organizations are not the answer nor are strong executives, science, or educational institutions. Limitations on individual knowledge and ability only strengthen the argument against the centralization of power.

On the prudence/justice scale, Ostrom believes that human beings primarily know what is prudent for themselves. In making this determination, they make full use of their capacity for reason. Public choice theory, based on classical economic theory, holds that when people act in their own self-interest, the common good is the result. Problems develop when power is accumulated in the hands of a few who,

despite claims of concern for the common good, continue to act in ways that are self-interested. In general, then, Ostrom believes that individuals human beings are quite high on the prudence scale but low on the justice scale in that they do not make the common good a central concern in exercising their reason in the face of various choices. This, seemingly, would place Ostrom in the upper-left corner on the scale – high prudence and low justice. His system, though, is more complicated than simply one location on the scale. It is his belief that when people exercise prudence in their own self-interest under the constraints of law with little concern for the common good, the common good is the most likely result. Self-interested individuals belong in the upper-left quadrant. Recognizing that this is the nature of human persons and refraining from attempts to deny or alter this core belief will result in a society that is both prudent and just and, therefore, belongs in the upper-right quadrant. Giving political power to only a few or assuming that a handful of people have overcome their inclination to self-interest results in a society that is neither prudent nor just.

Vincent Ostrom

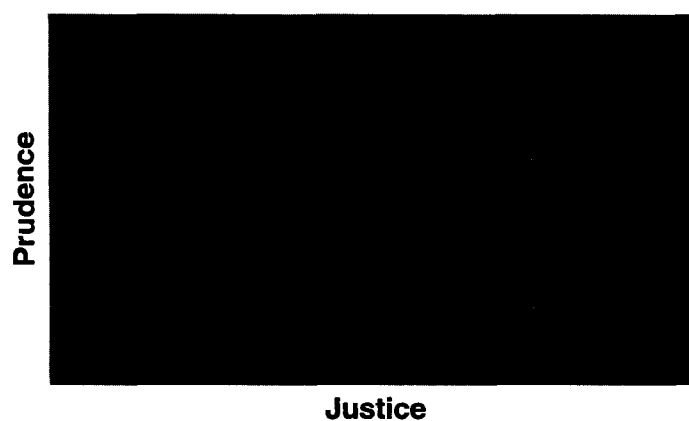


Figure 9. Vincent Ostrom

Amitai Etzioni's *The Spirit of Community: Rights, Responsibilities,
and the Communitarian Agenda*

The final book is Amitai Etzioni's *The Spirit of Community: Rights, Responsibilities, and the Communitarian Agenda*, first published in 1995. While not included on the Sherwood list because it postdates the survey by five years, it is an important book because it demonstrates further movement away from the dominant tradition theory of the need for a strong executive and moves into the realm of communitarian thought with an emphasis on rights and their corresponding responsibilities. Strength is found in the community rather than in any single individual or the government. This is a complete swing of the pendulum from Frederick Taylor and pushes what began in Ostrom further down the road. For Ostrom, the answer to human self-interest and its tendency toward self-maximization is found in constitutional or democratic administration where the rule of law, overlapping circles of authority, and the diffusion of power are pillars.

Etzioni's approach is remarkably similar to Ostrom's, although the connection is not at first obvious. They share a common concern about the self-interest of the individual human person, though Ostrom seems convinced that this cannot be overcome while Etzioni holds out hope that the level of self-interest in American culture has been increasing and, therefore, can also be decreased or at least mitigated by increasing community attachment and involvement. Neither are appreciative of central command and control and neither have much trust in elected officials or public

administrators to make the common good their central concern. Both are strong advocates of decentralization.

Of the five authors considered in this study, Etzioni is the theorist most focused on ethics and morality. Whereas Simon dismissed such topics as at best falling outside the concern of public administration, Etzioni makes them his cornerstone. His goal, as stated in the Introduction, is to form a new moral, social, and public order without becoming Puritanical or oppressive. He writes:

We hold that our call for increased social responsibility, a main tenet of this book, is not a call for curbing rights. On the contrary, strong rights presume strong responsibilities. We hold that the pursuit of self-interest can be balanced by commitment to the community, without requiring us to lead a life of austerity, altruism, or self-sacrifice. Furthermore, unbridled greed can be replaced by legitimate opportunities and socially constructive expressions of self-interest. (pp. 1–2)

This premise is full of anthropological assumptions. Self-interest is not necessarily negative nor is it something that needs to be overcome for the development of a common good. Self-interested people do not necessarily lack prudence or justice. Just and prudent people do not necessarily need to be altruistic or self-sacrificing. In other words, self-interest is not the same as selfishness where the only concern is personal gain. The self-interested person, in Etzioni's mind, is not necessarily the materialistic, power-hungry, grasping individual whose central concern is acquisition, protection and extension of what is owned. Self-interest and a

concern for the common good through decisions and actions that are both prudent and just are not mutually exclusive. For Ostrom, the best weapons to counteract self-interest and self-maximization are external to the individual and are established through the rule of law, democratic administration, and the decentralization of power. All of these take place outside the individual. For Etzioni, the real battle is an internal ethical and moral one. Greed can be controlled. Self-interest can be balanced with concern for community. Rights can be upheld while, at the same time, responsibilities are promoted. All of these must begin internally before they can be expressed externally to the human person:

What America needs, above all, is a change in the way we approach things, what we value and what we devalue, a change of heart. True, some of the matters at hand can be addressed through changes in public policy, but first and foremost we need a change in philosophy, a new way of thinking, a reaffirmation of a set of moral values that we may all share. (p.18)

Considerations of prudence and justice, then, are the keys to restoration rather than distractions from efficiency and effectiveness or unscientific metaphysical exercises with little or no connection to public administration. Communitarians, on whose behalf Etzioni is writing, “are dedicated to working with our fellow citizens to bring about the changes in values, habits, and public priorities that will allow us . . . to safeguard and enhance our future” (p. 3). While this is primarily an internal reconstruction of the values of human persons in American society, Etzioni does not believe it takes place in isolation. Ostrom did not believe individuals would be able

to balance their self-interest and self-maximizing tendencies and so he turned to the power of the state diffused among many agencies. Etzioni's approach is to consider a number of mediating institutions that have the capacity for balancing the common good and self-interest. As a matter of fact, the state has the potential to add to the problem rather than helping to solve it:

We suggest that free individuals require a community, which backs them up against encroachment by the state and sustains morality by drawing on the gentle prodding of kin, friends, neighbors, and other community members rather than building on government controls or fear of authorities. (p.15)

The problem is not mere self-interest. Instead, it is self-interest expressed in a particular way that demonstrates a lack of balance between rights and responsibilities. At the root of societal problems is, "a strong sense of entitlement—that is, a demand that the community provide more services and strongly uphold rights—coupled with a rather weak sense of obligation to the local and national community" (p. 3). The matter is expressed external to the individual but reflects an internal problem. Americans demand rights but refuse responsibility for upholding those rights for others in the community. Etzioni's prescription is as follows: "It is therefore necessary to reiterate that sooner or later the responsibilities we load on the government end up on our shoulders or become burdens we bequeath to our children" (p. 4). The problem is not government itself. It is only responding to the demands placed on it by its citizens. Etzioni believes the solution lies in balancing these demands.

The Communitarian agenda has four main goals. First, Etzioni calls for a moratorium on most, if not all, rights and demands. The constant claiming of rights in every dispute, “devalues their moral claims.” Second, the link between rights and responsibilities must be reestablished. Third, Communitarians want citizens to recognize that there are certain responsibilities that do not entail rights. And finally, they want to make it clear that some rights need to be adjusted given that circumstances change (p. 4).

The means of achieving these goals is not primarily legal nor is it governmental. Instead, it is distinctly a moral conversation, according to Etzioni. The 1960s and 1970s were a time of tearing down what was wrong with traditionalism, but the destruction left a vacuum that Etzioni claims was never filled. He writes, “This is where we are now: it is time to reconstruct, in the full sense of the term—not to return to the traditional, but to return to a moral affirmation, reconstructed but firmly held” (p. 12). For Etzioni to define the problem and suggest the solution in primarily individual moral tones, it is necessary for him to hold tightly to the idea that the capacity for prudence and justice are common and widely dispersed among the human population. They cannot be limited to only a few people, for if this were the case, the Communitarian approach would instantly collapse. Prudence and justice are real, can be enhanced, and will form the base of a society where self-interest and the common good are not mutually exclusive but are actually complimentary.

The morality of a society is a moving target in that it can wax and wane. It is not certain that human beings will act in prudent and just ways. But what is prudent, just, moral, decent or good, according to Etzioni, can be both known and chosen. It is equally possible that what is unjust, immoral, indecent and evil can be known and chosen. Different time periods are marked by different levels of morality. For instance, “The eighties tried to turn vice into virtue by elevating the unbridled pursuit of self-interest and greed to the level of social virtue” (p. 24). It isn’t self-interest that is the problem. It is whether self-interest is bridled or unbridled. In Etzioni’s system, morality provides the corrective boundaries. Removing or extending the boundaries of self-interest and the potential for common good is damaged: “it has become self-evident that a society cannot function well given such self-centered, me-istic orientations. It requires a set of dos and don’ts, a set of moral values, that guides people toward what is decent and encourages them to avoid what is not” (p. 24). Since the boundaries were blurred, extended, or eliminated in the 1980s, the decade during which Etzioni wrote required a return:

to a society in which certain actions are viewed as beyond the pale, things that upright people would not do or even consider: to walk out on their children, file false insurance claims, cheat on tests, empty the savings accounts of others, or force sexual advances on unwilling employees. (p. 24)

While he does not dig deeply into it, Etzioni’s framework is built on a variation of natural law theory where, “There is no need to consult clergy or a book by Kant to determine what one’s duty is. . . . This is what de Tocqueville and

Communitarian sociologist Robert Bellah mean by 'habits of the heart': values that command our support because they are morally compelling" (p. 24). It is not reason or revelation that make these individual habits and values known. As a matter of fact, "It is unrealistic to rely on individuals' inner voices and to expect that people will invariably do what is right completely on their own. Such a radical individualistic view disregards our social moorings and the important role that communities play in sustaining moral commitments" (p. 36). For Etzioni, the source of its authority is to be found in community or in, "a climate that fosters finding agreed-upon positions that we can favor authoritatively" (p. 25). Etzioni does not address pluralism as a challenge to his theory nor does he make a solid defense against what kind of moral system might be operative in a community made up of racists, Nazis, cannibals, or those who engage in incest. On one hand, he writes that "We must reaffirm that expressions of hate toward members of ethnic or racial groups, not to mention violent behavior, are intolerable" (p. 25). On the other, he does not say why this is normatively true.

