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The Big Questions of Public Administration in a Democracy

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What are the big questions which should concern practitioners and students of public administration? Behn recently offered three big questions of public management, involving micromanagement, motivation, and measurement. Kirlin argues that the big questions of public administration in a democracy are different from those of public management and develops four criteria by which to judge big questions. Seven big questions of public administration in a democracy are offered, concerning: tools of collective action supporting a democratic polity; appropriate roles of nongovernmental collective action; tradeoffs between designs based on function versus geography; national versus local political arenas; when decisions are isolated from politics; balance among neutral competence, representativeness, and leadership; and societal learning.

Behn's (1995) recent delineation of the "big questions of public management" makes an important and compelling argument that any field of inquiry should focus on major questions and should be driven by those questions, not diverted to more tractable questions nor limited by methodological orthodoxy. This is a strong critique of much of the contemporary public administration and public management literature, both in terms of the questions addressed and efforts to establish an orthodoxy of methods somehow judged to be most appropriate. Behn is careful to limit his suggestions to public management and to invite others to offer alternative definitions of big questions.

In this article, I respond to this invitation, arguing that the big questions of public administration in a democracy are quite different from the big questions of public management, a position also recently suggested by Newland (1994). To begin, I identify Behn's big questions, give an initial preview of the critique more fully developed later, and offer a listing of the seven big questions of public administration in a democracy.

Big Questions

Behn's three big questions for public management (1995; 315) are:

1. Micromanagement: *How* can public managers break the micromanagement cycle—an excess of procedural rules, which prevents public agencies from producing results, which leads to more procedural rules, which leads to ...?
2. Motivation: *How* can public managers motivate people (public employees as well as those outside the formal authority of government) to work energetically and intelligently toward achieving public purposes?
3. Measurement: *How* can public managers measure the achievements of their agencies in ways that help to increase those achievements?

These questions, asking “how” public managers can address each of the three big questions, place the public manager (implicitly operating from a public bureaucracy) at the center of the enterprise of governmental action. This approach, in common with others focused on public management, and much traditional public administration focused on public agencies, fails to confront adequately the issues of public administration in a democracy. It gives management of organizations primacy over the democratic polity, a position effectively critiqued by Appleby (1949) nearly half a century ago. It similarly fails to address the argument of Rosenbloom (1983) that public administration theory includes three distinctive approaches—managerial, political, and legal—all of which must be incorporated if public administration theory is to be legitimate in this nation.

Primary attention here is focused on the important questions for public administration in a democracy, particularly the United States. Four criteria the big questions of public administration in a democracy must satisfy are: (a) achieving a democratic polity; (b) rising to the societal level, even in terms of values also important at the level of individual public organizations; (c) confronting the complexity of instruments of collective action; and (d) encouraging more effective societal learning.

Seven big questions emerge from the analysis:

1. What are the instruments of collective action that remain responsible both to democratically elected officials and to core societal values?
2. What are the roles of nongovernmental forms of collective action in society, and how can desired roles be protected and nurtured?
3. What are the appropriate tradeoffs between governmental structures based on function (which commonly eases organizational tasks) and geography (which eases citizenship, political leadership, and societal learning)?
4. How shall tensions between national and local political arenas be resolved?
5. What decisions shall be “isolated” from the normal processes of politics so that some other rationale can be applied?
6. What balance shall be struck among neutral competence, representativeness, and leadership?
7. How can processes of societal learning be improved, including knowledge of choices available, of consequences of alternatives, and of how to achieve desired goals, most importantly, the nurturing and development of a democratic polity?

Critiques of Making Public Bureaucracy the Starting Point of Public Administration

Four critiques of making public bureaucracy the starting point of public administration in a democracy are offered here. These critiques are based on fundamental criteria to be met by any list of big questions of public administration in a democracy. Development of criteria by which any listing of big questions can be evaluated provides a foundation for this effort and a framework within which dialogue about questions central to the field can unfold. Indeed, development of the four criteria receives more attention here than do the seven big questions.

The big questions of public administration in a democracy must be rooted in achieving a democratic polity.

