

Women in Public Administration

Theory and Practice

Edited by

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FOREWORD

This book has been “a long time a-borning.” Not that the editors and authors have been slow about their work. To the contrary, they have approached the project with dispatch and the enthusiasm it warrants. But the emergence of writing on women’s issues and feminist perspectives in U.S. public administration has been terribly slow. After all, the birth pangs, as far as I know, were first felt in 1976 with the publication of a symposium in *Public Administration Review* on women in public administration. What a long labor it has been! Perhaps the present collection is a signal that the topic has finally acquired the critical mass it needs to take its rightful place among the most important in practice and theory. It may be that such a potentially transformative issue takes time to build momentum.

Why has it taken so long? No less a source than the mother of the second wave of feminism may give us a clue. The introduction of Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1949) reads as follows:

For a long time I hesitated to write a book on woman. The subject is irritating, especially to women; and it is not new. Enough ink has been spilled in quarrelling over feminism, and perhaps we should say no more about it. It is still talked about, however, for the voluminous nonsense uttered during the last century seems to have done little to illuminate the problem. After all, is there a problem? And if so, what is it? Are there women, really?

If I had claimed that these words came from a book written last year, who would have doubted it based purely on the content? Are we not still saying women’s issues are irritating? Do not many women (let alone men) still protest “Let’s not talk about it anymore”? Does not each of us have our favorite idiocy to point to in writings on the subject?

Yet the topic could be said to be too central to die (not, one hopes, the same as “too big to fail”). In the United States women play an ever-increasing part in public service. They fill the ranks of bureaucracy at every level of government, though numbers at the top are still disproportionately small. They have played a leading role in the development of the nonprofit sector from its earliest days in the mid-nineteenth century. Classes in

virtually every university that offers them throng with female students, many of them mid-career practitioners. But the question of what difference, if any, women make to practice and scholarship in the field has been shamefully neglected. It is hard to think that a subject matter this significant has been ignored this much.

Anyone who has raised the issue in the classroom over the last two or three decades knows full well it is hardly ever met with indifference. Those who sigh (or groan), “Let’s not talk about it anymore,” are matched by an equal or greater number who exclaim, “Finally!” In part, the disagreement comes over that question of what difference the difference makes. Everyone is pretty sure she or he knows the answer, but argument—sometimes vociferous argument—continues. Can the field go on ignoring such an interesting and provocative question? The publication of this book suggests it cannot.

Women in Public Administration: Theory and Practice will be a landmark resource, in the classroom, in the government agency, in the nonprofit organization, and on the bookshelves of thinking (and acting) people who care about public service. I like to think of it as an opening salvo rather than a definitive statement. It will teach, it will inspire, it will provoke. For all these reasons it is cause for celebration.

Camilla Stivers
Spruce Head Island, Maine
April 2010

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PREFACE

Looking back to *Gender Images in Public Administration: Legitimacy and the Administrative State*, Camilla Stivers' seminal work provided context for a new dialogue in public administration that would legitimize gender dimensions in Western political philosophy and public administration (Stivers, 1992). In addition, Mary E. Guy emphasized that the strengths attributed to women in the workplace were far too valuable to ignore as the nation grappled with a changing workforce and newly defined boundaries. Dr. Guy reminds us that "If ever there were a need for building bridges, it is now. If ever there were a need to build on the skills that women have always been characterized as bringing to management, it is now" (Guy, 1993).

The overriding question raised by the contributors to this volume is to what extent since the writings of Stivers, Guy, and other female voices of the past, has the administrative state recognized that public administration's legitimacy problem, enveloped under the purview of the political versus administrative dichotomy, is further defined, recognized, and necessitated by a gender dimension? In specific, the paucity of research exploring how gender informs theory and practice in public administration continues to undermine the equitable representation of women in our society and precludes the integration of gender analysis into public and nonprofit sector practice and policies.

The intent of this edited volume is to inform the theory and practice of public administration through a gendered perspective. The book is designed primarily as either a stand-alone or supplemental text targeting several different audiences. Users include academics, practitioners in public service, and students in graduate public administration and public policy courses. It is also appropriate for students of public service as well as a supplement for practitioners in the field. In addition, this book is a must-have addition to Introduction to Public Administration, Ethics, Women in Politics, Gender Studies, or Diversity classes.

There are many people to thank for a text of this magnitude. We extend thanks to the many anonymous peer reviewers whose comments and suggested revisions contributed to the scope and depth of each of the 21 chapters. A special thanks to Catie Heverling and the production staff at Jones & Bartlett Learning; to Camilla Stivers for her inspirations and generosity; and to the contributors of this book, we thank you for your diligence and

expertise in preparing such invigorating and thought-provoking chapters. Each one of you has made *Women in Public Administration: Theory and Practice* possible.