Etzioni's faith in community is expressed in his belief that a community requires, "a set of social virtues, some basic settled values, that we as a community endorse and actively affirm" (p. 25). While internal moral formation is key to Etzioni's system, the content of moral precepts is largely determined by agreement within community. The boundaries of morality are not matters of individual choice. The role of the individual, then, is to voluntarily do what is determined by the

community to be prudent and just. It is this, according to Etzioni, that determines whether a society can survive:

No society can function well unless most of its members 'behave' most of the time because they voluntarily heed their moral commitments and social responsibilities. There can never be enough police and FBI, IRS and customs agents, inspectors, and accountants to monitor the billions of transactions that occur every day. (p. 30)

It is not, then, the promise of carrots or the threat of sticks that serves as the adhesive that allows an organization to function. Etzioni prefers the boundaries to be determined collectively but adherence to those boundaries to be a matter of individual choice.

The vast majority of human persons within any given organization, community, or society must voluntarily choose to comply with the standards and, thus, are essentially ethically well-formed persons. According to Etzioni, those lacking prudence and justice are a tiny percentage of any given gathering of human beings. Their presence, not reflective of human nature in general, can be explained as psychological anomalies: "The police powers of the government should be called upon only as a last resort to deal with the small number of sociopaths and hard-core recalcitrants, those who do not have moral commitments or sufficient impulse control to heed those commitments" (p. 30). Sociopaths do not know what is just and prudent as well as what is unjust and imprudent and then voluntarily choose the latter. By definition, the sociopath does not know the difference and so, morally, is the

equivalent of an outlier in statistical analysis in that the person exists but should not skew the general conclusions by existence.

How, then, does Etzioni explain the lack of justice and prudence he sees in modern America if he rejects the idea that human nature is inherently flawed? It isn't that human beings are incapable of making prudent and just decisions. Instead, the current culture of greed and corruption in the United States is providing neither the content of what is prudent and just nor the encouragement to act prudently and justly (p. 30). The solution is that, "we must shore up our moral foundation to allow the markets, government, and society to function properly again" (p. 30). Of course, this begs the question of whether such a moral foundation has ever existed in the market, the government, or society in general. Etzioni does not name the golden era when this was the case and leaves himself open to the accusation of viewing either the recent or distant past with too optimistic a perspective.

The need to shore up the moral foundation has come about, mainly in instances in which there is no viable community, in which people live in high-rise buildings and do not know one another, in some city parts in which the social fabric is frayed, and in situations in which people move around a lot and lose social moorings, that the social underpinnings of morality are lost. (p. 33)

The sources, then, of false prudence and injustice are geographic, architectural, and excessive mobility. The first fear of citizens might be that the solution for poorly-chosen geography, architecture, and moving patterns is a centrally-

planned government which would determine what will and what will not contribute to the presence of prudence and justice in a society. Etzioni is careful to assure his readers that this is not what he intends:

The best way to minimize the role of the state, especially its policing role, is to enhance the community and its moral voice. . . . What we must try to avoid is relying on the state to maintain social order, which can be achieved more humanely and at less cost by the voluntary observance of those values we all hold dear. (p. 44)

Etzioni's anthropological assumptions assign little credit or blame for the prudence and justice of a society to the nature of the human person. To him, the well-functioning human being is created in society, not born. Apart from a community, there is no human nature. As he writes, "Our culture wraps newborn infants in a pink mist. Actually, those newborn 'cute babies' are animals with few human traits; left to their own devices, they will crawl on all fours and bark" (p. 55). The "nature versus nurture" argument is over for Etzioni and nurture has won hands down. People are neither inherently prudent nor imprudent, just or unjust. Instead, they are what they are created to be by their community. There is no class distinction other than one class might be better situated to create prudent and just members than another. All are equally capable of either.

With this assumption unquestioned, it is a quick and easy move to focus all attention and resources to the creation of prudence and justice using the blank slates

that present themselves before communities in the form of the human baby. Such formation ought not to be overly difficult for:

We Communitarians argue that two requirements loom over all others, indeed are at the foundation of most other needs: to develop the basic personality traits that characterize effective individuals and to acquire core value. . . . Both are sometimes referred to as 'developing character'. We mean by character the psychological muscles that allow a person to control impulses and defer gratification, which is essential for achievement, performance, and moral conduct. The core values, which need to be transmitted from generation to generation, contain moral substances that whose with the proper basic personality can learn to appreciate, adapt, and integrate into their lives: hard work pays, even in an unfair world; treat others with the same basic dignity with which you wish to be treated [or face the consequences]; you feel better when you do what is right than when you evade you moral precepts. (pp. 90–91)

Communities that have lost their formative power over the lives of their members must be restored. At first, it appears that Etzioni is going to propose the expansion of community involvement and volunteerism as the solutions to society's woes and, indeed, this is where he begins. He encourages people to not only donate to charities but also to get involved. Start a neighborhood supper club. Do something with a social purpose. Keep space available in buildings for elderly people with special physical needs (p. 128).