One schism in the study and practice of public administration concerns the starting point: Is it public bureaucracy or a democratic polity? Public bureaucracy and democratic polity should be seen as complementary; both are needed in our society. But analysis and advocacy often start with and emphasize one perspective over the other. Those who make public bureaucracy the starting point focus largely on their operations. POSDCORB is an early iteration of this orientation, concerns with (organizational) economy, efficiency, and effectiveness are constants, and contemporary studies of public management are rooted in this tradition. Much of the contemporary reinvention effort seeks to improve performance of public bureaucracies (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992; Gore, 1993; Carroll, 1995). Simon (1947) issued a challenge to the conventional proverbs of public administration on the basis of method, but he did not challenge the focus on organization as the core of the field. This remains the dominant subject focus of the field, as measured by articles appearing in *Public Administration Review* (Bingham and Bowen, 1994).

The primary alternative starting point of a democratic polity may be more diffuse and less coherent, but it is also a major current in our history. It can be seen in the attention paid to citizenship in early education for public service. For example, the two first university-based programs with their own deans both included “citizenship” in their names: The Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs of Syracuse University (founded in 1924) and the School of Citizenship and Public Administration of the University of Southern California (founded in 1929) (Stone and Stone, 1975). Waldo (1948) concluded that over-attention to perfecting administrative processes was harmful to democracy. Advocacy of the council-manager form of government, sought by early reformers, included both hopes for increased efficiency and effectiveness and enhancing democratic norms of citizen participation and political accountability (Stillman, 1974; 9).

Appleby (1949; 43) argued strongly that politics and policy making interpenetrate public administration. He characterized common processes of public administration as an “eighth” political process:

Arguments about the application of policy are essentially arguments about policy. Actual operations are conducted in a field across which mighty forces contend; the forces constitute policy situations. Administration is constantly engaged in a reconciliation of these forces, while leadership exerts itself in that process of reconciliation and through the interstices of the interlacing power lines that cut across the field.

Some of the lament of those troubled by the dominance of narrow methods of inquiry occasioned by embrace of behavioral social science approaches to the generic study of administration includes loss of the nuanced appreciation of public institutions operating in democratic polities (Fesler, 1975). Vincent Ostrom (1974) critiqued the embrace of Woodrow Wilson as the founder of the field, arguing that the defining feature of the American political system is its constitutional design.

Moe and Gilmour (1995) pose the issue in terms of legitimate

How *public administration can contribute to sustaining democratic polities is an issue long central to public administration...*

foundations for actions of public agencies, finding them in public law rather than in management theories. Business management practices developed within the constraints of judge-made common law intended to protect the rights and establish the obligations of private parties pursuing private interests. Practices in the governmental sector are "...founded on the body of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights and articulated by a truly enormous body of statutory, regulatory and case law to ensure continuance of a republican form of government and to protect the rights and freedoms of citizens at the hands of an all-powerful state" (Moe and Gilmour, 1995; 135).

This position is similar to that of Rosenbloom (1983) who analyzed the legal perspective as distinct from the managerial and political perspectives. He found that the origin and values, suggestions for organizational structure, and views of individuals differ among the three perspectives. The legal perspective, derived from constitutional law, administrative law, and the "judicialization" of public administration, embodies three central values: procedural due process, individual substantive rights, and equity.

One of the fundamental flaws in making public bureaucracy the starting point of public administration is that it easily supports substitution of organizational concerns and measures of performance for those of a democratic polity, including the rule of law. Organizations may focus on effectiveness, efficiency, or economy. They may also focus on the impacts of organizations on their members or consumer satisfaction. But the ultimate value underpinning organization theory is organizational survival; any other values or constraints must be imposed from an external framework, intellectual, political, or legal.

Democratic polities must focus on: the sustained capacity of the political system itself to make and act on collective choices, opportunities for effective citizenship and political leadership, ensuring a limited government, nurturing the civic infrastructure necessary for collective action without public authority, providing the institutional structures necessary for operations of the economy, and protecting individual freedoms and rights. These are very different issues than those seen at the organizational level. How public administration can contribute to sustaining democratic polities is an issue long central to public administration, contributing several traditional big questions.

The big questions of public administration in a democracy must rise to the societal level, even in terms of values also important at the level of individual public organizations.

There is reason to doubt that improving performance of individual public bureaucracies, or the operations of all agencies of the national government, for example, will aggregate to economy, effi-

ciency, or effectiveness judged from a societal point of view. Even if each individual public organization approaches perfection, the totality of their effects may be found wanting. This is a consequence of the necessity of organizations to develop specialized competencies, to limit the range of their actions, and thus to have limited, partial effects. This phenomenon is well recognized in organization theory as occurring in the process of goal formation (March and Simon, 1958). For James D. Thompson (1967), the critical issue confronting organization theory is how to reconcile organizations' drive for internal certainty, accomplished by limiting information, technology, structures, and processes, with the uncertainties and changes encountered externally.

