

Old Wine in a New Bottle, with a Twist

H. George Frederickson and Richard K. Ghere, eds.,
Ethics in Public Management (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2005). 400 pp., \$41.95 (paper) ISBN: 978-0-7656-1461-2.

In *Ethics in Public Management*, H. George Frederickson and Richard K. Ghere present a useful compendium of recent scholarship for the study of ethics in public administration. This book is a delightful companion edition to Frederickson's 1993 *Ethics and Public Administration* (also published by M. E. Sharpe). Yet the work does not fully live up to its title, as it covers substantively similar ground to its predecessor.

As an edited volume, *Ethics in Public Management* performs the expected task nicely: it presents the reader with a selection of material from a variety of scholars and perspectives on a pressing topic. It brings together a diversity of methodological and substantive perspectives on issues in public administration and public management ethics. The book reads easily, and the reader emerges at the end of the 371 core pages feeling educated about the research and dilemmas in public administration ethics.

The useful structure, thoroughgoing introduction, and competent editorship of the book, though important, are less valuable than the amalgamation of current research by the authors of the individual chapters. In this regard, the book is no less a goldmine of collected scholarship and research than the earlier *Ethics and Public Administration*. It is a fine introduction to topics and relevant techniques for ethics research, both for students and for scholars who already familiar with the literature of public administration ethics.

The structure of the book flows logically and topically through the major sections. In the first part, "Ethics and Public Administration in the Twenty-First Century," Ghere reintroduces the reader to events of ethical import in American public administration, placing the book firmly in context for both practitioners

and scholars. Following Ghere, Donald C. Menzel offers a comprehensive literature review of the most recent public administration ethics research. Though Menzel's review sometimes strains under the weight of the amount of literature he attempts to present, this chapter is not only quite readable but also will undoubtedly be useful for research scholars and graduate students attempting to situate themselves within this varied literature.

Within the second and most lengthy part, "Organizational Designs that Support Ethical Behavior," the cast of scholars presents a range of theoretical and empirical literature. Chapters by Dennis P. Wittimer, Laura Lee Swisher, Ann-Marie Rizzo, and Marsha A. Marley offer theoretical and empirical analyses of neo-Kohlbergian research into ethical decision making and reasoning. This avenue of research relies on administrators' responses to surveys intended to develop a categorization of decisions as exemplifying the stages of Kohlberg's moral reasoning (Kohlberg 1969, 1976, 1981). Briefly, these surveys attempt to place administrative decisions along a spectrum, usefully spelled out by Carole L. Jurkiewicz on page 102, ranging from mere obedience to coercive rules and threats from authority figures (stage 1) to a self-determined, principled application of universal ethical principles (stage 6).

Wittimer introduces the reader to the theoretical basis of Kohlbergian perspectives in administrative ethics research, while Swisher, Rizzo, and Marley survey original and empirical research of this kind. Jurkiewicz uses Kohlberg's moral reasoning research in her assessment of the relationship between power and ethics in administrative decision making. At the end of these three chapters, one is well versed in both the Kohlbergian and the somewhat ambiguously defined neo-Kohlbergian schools of ethical research. However, a chapter representing perspectives that are critical, comparative, or competitive with the Kohlbergian research, as well as a chapter that clearly differentiates Kohlbergian from neo-Kohlbergian research in administrative ethics, would have augmented this section.

Sara R. Jordan is an assistant professor in the Department of Politics and Public Administration at the University of Hong Kong. Her earlier work has appeared in *Public Administration and Administrative Theory and Praxis*.
E-mail: sjordan@hku.hk

The subsequent chapter, written by Guy B. Adams and Danny L. Balfour, eclipses the previous chapters. Here, Adams and Balfour cogently analyze the perennial problems of administrative discretion, political power, the service ethic, and administrative evil. Their provocative discussion of the role of intention and evil in administrative action leads me to agree with their concluding recommendation of a more staid yet deliberately responsive ethic of putting the prevention of cruelty first. The less than optimistic tone of the conclusion of this chapter leads the reader into the final chapter of this lengthy section, "Accountability through Thick or Thin Moral Agency in Public Service," with high hopes for resolution of the problems of administrative evil. These hopes may be dashed, however, by Melvin Dubnick and Ciarán O'Kelly's presentation of an excessively detailed case study, which in the process loses its primary focus—that accountability for political speech takes many different forms and may have unusually high costs for some.