And yet, encouraging communities and their members to expand their volunteerism is not going to be enough:

So much has been written about Tocqueville's America, the land of voluntary associations and activities, that the notion that Americans are much more active Communitarians than Europeans has become a sociological cliché. Indeed, in America there are many tens of thousands of associations that promote block parties, baby-sitting pools, lodges, and clubs. One is tempted to bless them, saying, 'May they grow, flourish, and multiply,' and let them be. (p. 130)

But Etzioni does not succumb to this temptation. So is big government the answer? Etzioni is clear that he does not accept this as a solution:

It is widely recognized that communities provide the social base of the mediating institutions that stand between the individual and the state, protecting the individual from excessive encroachment by the state. For these mediating institutions to be able to discharge this important functions, they themselves need to be shielded from the government. Such protection is high on the agenda of the Communitarian movement. (p. 136)

If individuals have no built-in guidelines for prudence and justice and so cannot be relied on to be moral, and if current communities cannot provide such guidance because of current architecture, geographical, or mobility practices, and if big government is not the solution and may actually contribute to a further breakdown of community, what is the solution? Etzioni believes the solution is government but a

particular kind of government that is local and controlled by citizens: “Each city should have a civilian review board whose duty is would be to review the city’s procedures to check whether they enhance or hinder the Communitarian nexus” (p 137). Through community policing, neighborhood watch groups, and other communal involvement, Etzioni believes that government must be brought “closer to people” (p. 140).

Much of what Etzioni lays out in the first half of his book is contradicted in the second half. On page 144, Etzioni articulates what he calls the “Communitarian position on social justice.” He begins with the philosophical precepts, addresses the core problems with government, discusses the meaning of public interest, and makes recommendations for the changes that he believes must occur. It is as if two separate and competing perspectives have merged and been presented as one text. Etzioni’s philosophical anchors in the second half of the book closely resemble what is commonly referred to as the “principle of subsidiarity” in Catholic social thought. In a 1931 encyclical, Pius XI provided a clear statement of the principle:

Just as it is wrong to withdraw from the individual and commit to a group what private initiative and effort can accomplish, so too it is an injustice for a larger and higher association to arrogate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower associations. This is a fundamental principle. In its very nature the true aim of all social activity should be to help members of a social body, and never to destroy or absorb them. (as quoted in Gregg, p. 11)

Subsidiarity can be portrayed as a series of circles within circles with the individual human person at the center. If the individual at the center cannot provide what is needed, the circle closest to the individual bears responsibility for that individual. If that circle is unable to provide what is needed, responsibility is transferred out to the next larger circle. No larger circle should take from a smaller circle their responsibility unless the smaller circle is unable to meet its responsibilities.

In Etzioni's philosophical definition of social justice, "First, people have a moral responsibility to help themselves as best they can. . . . It is respectful of human dignity to encourage people to control their fate the best they can—under the circumstances" (p. 144). If the individual cannot control their fate, "The second line of responsibility lies with those closest to the person, including kin, friends, neighbors, and other community members" (p. 144). The justification for their involvement is that "they know best what the genuine needs are [they are much less likely to be cheated than are welfare bureaucrats] and are able to tailor the help to what is required" (p. 144).

In instances where those closest to the individual cannot provide the kind or amount of help that is necessary, "as a rule every community ought to be expected to do the best it can to take care of its own" because "attending to welfare is the responsibility of the local community" (p. 146). In instances where this is not possible, "societies [which are nothing but communities of communities] must help those communities whose ability to help their members is severely limited" (p. 146).

The Catholic system of subsidiarity is built on a presumption about human persons vital to such a system functioning properly. It assumes that most people are able to know and are willing to do what is prudent and just. Individuals, who bear the primary responsibility for themselves, can determine what the right thing for them to do is. If they are unable to provide for themselves, the assumption is that those closest to them will both know and do what is prudent and just. At each level up the chain of provision, it must be assumed that those who are in that level can and will act in accordance with prudence and justice. In the Catholic system, both knowing and doing what is prudent and just are possible because of natural law which is accessible to human beings through the use of their reason. Human beings innately can know and can choose to do what is prudent and just.

This is where Etzioni's system is at odds with his previous statements on the nature of the human person. If human beings lack this innate ability to determine what is prudent and just and only learn these through what their community impresses upon them, when they are lost there is little possibility they can be regained. Those are not capable on their own of knowing their societal duties through the use of reason and are not taught to consider justice or prudence by their communities will not even contemplate let alone commit themselves to acting in ways that are prudent or just on behalf of themselves or others.

Etzioni rejects the idea that large governmental agencies can contribute anything to the common good primarily because they are controlled by the Congress of the United States who, in turn, are entirely controlled by special interests. Even

good faith attempts became fiascos as “policies that were clearly designed to serve the public interest were twisted beyond recognition by the time they were processed by the prevailing political system” (p. 213). The primary role of Congress has become “the selling of legislation to special interests” (p. 213). Because this is the case, “the nation cannot face a problem and expect that it will be met with a reasonable, workable public policy that is in the public interest” (p. 216).

Several inconsistencies appear in Etzioni’s consideration of the U.S. Congress. First of all, Congress itself qualifies as a community, but it is not considered as a candidate for reform. It appears that members of Congress are morally incapable of acting in accordance with what is prudent and just because of the dollars with which they are dealing.