A central theme of the policy implementation literature is the difficulty of achieving coherent actions in complex systems consisting of organizations and political entities each with independent capacity for action (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973; Ingram, 1990). A constant complaint of states and local governments about the national government, and of local governments about states, is that fragmentation of policies, programs, and funding flows from above makes effective action at the point of impact extraordinarily difficult. Analysts of federalism wrestle with these issues frequently (Walker, 1995), as do those who analyze complex systems of collective action (Dahl and Lindblom, 1954; Kaufmann, 1991). Advocates of deregulating government address some of these issues but commonly focus on individual public bureaucracies without addressing the total, societal impact of many such agencies (Wilson, 1989; 365-378).

A simple question challenges the emphasis upon single organizations dominant in much public management and public administration literature, revealing that such a focus is ultimately inadequate. That question is: "If each and every single public organization performed ideally as seen in your theory, would the results be societally desirable?" The response must be, No, as public organizations cannot be assumed to be subject to a blind hand of external forces. Public organizations require external direction and constraint to achieve societally desired results. How this can be achieved is the focus of several traditional big questions.

The big questions of public administration in a democracy must confront the complexity of instruments of collective action.

While traditional public administration and public management focus largely on government, the instruments available for collective action to a modern society characterized by a limited, democratic government and a market economy are not limited to government. They include also the market itself (Lindblom, 1977), the rich tapestry of institutions that comprise the civic infrastructure (Putnam, 1993), and regulation, grants-in-aid, government corporations, and other approaches (Salamon, 1989). Without government, society lacks the property rights, monetary system, legally enforceable contracts, forms of business organization and legally sanctioned practices, or processes to resolve conflicts, required of a modern economy. Government can also encourage civic infrastructure, through legalizing collective action without an explicit grant of governmental authority, through supportive provisions of tax codes, or through contractual and co-provision arrangements for action.

At the most fundamental level, public action creates the institutional frameworks through which individuals are born; live; marry and divorce; parent; worship; enter into work relationships; create and run businesses; buy and sell property; exercise political voice and choice; join with others to pursue recreation, art, or a vision of the good society; are held accountable for their actions; and resolve conflicts. In essentially any dimension of human activity, ranging from housing and education through transportation and personal safety or recreation to environmental quality, examination reveals some areas of direct governmental production of a service but much greater impacts through governmental shaping of the legal forms of collective action, establishment of rights and responsibilities, boundaries of acceptable behaviors and practices, and tax codes. Within the framework constructed by these governmental policies and the relevant constraints of critical "private" institutions such as financial institutions, themselves working within frameworks of public policy, private industries emerge, usually making direct private expenditures larger than those made by government in the area. Of course, private interests, firms, and associations influence the public policy frameworks within which they operate, but they do so within a political process in which other parties also participate.

Moreover, social institutions are active, being altered purposively in response to changed constraints, opportunities, and preferences. For example, the system of state and local public finances in California has evolved through ten identifiable iterations since passage of Proposition 13 in 1978. One major adaptation involved local governments, investment banks, and developers, creating new processes and instruments to pay for infrastructure required to accommodate growth. Another involved a voter-approved initiative pushed by school interests requiring allocation of increasing percentages of state revenues to K-14 education, which stimulated a voter-approved initiative supported by cities, counties, and other interests to moderate those effects (Kirlin, Chapman, and Asmus, 1994).

An area where public administration needs a better conceptualization of its roles is precisely in the contributions government and public administration make to the creation, nurturing, and restructuring of complex functional systems. But even within the constraints of traditional public administration, the variety of available instruments of collective action received considerable recognition (Fesler, 1975), and this variety is recognized in traditional big questions.

The big questions of public administration must address processes by which societal learning is made more effective.

The discussion above suggests an important challenge for advocates of increasing the importance of research in public administration (White and Adams, 1994). The challenge emerges directly from the necessity to improve the capacity to achieve desired results in complex systems, where governments are creators and shapers but have severe limits on their direct actions, and the central values are those of democracy in which citizen values and choices are ultimately controlling. In this situation, science—as organized, structured inquiry—is useful but limited. Adding subjectivist, interpretist, or critical styles of research to public adminis-

tration may well be desirable, but these proposals remain focused on improving the enterprise of science rather than improving the broader processes by which society learns.