In part III, "Market Forces that Compromise Administrative Ethics," the book turns, for the first time, to issues that will appeal to scholars who identify more strongly with public management scholarship. Laura S. Jensen and Sheila Seuss Kennedy present the strongest chapter in the book in terms of its unique contribution to public management research. Their thoroughgoing analysis of legality and judicial decision making regarding issues of public and private ownership and responsibility and contract governance lends substantive argumentative weight to their interesting propositions for the "close nexus" and "symbiotic relationship" criteria for public-private partnership governance. This chapter will be useful for scholars who are interested in the larger political, institutional, and ethical ramifications of New Public Management (NPM).

Following Jensen and Seuss Kennedy, H. George Frederickson and Lisa Dicke and Pitima Boonyarak provide interesting arguments for reconsidering the New Public Management in light of general (Frederickson) and context-specific (Dicke and Boonyarak) ethical frameworks. Frederickson nicely points out some of the trade-offs that present themselves for training the next generation of public managers and implementing NPM reforms in complex governance systems. Dicke and Boonyarak echo some of Frederickson's general concerns within their evaluation of the problems of implementing NPM reforms in health and human services. The six accountability dilemmas they point to are insightful and useful for scholars who are interested in both empirical and normative research in public management. Specifically, their attention to the problematic nature of measurement technology in human services highlights some general problems of measurement in public management.

Part IV, "Unintended Consequences of Anticorruption Reforms," does not seem to follow as easily and neutrally from the others as the remainder of the book. The research and analysis, contributed by Frank Anechiarico, Kathryn Denhardt, and Stuart C. Gilman, certainly match the quality of the other chapters in terms of research and utility for instruction (particularly for practitioner-oriented courses). Yet the presence of the section itself seems to suggest something of a stronger bias against the programs of New Public Management than the editors may have intended.

Part V, "Administrative Ethics in Global Perspective," is the most pedagogically useful section in the work, as well as the most promising as a collection of future research avenues for the discipline. While considering fully the extent of globalization, transnationalism, and cosmopolitan governance, the contributors to this section address nicely the political and managerial implications of the changing environment. Gerald E. Caiden's chapter, "An Anatomy of Official Corruption," provides a well-developed, generalizable assessment of the types and locations of official corruption across multiple times and locales. Scholars interested in the study of corruption will certainly find his conceptualization of corruption—as institutionalized, systemic, or widespread systemic—a useful starting point for further theoretical, empirical, or analytic research into the matter. Diane E. Yoder and Terry L. Cooper offer a wellspring of information (in a place where typically information is scarce) on the ethical affiliations and activities of governmental organizations in the developing world. Their assessments of the objectives and functions of transnational, regional, and international ethical initiatives provide the scholar unfamiliar with the landscape a well-researched road map into this yet-uncharted territory.

There's first chapter in this section, "Globalization and Public-Service Ethics: Some Directions for Inquiry," offers the reader eight major research suggestions, subdivided according to the normative or empirical research that could be done under each of those headings. Though, in many cases, the chapters that present further research suggestions are rarely useful for a broader range of scholars than are represented in the present book, Ghere clearly takes pains to examine multiple alternative avenues. Ghere's conclusion to the book is a useful contribution, detailing arguments and annotations in public administration, public management, and ethics research.

Ethics in Public Management, though a quality read for those interested in an introduction to the research available in public administration ethics and some of the public management literature, may be less than satisfactory for scholars who are searching for insights into public management ethics that go beyond the introductory or speculative. Likewise, scholars who

study public management from a decidedly scientific standpoint may find the work to be thin in its coverage and attention to their preferred perspective. Nevertheless, for those interested in a work that provides well-organized (but not always consistent), quality research, useful for teaching oneself or others the basics of ethical research in public administration and public management, this book is worth its length—just like its intellectual predecessor, *Ethics and Public Administration*.

References

- Frederickson, H. George, ed. 1993. *Ethics and Public Administration*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Kohlberg, Lawrence. 1969. Stage and Sequence: The Cognitive-Development Approach to Socialization. In *Handbook of Socialization Theory and Research*, edited by David A. Goslin, 347–480. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- . 1976. Moral Stages and Moralization: The Cognitive-Developmental Approach. In *Moral Development and Behavior: Theory, Research, and Social Issues*, edited by Thomas Lickona, 31–53. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- . 1981. *The Philosophy of Moral Development: Moral Stages and the Idea of Justice*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.