Second, Etzioni’s anthropology in the first half of the book eliminates the possibility that prudence and justice can either be assigned to a particular community or class or be completely missing from a community or class. All members of Congress are members not only of the congressional community but also of their own local communities, places of worship, neighborhoods, and families. But it appears that for them, these closest of communities have lost their power to mold and shape congressional members who belong to them so that those in the House or Senate are all morally adrift in a sea of cash and influence peddling.

The real villains are not the members of congress, actually. The true villains are lobbyists and members of special interest groups. Etzioni’s comments on this topic are illuminating:

Because three of four interest groups have no ideological commitments, but are interested only in lining the pockets of their constituents, they sink their hooks into both political parties, making effective opposition often impossible and undermining an essential feature of democratic government. . . . Next time you find an opposition party oddly refusing to discharge its duties, under our democratic form of government, check out who is underwriting the opposition. You will soon discover the major reason our political system is hobbled: special interests tie it up in knots. (p. 216–217)

One must ask whether these special interest groups actually represent communities whose bond is a particular interest, whether geographic, ideological, or economic. Etzioni lists unions and big oil firms as the most egregious examples of special interest groups that are a corrosive element in national public policy development, but even these represent groupings of people who are often connected to a geographical region.

One must also ask how various geographic, ideological, or economic interest groups could advocate on behalf of the members of their community apart from their lobbying efforts and how legislators would learn about the needs of a particular interest without a lobbying arm making their concerns known. Etzioni is aware of these criticisms and attacks them directly:

Some political scientists argue that special-interest group representation adds to the democratic process. As they see it, each community is made up of groups, each of which has its particular interests that it holds dear: farmers

and city dwellers; industrialists, workers, and consumers; and so on. The act of satisfying this assemblage of groups, referred to as 'pluralism,' is a way to serve the community as a whole. (p. 217)

But Etzioni does not accept this argument as valid:

As I see it, there are two kinds of pluralism: the kind that is unbounded and unwholesome, and pluralism-within-unity. In the former, each group is out to gain all it can, with little concern for the shared needs of the community. In the latter, groups vie with one another yet voluntarily limit themselves when they impinge on common interests. (p. 217)

Again, his perspective is inconsistent with what is in the first part of the book.

He explicitly states that individuals cannot self-limit their appetites. The community to which an individual belongs determines what is and what is not moral behavior. The community also functions to alert its members "that their inclinations violate fundamental values we share as a community of communities, as a society. And if moral suasion does not suffice, legal procedures are available to challenge local policies that violate overarching values to which the whole society is committed" (p. 52). While perhaps admirable, it is difficult to believe that those leading the community or representing its interests are going to "limit themselves when they impinge on common interests" (p. 217). Who will serve in this capacity? Who is morally formed to such an extent that they are able to not only know the common good but also to realize that when their interests run up against those of society at

large, their interests should be withdrawn in the interest of the common good? It would require the Aristotelian philosopher-king, a concept that Etzioni rejects.

Furthermore, what happens when a community within a society of communities decides to ignore what is in the best interest of the society as a whole and act only in a fashion consistent with its own interests. The problem of the “commons” as described by Ostrom can also be applied to communities themselves:

If each is free to decide for oneself in the pursuit of one’s own interest concerning a common-property resource or a public good, serious problems will occur. Each individual will presume to maximize one’s own net welfare if one takes advantage of the common property or public good at a minimum cost to oneself. In the case of a public good, the cost minimizer would have no incentive to pay his or her share of the costs for provision. (pp. 49–50)

Communities will compete for public goods and services, and it is difficult to imagine that individuals, who do not have the capacity to self-limit, will make up a community whose self-interest will be checked by a concern for the common good. The parts will, no doubt, have an impact on the nature of the whole.

Etzioni realizes this conflict exists within his system and attempts to address the question of who decides what is and what is not in the public interest or, put another way, what is and what is not prudent and just. He notes that:

An ideology has developed, supported by some social scientists and intellectuals, that claims there is no such thing as communitywide [or “public”] interest, only the give and take of particular interests. The actions of

the interest groups are said not to be detrimental; on the contrary, they are part of normal politics through which the 'community' benefits by servicing its various constituencies: long live unbounded pluralism. (p. 218)

It is his fear that such "unbounded pluralism" will create a situation where the majority will always dominate the minority because there will not be parity as to the relative strength of various interests within society as a whole for, "not all interest groups are created equal in economic and political power" (p. 219).

How can it be known whether a group's chief concern is the true common good or whether it is a narrowly focused group that seeks its own benefit at the expense of others? Etzioni writes:

The criterion I recommend to one and all is to ask: Who benefits? If the answer is mainly members of the group that is lobbying, then we have the general article: a true special interest group [of which we currently have more than you can shake a stick at]. If the main beneficiary is the society at large, then we have found a relatively rare specimen and treasure: a group that serves the public interest. In my judgment, the Sierra Club is such a jewel because its main concern is to conserve the wilderness for us all and not to ensure untrampled ski slopes for its members. (p. 219)

There are multiple concerns with this approach. Is the Sierra Club the source of what is prudent and just regarding stewardship of natural resources? Who in the Sierra Club has the knowledge and lacks the self-interest to determine what is and what is not prudent or just when it comes to concern for the environment? Or is the

Sierra Club simply one group with its own set of interests? The petroleum industry might argue that their concern is providing inexpensive power to help control the rate of inflation and spur on economic growth. The ski industry might argue that their concern is providing a health and recreational activity for people who love mountains covered with snow. If the Sierra Club is given complete control over natural resources and is not required to balance its own interests with those of others, it seems likely that those whose interests are inconsistent with the Sierra Club's would make it their goal to influence or even capture control of the Sierra Club.