It is well known that policy makers and public administrators often do not make effective use of available knowledge derived from scientific research (Lindblom and Cohen, 1979). However, the challenge posed here is more fundamental, concerning limits upon the insights available from science. In some instances, available science requires fragmenting problems in ways that do not provide ready insight into operations of the relevant real systems. Separation of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) science (and programs) into air, water, pesticides, and toxic and solid waste categories provides an example (National Academy of Public Administration, 1995; 16-18). Partial insight and some progress toward policy goals occur under these divisions, but uncertainty and conflict among sciences and programs are common in application to specific geographical places. In other instances, continuing controversy among scientists suggests that knowledge is not perfect. Examples can be found in the disputes over global cooling or global warming (Stone, 1993) or about how best to teach children.

When the question moves from what should be done to how, the issues of complexity of action will frequently confound science with the literature on public policy implementation bearing witness to the difficulties encountered (Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1983). The ultimate challenge arises when increasing citizen understanding is confronted. Citizens do gain information from science, with general acceptance of the risks of smoking providing an example. But the linkages among information acquisition, attitude, personal action, and political voice and choice are complicated. Some issues are "wicked," characterized by conflicting values among citizens and imperfect or conflicting understanding among analysts. Yankelovich (1991) distinguishes between public opinion and public judgment, with the former being more fleeting. Where the public reaches judgment citizens believe themselves to understand the issue as it affects them, they have a preferred outcome (and, often, associated governmental actions), they are willing to accept the consequences of these choices, and these judgments endure.

Citizen understandings are important not only because they influence or control eventual policies in a democratic polity. When human behaviors and the actions of organizations or institutions are involved, Lindblom (1990) argues that social sciences are intimately rooted in categories and values of ordinary lives and language. From this perspective, social sciences, and much of whatever science is available to public administration, cannot escape close relationship with their nominal subjects, humans.

In this situation, the interests encompassed in public administration must expand beyond traditional science and also beyond processes to increase the use of science in policy making and implementation, to encompass how society at large learns. Only as society, broadly defined, learns what it wishes to pursue and how to achieve those desired outcomes more reliably can citizens participate effectively in policy choices and in collective action by their informed, as opposed to coerced, bought, or manipulated, actions (Dewey, 1927).

Appleby (1949; 155-156) again provides a strong rationale for the importance of expecting public administration in a democracy

to positively contribute to societal learning.

In every case, the principal roles of the especially responsible citizens who are also public officials are: to bring into focus—to resolve and integrate—these popularly felt needs; to give specific form to responses of the government...to inject foresight and concern for factors not readily visible to citizens at large.... The process produces a kind of political logic unlike any other logic, the validity of which is tested or attested by popular consent and governmental survival.... But it is constantly adjusted by repetitive phases....

There would be a grave danger, for example, in straining too hard for “rationality” and minimizing the political, for it is the political that makes room for the whole of human potential, including the rational potential.

A framework to analyze the range of societal institutions within which societal learning occurs can be developed from an approach suggested by Weshler (no date). He identifies faith, tradition, mass media, science, politics, and ideology as arenas in which societal learning can occur, with different mixes operative in any society at any time. This framework can be expanded by addition of the categories “markets” and “professional practices,” resulting in these categories: faith, tradition, mass media, professional practices, science, markets, politics, and ideology.

These arenas are shown in Table 1 with the type of proof offered for each for the veracity of an insight. To illustrate the relevance of the various arenas in the practice and study of contemporary public administration, an easily understood example of learning from each arena is offered. Of course, not all accept the truthfulness of all the illustrative examples offered, but each is a recognizable, powerful factor in the practice (and study) of public administration.

Table 1
Arenas of Societal Learning Relevant to Public Administration

Arena	Proof Offered	Illustrative Example
Religion	Faith (no effort to verify)	High value of individual lives
Tradition	Societal custom	Hierarchy is preferred organizational structure
Literary and mass media	“Good” values	“No more Vietnams”
Professional practice	Expert status; license	Building budgets from current services base
Science	Verifiability	Rule making in EPA or FDA
Market	Price, demand, and supply	Preference for single-family housing (in USA)
Politics	Political decision	Intergenerational redistribution is good (Social Security, Medi care)
Ideology	Fits ideology	Business practices are better than governmental practices

The important conclusion of this discussion and examination of Table 1 is that science is *one* of several arenas in which societal learning occurs. Increasing the influence of science is a strategy to increase rationality in society but likely to be constrained by limits on scientific understanding and by resistance to turning contentious choices over to elites. For most issues confronting society, any political decision-making body, or any public administrator, science is unlikely to provide definitive guidance. A perspective on societal learning that includes more than science is needed just to understand the factors shaping decisions and actions in the public sector.