Helisse Levine
Maria J. D'Agostino

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- Stivers, C. (1992). *Gender images in public administration: Legitimacy and the administrative state* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

INTRODUCTION

Organizing a book on the theory and practice of public administration from a gendered perspective presents several challenges. First, the issues are eclectic. The topics range from male-dominated labor markets, academic and financial institutions, to management, ethics, law, and gendered budgeting. Second, the population of contributors to this book is rich and vast. Female public administrators are diverse in background, research agenda, and public service, connected by the common ideology that the practice and education of public administration necessarily encompass a gendered analysis. Third, public administration is dynamic. As our organizations, communities, states, and domestic and global economies change, so too do the issues confronting our female public administrators. The challenges are welcome as they further define a growing, diverse, and always dynamic public administration.

We approach the female endeavor in public administration from a wide-reaching panorama demonstrated through the collection of narratives, theoretical essays, and empirical research from female scholars, practitioners, and educators in the field. The organization of the book centers around five parts. Part I explores the theoretical foundations of gender in public administration from the lenses to feminism. In Chapter 1, “Feminist Theories and Their Application to Public Administration,” Janet Hutchinson introduces theories of feminism that appear to be most applicable to public administration’s “publics.” Dr. Hutchinson suggests that although feminist epistemologies are varied and complex, without a significant paradigm shift in Western values and culture, only a few theoretical approaches show promise for changing the situated space of women, people of color, and sexual minorities in today’s public agency environment. The theories discussed in Chapter 1 include the ubiquitous liberal feminism and the more recent intersectionality and postmodernism with mention of several others. There is also discussion about new theory development among young women and men activists to view the likely direction of future feminisms. Patricia Shields uses the lenses of feminism in theorizing about public administration and democracy in Chapter 2: “Jane Addams’ Theory of Democracy and Social Ethics: Incorporating a Feminist Perspective.” Dr. Shields describes the social ethics and democratic theory of Jane Addams, a nineteenth century settlement woman and activist. Addams’ theory of democracy, as portrayed by Dr. Shields, has direct application to contemporary public administration theory and practice. Next, Helise

Levine presents a feminist model that challenges the universal view of women's equality with the idea that specifics of women's differences should be exalted rather than compromised in the equalization process. In Chapter 3, "A Theory of Difference," Dr. Levine maintains that in a like manner to the settlement women, once silenced by influential male-dominated policies and politics, a theory that embraces cultural diversities with differing experiences, values, and ideologies further defines women's roles and practices in public administration.

Throughout history governmental and agency policies have been developed, implemented, and continually revised to address the gender gap and foster equality in the public sector workplace. Part II explores family-friendly policies in a number of public sector settings. Chapters in this section center on the trials and challenges faced by women in balancing work and family and fostering equality in the public sector workplace. Chapter 4, "Case Study: Female-Friendly Policies in the Academe" by Heather Wyatt-Nichol, explores the linkages between gendered public administration and structural inequalities in academia. Dr. Wyatt-Nichol describes some of the best practice approaches to implementing family-friendly policies as experienced at various colleges and universities throughout the United States recognized for progressive initiatives. Chapter 5, by Meghna Sabharwal, "Research Productivity and Career Trajectories of Women in Public Administration," is a cautionary account of the lack of studies examining issues of productivity and leadership in academia from a gendered perspective. Dr. Sabharwal suggests that an understanding of these issues is not only important to the growth of the discipline but also is of significance to graduate students who wish to pursue academic careers. This study of career trajectories and productivity by gender provides the students of public administration a brief look into the lives of faculty members in the discipline. Chapter 6 continues with Lotte Bøgh Andersen's empirical analysis of female-friendly policies and practices from Denmark. Dr. Andersen questions whether gender diversity at Danish research institutions affects organizational performance to form the basis for discussing the gender dimension in public administration more broadly. The claim is that public administration needs both women and men and that it is important to focus on performance measures that show the contribution of women in terms of relational practice. Chapter 7, offered by Sharon Mastracci in "(Un)intended Consequences of Family-Friendly Workplace Policies," explores several agencies across the country that have gone beyond government-mandated policies and developed "in-house" policies to address inequalities in the workplace. This chapter presents an overview of these policies, discusses their purpose, and illuminates the processes necessary for execution.

The chapters in Part III, "Diversity, Ethics, and Law," concentrate on the laws and policies, both formal and informal, created to address the structural inequalities and foster gender equality in public organizations. Contributors examine the strengths and weaknesses of these laws and prescribe suggestions for improvement. Shelly Pepper, in Chapter 8, "Women and the Law: Statutory and Constitutional Legal Frameworks for Gender Equality," details the legislative initiatives intended to ease disparities between men and