Etzioni struggles with whether the problem with special interest groups is that they represent only a few very wealthy people and industries, like petroleum, or whether they are unions with huge membership roles but whose members have little control over what is said and done on their behalf. On the one hand:

The issue is whether small groups of well-heeled citizens should be allowed to use their deep pockets to in effect buy legislation—and to twist the arms of elected representatives to serve them, while the same representatives shortchange the rest of the constituents, the overwhelming majority. (p. 228)

On the other, the problem with most special interest groups is that while their members are required to contribute resources to make their lobbying possible, its members have no say over how the money is spent: “Their members rarely, if ever, meet, reason, or vote about the course the PAC follows, how its monies are used, or anything else” (p. 228). In other words, a handful of people within the special interest group have total control over the resources and, ultimately, the voices they are

supposed to represent. Because this is the case, “even special interest groups that have thousands or even millions of members are not genuine avenues for public participation” (p. 229). Etzioni does not consider that those in control are not nearly as free to act as he portrays them to be. If the National Rifle Association began to support handgun control or the American Association of Retired Persons supported lowering social security payments while raising the retirement age or the leaders of a trade union came out in favor of the Central American Free Trade agreement, it is reasonable to assume that their members would revolt and their funds would dry up. It seems, then, that according to Etzioni, small but powerless interest groups will not be heard, small but powerful groups will dominate, and groups with a significant number of members will be dominated by a small number who control their financial resources.

In the end, Etzioni does not consider how his system might manifest itself in political reality. Legislators are incapable of considering prudence or justice as they fashion the laws of the United States. A handful of very powerful and well-funded special interest groups dominate the landscape in the capitol, led by people who have no concern for the common good but are entirely focused only on benefits to those they represent. In doing so, they silence the voices of society as a whole and specifically the smaller communities which make up society:

As corporations, labor unions, trade associations, and other economic and social groups penetrate the realm of politics, they overpower the basic

democratic precept of “one person, one vote” that aims to make the government equally responsive to all members of the community. (p. 226)

Etzioni’s diagnosis is that “the main reason American democracy is hobbled is that special interests, drawing on the deep-pocketed PACs, have gained ever more power since the mid-seventies” (p. 225). His prescription for improvement is a kind of gentle revolution: “The public at large, those who care about the whole and not merely the parts, must get back into the act. They must recapture politics for the community” (p. 225). Those engaged in this revolution must build “a consensus powerful enough to unlock their grip on our legislators” (p. 221). This will require a mobilization of “the great underrepresented majorities” (p. 227).

For Etzioni, this revolution must occur through what he calls a “multilogue” which will be led by a “steady core of leaders” who will “draw on strong shared values and molding symbols” and will “command cadres that mobilize the rank and file to whatever social action is called for” (p. 230). At first glance, such a system has inherent flaws in that similar structures led to some of the greatest atrocities of the 20th century. In addition, those who are the core leaders must be people of tremendous moral fortitude lest they become the equivalent to union leaders, as Etzioni sees them, who control the flow of finances and put their own good before the good of the society and even their own membership. Etzioni’s goal is to “protect our democracy from demagogues,” but it appears that a handful of people who might lead such a majority might simply replace one set of demagogues with another.

Building such multilogue coalitions is only one side of the solution. The other, according to Etzioni, is the limitation of the power and finances of other special interest groups. Most of his solutions aim not at the interest groups themselves but at the elected officials whom they seek to influence. His list of needed reforms is as follows:

1. "Finance congressional elections with public funds such as we already do for presidential elections."
2. "Curb the flow of private money into the coffers of members of Congress" by imposing "a ban on all PACs. Limit individual contributions to \$250 per person. Allow no 'bundling.'"
3. "Reduce the cost of running for office. Provide free time for all bona fide candidates on radio and TV."
4. "Promote disclosure of the political process" by recording every time a lobbyist visits anyone in the legislative or executive branch.
5. "Enhance the enforcement of all rules, new and old."
6. "Enhance the role of political parties" by channeling all "campaign contributions [if any are allowed] through political parties rather than directly to individual candidates, or provide the parties with public funds."
7. "Restore honest debates among the candidates to reduce the effect of sound bites, of what is called teledemocracy." (pp. 234–238)

There is a lack of political realism in these suggestions and some introductory questions flesh this out. For example, could just anyone run and receive federal money? Who would monitor how that money is spent? Which parties would receive it? Who would pay for radio and television time if the candidates do not? Who would monitor how political parties distribute the money, and isn't it possible that this would make political parties even more susceptible to corruption than they already are?

In summary, Etzioni's communitarianism is really about changing the morality of individuals through the enhanced activity and involvement of the community. As he writes, "Change of heart is the most basic [part of Communitarianism]. Without stronger moral voices, public authorities are overburdened and markets don't work. Without moral commitments, people act without any consideration for one another" (p. 247). It is hard to imagine that many would argue with such a statement and yet Etzioni's solutions are grounded upon a philosophical anthropology that is a moving target throughout his book. On the one hand, human beings at birth are the moral equivalent of animals and lack the capacity to determine what is and what is not prudent or just on their own. They are avaricious as any other living organism and lack internal checks to their own appetites. They cannot determine what is right or wrong. Considering the just claims of others simply isn't part of their makeup as originally equipped.