Dewey (1927) provides a classical philosophical foundation for the position that societal learning is critical. The issue is addressed in seminal works on civic culture (Almond and Verba, 1965) and in contemporary examinations of how cities encourage or discourage citizen participation, with Berry, Portney, and Thomson (1993) finding that cities which institutionalize neighborhood participation in policy processes generate more informed, efficacious, and participative citizenry whose inputs are heard by both administrators and elected officials. The Kettering Foundation has supported work on effectively involving citizens in public issues; examples include the writing of its president (Mathews, 1994) and the work of Yankelovich (1991), which it supported. The National Civic League (1994) has long been committed to development of strong citizenship, developing a ten-item “Civic Index,” which is the template used for its annual “All American Cities” competition. Putnam (1993) offers a theoretically sophisticated and empirically supported rationale for the critical contribution of social capital developed by citizens’ joint activities outside of government to successful functioning of government and administrative processes.

Beyond mere passive understanding, the argument advanced here is that an important challenge for public administration in a democracy is to improve the whole of societal learning. This provides even stronger reason that discussion regarding inquiry in the field must not be limited to any narrow focus on method. It is possible to “improve” the learning that can occur in society, that is, make it more likely to improve effective understanding of what is going on, appreciation of choices, and of strategies for action that improve odds of achieving desired goals. The big questions of public administration in a democracy must engage this role.

Big Questions of Public Administration in a Democracy

The big questions of public administration in a democracy must satisfy the four criteria developed above. In general, what is required is moving up in levels of abstraction beyond a favored instrument of collective action (the public bureaucracy) and a favored approach to inquiry (science) to broader processes. Public bureaucracies are *one* instrument of collective action; our commitment should be to develop, manage, nurture, change, and improve the range of instruments of collective action which achieve societal goals. Similarly, science is *one* approach to social inquiry and our commitment should be to develop, manage, nurture, change, and improve the range of processes through which societal learning occurs. To the extent public administration limits its scope of action and learning to public bureaucracies and science, it limits its relevance and impact. To limit scope of learning and action is to

elevate instrument above purpose, a foolish choice. By analogy, a society focused on instrument rather than goal would have remained limited to walking as its mode of transportation and to consulting oracles as its approach to learning.

To move beyond a general exhortation to satisfy the four criteria, students and practitioners of public administration have developed seven big questions identified at the beginning of the article, which are easily recognized as long central to American public administration:

1. What are the instruments of collective action that remain responsible both to democratic political processes and to core societal values? This question is posed at the organizational level, for example, in the positions argued by Friedrich (1940) and Finer (1941) on internal norms of professionalism versus external controls in achieving accountability in public agencies. At the policy level, a recurring choice is between instruments which rely more on elite judgment and authoritatively directed compliance behaviors versus those that emphasize citizen judgment and empowering strategies (Dahl and Lindblom, 1954; Shonfield, 1965).
2. What are the roles of nongovernmental forms of collective action in society and how can desired roles be protected and nurtured? This is a central question of any limited form of government. Some theorists emphasize the market as the primary nongovernmental alternative for collective action, with Lindblom (1977) providing a reasoned examination of this alternative. Other theorists emphasize nonmarket forms of nongovernmental collective action, as seen in the contemporary work of Berger and Neuhaus (1977), Elinor Ostrom (1990), Putnam (1993), Etzioni (1993), and Mathews (1994), among others.
3. What are the appropriate tradeoffs between governmental structures based on function (which commonly eases organizational tasks) and geography (which eases citizenship, political leadership, and societal learning)? The decades-long debates about structures for collective action in metropolitan areas offer an example of these issues (Erie, Kirlin, and Rabinovitz, 1972; Kirlin, 1996a) as do the similar long-lived debates about block grants (Posner, 1995). Recent efforts to add civic (John, 1994) or community-based (Hansen, 1995) perspectives to environmental policy making are another example of this tension.
4. How shall tensions between national and local political arenas be resolved? This is a classic question central to the adoption of our Constitution. Elazar (1974) and Vincent Ostrom (1987) are among those who regularly address this question. The journal *Publius* takes this issue as its central focus as has the U.S. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. Administration of virtually all domestic policies and programs includes features, dynamics, and conflicts rooted in this question (Kincaid, 1993).
5. What decisions shall be "isolated" from the normal processes of politics so that some other rationale can be applied? This is a recurring issue regarding expertise and how to break through paralysis on contentious issues. Nathan (1995) reports that the National Commission on State and Local Public Service (1993) made the explicit decision that some decisions needed to be isolated from the turmoil of pluralist politics. The base-closure

To limit scope of learning and action is to elevate instrument above purpose, a foolish choice.

process is an example of this approach. Appleby (1949; 162) critiques the move to take issues out of politics as often being intended to take choice out of public control, to transfer power to special interests.