women in society. Dr. Pfeffer discusses the statutory legal framework for women's rights beginning with the Equal Pay Act of 1963, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and its amendments, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, and the Family Medical Leave Act. Chapter 9, "Minority Women and Public Administration" by Lia Abney, looks at the challenges and barriers minority women face in the area of hiring practices, ethical dilemmas, education, and policies. This chapter illuminates the value that women of color bring to public administration and how that value positively impacts all people regardless of race, sex, religion, or income level. In Chapter 10, "Women in Public Administration: Sustainable Development and Social Justice," Deniz Zeynep Leuenberger explores the role of women in addressing sustainable development in public administration and discusses the theoretical foundations of gender and equity in sustainability decision making. Dr. Leuenberger reminds us that the expanding role of women in development, as participants in decision making, as leaders of systemic change, and as caretakers of social welfare, is an opportunity for public administration to improve social and environmental justice. Chapter 11, "Women in Budgeting and Financial Management" by Marilyn Marks Rubin and John R. Bartle, considers the evolving role of women in government and financial management from two perspectives: the role of women in promoting the concept and use of gender budgets. This chapter highlights how the increased involvement of women in financial budgeting and management has served to address the issue of gender inequality. As an illustrative example, Dr. Rubin and Dr. Bartle maintain that gender responsive budgeting, which was galvanized after 1995 Beijing Conference on Women, would not have happened if the field were as male dominated as it was in earlier years.

Next, the book turns to the issues and obstacles facing the female administrator in the workplace. Chapters in Part IV, "Public Administration in Practice: Issues and Obstacles," highlight the issues, barriers, and triumphs specific to female administrators as practitioners and managers in the public sector organizations. Part IV is broken into two sections, Part IV-A, "The Female Practitioner" and Part IV-B, "The Female Manager." In Chapter 12, "Municipal Clerks: A Female Perspective of Local Government," Victoria Gordon builds on Ellickson and Logsdon's model of job satisfaction to examine indicators of job satisfaction indicators among female clerks in local governments across the United States. Patrice M. Maraeschal, in Chapter 13, "Women in Public Sector Unions: Opportunities and Obstacles on the Path to Activism and Leadership," applies Camilla Stivers' progressive era settlement women framework to examine the stages of women's involvement in trade unions. Dr. Maraeschal examines the opportunities created for women by shifting ground and crises in the labor movement, obstacles women face in public sector unions, and how three interviewees overcame these obstacles. Chapter 14, "Women in the U.S. Military," written by Sandra J. Reinke and Randall D. Miller, addresses the military, a public institution defined by an explicitly aggressive purpose (combat) using a very hierarchical approach. As the most hierarchical of all public organizations, with a decidedly masculine culture, the military challenges feminist theory and public administration to

face difficult questions. In Chapter 15, “The Pipeline and Women Practitioners,” Judy-Lynne Peters discusses the importance of a strong pipeline to ready the next generation of female public administrators. In addition to mentoring and building relationships across the traditional boundaries of race, gender, age, religion, and sexual preference, Dr. Peters identifies developing a leadership succession as a critical practice to closing the gender gap.

Part IV continues with the issues and obstacles specific to the female manager. In Chapter 16, “Beating the Odds: Female Faculty, Students, and Administrators in Schools of Public Affairs,” Cleopatra Charles and Rachelle Brunn report that despite substantial gains in the number of women in the field of public administration/affairs, women continue to be under-represented in the academy. Dr. Charles and Dr. Brunn analyze National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration data and interview methodology to show that women’s gains in the graduate student population are gradually diminished as they advance to first jobs, tenure, and eventually to senior positions. Kathryn Kloby, in Chapter 17, “In Their Own Words: Profiling Women Strategic Managers in Award-Winning Programs,” interviews female strategic managers in acclaimed state-level programs designed to measure what matters to citizens, improve government operations and its outcomes, and communicate more directly with the public. The interviews reveal how the executive directors of these programs interact with a diverse set of stakeholders, coordinate efforts across state agencies, and increase the relevance of government actions and the strategies to measure and report them to the public. Furthermore, they discuss the influence of their gender on how they are perceived, how they manage, and how they negotiate their personal and professional worlds. In a similar fashion, A. Carol Rusaw in Chapter 18, “Managing Gendered Politics in Careers: A Case of Women Managers in the Federal Government,” discusses how women address organizational politics in relation to career progression obstacles. Dr. Rusaw’s interviews with women managers in federal government reveal how women create knowledge for naming and overcoming negative political forces to career progression. Several important steps to facilitate women managers’ career advancement opportunities are suggested. Using a feminist lens, Renee Nank in Chapter 19, “Women and the Nonprofit Sector,” examines how nonprofits can be central to creating greater equality between men and women. Dr. Nank discusses how the nature of nonprofit organization work and the impending leadership gap provide the opportunity for women to have greater influence in the political sphere through voting, advocacy, holding political office, and other public activities.

Part V, “The Future of Women in Public Administration,” continues with “In Search of a Middle Ground: Preachy, Screechy, and Angry Versus Soft, Sweet, and Compliant,” in which Mary E. Guy examines how images in the public mind make it difficult for women to assume autonomous power. Using examples of former First Lady Hillary Clinton and current First Lady Michelle Obama, Dr. Guy gives us a glimpse of the accomplishments and obstacles that remain.

Chapter 21 concludes the book with closing remarks from the editors.