The only check to endless consumption that will take into consideration the just claims of others is the community where persons are formed and molded into the

moral beings they become. The community determines what is and is not moral and the community enforces their definition of morality through social suasion and, if need be, coercion. Etzioni lacks Ostrom's emphasis on the rule of law where by citizens are subject to a written and clear code equally applied to all. They are free to act in their own self-interest as long as they adhere to what is legally acceptable and refrain from what is illegal. The law, as it functions in American society, has a community aspect to it in that many laws are passed at the local level. Those not in accordance with federal law are trumped by that federal law, which ultimately is connected to the Constitution of the United States. It is a standard by which all the nation's laws can be judged as applied by the Supreme Court of the United States.

Etzioni locates this function not in the rule of law but in the morality to be found in and determined by the community. Somehow, in a way Etzioni does not make clear, communities form society and the collective society determines what is and what is not prudent or just. There is no sense of how society might exercise its influence on a particular community that operated outside of what society at large considered to be deviant behavior. Large agencies cannot be trusted. Congressional members are for sale to the highest bidder. But neither can individuals be trusted to determine what is and what is not prudent and just because of their dominating self-interest, although this is not true for all individuals, as some will lead a majority special interest group or oligarchy in a multilogue which will determine morality. In Etzioni's thinking, it is clear that a community forms and molds its individual members in its own image. It is not clear that, conversely, individuals shape their

communities in their image in accordance to their wants, needs, and interests. It is this disconnect which makes Etzioni's concept logically untenable.

Are human beings prudent? Are they generally just or unjust? The answer, according to Etzioni, is that it depends on the community in which they have been raised. Communities are prudent or imprudent, just or unjust. Individual persons are morally formless at their genesis, essentially lacking the ability to be either until they are acted upon by their community. The answer to the question is that it depends on the community.

Amitai Etzioni

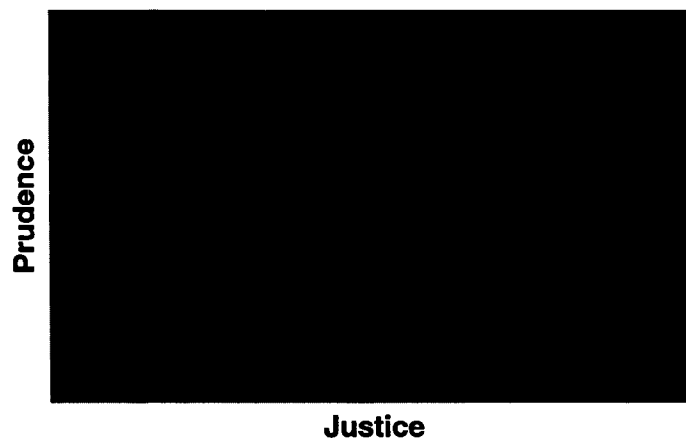


Figure 10. Amitai Etzioni

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

In 1972, David K. Hart stated in an article in *Public Administration Review*:

“It is now time for a generation of ‘public administration philosophers’ who will address themselves to the resolution of extremely difficult normative questions that plague nearly every book and article” (p. 617). The most serious problem facing public administrative theorists and practioners, according to Hart, was the “absence of such metaphysical speculation” (p. 617).

This project argues that every article and book written on public administration is written—whether consciously or unconsciously, implicitly or explicitly, examined or left unexamined, consistently or inconsistently applied—from a certain philosophical anthropological perspective. Addressing human society means saying something about the nature of the human person.

All five major theorists examined in this study have implied philosophical anthropologies that say something about what they believe to be the level of prudence and justice in the general population. Some theorists directly address their assumptions about the human person while others do not. Some apply a consistent theory of human nature, even if the assumption is that no such thing exists, while others attribute certain traits to some subgroups of the general human species but not to others.

This study is certainly not exhaustive and can be expanded in at least five ways. First, the primary books of additional authors and theorists could and should be considered as regards to their view of human beings pertaining to prudence and justice. Frank Sherwood's list of the 70 most influential books is a good place to begin. The consideration of books like *Functions of the Executive* by Chester Barnard, *The Administrative State* by Dwight Waldo, *The Politics of the Budgetary Process* by Aaron Wildavsky, and *Papers on the Science of Administration*, edited by Luther Gullick and Lyndall Urwick may provide deeper insight into how these leading theorists and others thought about human nature and its capacity for prudence and justice.

Secondly, it would be helpful to study all the writings of a particular theorist to determine if he or she is consistent in thinking regarding human nature or whether some development occurred as time passed. For instance, how do the early writings of Peter Drucker compare to the later expressions of his thinking about leadership and public administration? Did some evolution of thought take place? Did he hold to a consistent position regarding his understanding of human nature which he applied to different circumstances throughout his theoretical life?

A third potential arena for additional research is in changing or adding to the classical virtues considered. What would be the results if, instead of prudence and justice, the virtues of temperance and fortitude were considered? Or kindness and honesty? The list of virtues and their corresponding vices to be considered is lengthy

and might provide greater illumination about the functional anthropologies that undergird the thinking of various theorists.