6. What balance shall be struck among neutral competence, representativeness, and leadership? This is the classic formulation of Kaufman (1956), central to the design of institutions and policies. The *PAR* Symposium on Public Administration in Europe (Kickert *et al.*, 1996) illustrates the continuing relevance of Kaufman's three contending forces in seven European democracies, without use of his terminology.
7. How can processes of societal learning be improved, including knowledge of choices available, of consequences of alternatives, and of how to achieve desired goals, most importantly, the nurturing and development of a democratic polity? Schachter (1995) has demonstrated how the Bureau of Municipal Research advocated citizens as owners of government and efficient citizenship in 1908-1913. More recently, Gawthrop (1984) and Barber (1984) address the importance of encouraging effective citizenship.

These seven big questions of public administration in a democracy are both researchable and actionable. Each has a long legacy in the field of public administration, enduring through changes in political regimes or academic fashions. Collectively, they satisfy the four criteria; indeed, each question touches on at least some facet of all four criteria.

In contrast, elevating public management to primacy in our field invites design and management of government to satisfy internal organizational needs of public agencies, sometimes constrained by directives of legislators, budget allocations and courts, and sometimes seeking to respond to customers. In this nation, public administration is not only subordinated to the values and constraints of a democratic polity but has a responsibility to protect, nurture, and to develop that polity. Appleby concludes *Policy and Administration* with the sentence: "Public administration is one of a number of basic political processes by which this people achieves and controls governance" (1949; 170).

From this perspective, questions derived from a public management perspective can only become "big" as they are cast within the values of a democratic polity. The Behn (1995) questions can be reposed as interesting, and even reasonably big:

1. "Micromanagement" becomes "Function Bias": How can institutions be developed that overcome the function bias cycle—excessive use of single-function-focused policies, programs, organizations, regulations, funding flows—that enfeeble geographically based political systems and civic infrastructure, while significantly increasing uncertainty and transaction costs for those who must live lives and conduct business and community affairs across functional boundaries?
2. Motivation: How can institutions and policies be developed that empower citizens, individually and in civic organizations,

businesses and nonprofits, and also governments and their employees, to work energetically, intelligently, and collaboratively, toward politically legitimated and socially valued purposes?

3. Measurement: How can society measure its overall progress and the contribution or hindrance contributed by major institutions, including business, civic infrastructure and government, and various policies, toward desired goals and use that knowledge to learn regarding future choices of goals and strategies of action?

These reformulations of Behn's three questions cut across the seven big questions identified above, with number 1 linking respectively to questions one, three, and four; number 2 with one and two; and number 3 with question seven. Questions five and six are missed.

Big Questions Endure

Public administration is characterized by periodic changes in dominant conceptualizations of what government does, of the roles of public administration, and of appropriate styles of inquiry. Big questions endure, and recent reconceptualizations leave the seven big questions as critical and central to the field of public administration in a democracy. Lan and Rosenbloom (1992; 537) conclude that even "marketized" public administration would retain features of democracy, including, for example, legislatures, responsiveness to citizens, courts to adjudicate conflicts, constitutional

integrity, robust substantive rights, and equal protection. John *et al.* (1994) analyze experiences with reinvention to develop prescriptions, which include an emphasis on strengthening state-local capacity and engaging and empowering citizens. Kirlin's (1996b) more integrated, abstract perspective explicitly makes democratic political attributes of places a central focus of the ways in which government and public administration create value for society.

As long as democracy is valued, the big questions of public administration must go beyond the big questions of public management. Even the contemporary antigovernment rhetoric does not abandon democracy. However, public administration cripples its role in society if understood primarily in terms of managing public agencies.

These suggestions concerning the four criteria by which big questions should be judged and the seven big questions of public administration in democracy are offered with knowledge that other perspectives exist. Other formulations of essentially similar arguments are possible. These four criteria and seven questions do serve to clearly demarcate the big questions of public administration in a democracy as distinct from the big questions of public management.

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