Fourthly, this project focused exclusively on American theorists. If the same virtues of prudence and justice were considered but a comparison between theorists from the United States and from Europe were done, would the results yield any insight into the causes of some of the variation between the American and the French view of bureaucracy, the role of the government, and the utility of public administration? What might be the results of comparing two leading Western theorists with two leading Eastern theorists?

Finally, a comparison of the philosophical anthropological perspectives regarding the distribution of prudence and justice as human traits could be done between leading theorists of different eras. This study could serve as a beginning as the theorists are considered in chronological order and span most of the 20th century. The argument is not being made here that each theorist speaks for a school of thought. It is possible, however, to bundle similar theorists into schools representing different eras and then consider how their views of prudence and justice play a role in the foundations of their theories.

While not the focus of this study, there does seem to be some development over time along a continuum regarding the broadness or narrowness of prudence and justice in the population at large. It is possible that this development is only an apparition determined by the theorists included in this study. Examining different theorists from the same decades could lead to a different conclusion. But it appears

that assumptions among the theorists as to the disbursement of prudence and justice change over time.

Taylor and Simon, the earliest theorists considered, limit both prudence and justice to a handful of people. For Taylor, it is the scientific managers who are the keepers and builders of prudence and justice. For Simon, it is the administrators. For both, hierarchical organizations are good and add to prudence and justice by demanding compliance from those who would not be capable of discovering or doing either. Mosher, Ostrom, and Etzioni attribute prudence and justice to much more broad and diverse populations. To them, hierarchical organizations are not the keepers of prudence and justice. For Mosher, the problem is not the person but the professionalization and unionization of public administrators who serve to put their own concerns above the common good. For Ostrom, prudence and justice are part and parcel of almost all human beings in that they operate from self-interest and are moral as long as they abide by the rule of law. For Etzioni, prudence and justice can be found among a small number of individuals, rarely in the government, and never among special interest groups or lobbyists. Instead, morality is kept by and transmitted through community.

Perhaps this shift from thinking that prudence and justice are narrowly disbursed to the assumption that they are common is a result of sociological and political changes that have occurred as the percentage of those who could participate in American democracy has increased in the recently ended century. It is not clear if public administration theory is merely reflecting changes that are occurring in

American culture or if it is leading these changes. The goal of this project is not to determine which of these might be true but rather to note that assumptions about human nature are present in and have a powerful impact on the kinds of theories that are developed and operative with public administrative systems. The point is that underlying anthropological assumptions have been operative among PA theorists, whether or not they acknowledge them, and that the various schools of thought about both the theory and practice of public administration is greatly influenced by these assumptions.

In conclusion, part of this study must be a call for theorists to give serious consideration to their own anthropological assumptions as part of their work of theorizing. Their assumptions should be made plain and defended at the beginning of their work. Not only is this beneficial to the reader so that, through full disclosure, these assumptions can be known, it is also beneficial for public administration theorists and practitioners to give serious consideration to their own assumptions pertaining to the human beings about whom they write and for whom they work.

At the recommendation of the dissertation committee, a few, very broad suggestions toward the formation of an operative philosophical anthropology for public administration theory will function as the concluding comments. This is not meant to be a full-orbed or completed recommendation and really is the equivalent of some initial wonderings.

It seems that those considering a potential anthropology for public administration should make full use of the cultural connections that have been made

possible by the expansion of globalization. Increased speed in communication and the interconnectedness developing between various cultures and nations because of expanded international commerce may lead to a deeper and more global understanding of the nature or natures of human beings. Examining the similarities and differences expressed in non-American cultures could provide fertile soil for consideration. Is the self-interest that is at the core of American public choice theory found in other cultures? If not, why not? Are the variations or similarities caused by differences or consistencies in educational systems or religious beliefs or societal expectations? Exploring the human person by examining global examples might yield some benefit.

Secondly, it would be helpful to explore the thoughts of American founders during the period of the Revolutionary War and the framing of the U.S. Constitution. An examination of the anthropological assumptions in the thought of Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson would, at the very least, bring greater clarity to some of the intellectual roots of American thinking about the nature of the human person. It is likely that Hamilton's view of the individual is not particularly rosy, given his more elitist approach. His view is likely to be stark contrast with Jefferson, who at least in appearance, seemed to be more comfortable with power resting in the hands of citizens. Even their definitions of who is counted and who is not counted as a citizen in a democracy would be illuminating.

Furthermore, the intellectual roots of the Declaration of Independence hold the potential for some clarity as to the nature of human beings. A discussion of the

origins of concepts like the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness would be profitable as would some consideration of their roots in English common law and philosophical nature law. If rights are inalienable, then what is their source? If everyone has them, what are the corresponding responsibilities that come along with these rights and what capabilities are assumed so that people can live up to these responsibilities?

Finally, it would be interesting and perhaps enlightening to compare the constitutions of various nations to see what assumptions about human beings are common to them all. If freedom of speech, for example, is an explicit right contained in a large percentage of constitutions, what does this assume regarding human ability to be rational in thought and expression? The comparison would benefit from the inclusion of various United Nation statements regarding human rights.

Human beings are complex things and everyone holds certain truths about them to be self-evident. A solid examination into these assumptions and their relation to society, political structures, and specifically public administration theory and practice may finally begin to end the wandering in the wilderness that is too commonly found in public administration. It may even lead to a public administrative structure that more truly aligns with being of the people, by the people, and for the people.

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