

Professionalism and Public Service: Essays in Honour of Kenneth Kernaghan

edited by David Siegel and Ken Rasmussen. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008, 352 pp.

This *Festschrift* honours the life work of Ken Kernaghan, a giant among Canadian (and international) scholars in public administration. Despite some unevenness, the 13 essays in this volume constitute a worthy tribute, reflecting both the diversity and thoughtfulness that have marked Professor Kernaghan's contributions throughout his active career of more than 40 years.

The variety of topics on which Ken Kernaghan has written is remarkable, ranging across the fields of governance, accountability, the public service, privatization, service delivery, information technology, and perhaps most crucially, values and ethics. Distinguished colleagues offer their reflections on these topics, paying tribute to Ken's often pioneering work and developing their own assessments of the state of debate.

Part I on "The Evolution of Traditional Institutions" is particularly strong. Peter Aucoin, for example, writes about finding a balance between the empowerment of public servants which is essential to improved management, and the pressures to concentrate control in a perhaps too-politicized centre. Paul Thomas traces recent twists and turns in our search for the holy grail of accountability, arguing for a "back-to-basics approach" and warning against the danger of "multiple accountabilities disorder." David Good takes an intriguing look at the real world of harmonizing the political neutrality of public servants with ministerial responsibility. Especially interesting in Good's piece is a fictional dialogue between a minister and a deputy minister that dramatizes how easily rhetoric risks succumbing to hypocrisy.

Ironically, in view of Ken Kernaghan's leading role in developing thinking on public service val-

ues and ethics, Part II on "The Public Service" is weaker. Ian Gow seeks to distill and rank values into a coherent and practical order. His central argument that "the basic values of the public service are 'constitutional stewardship' or 'regime values' tempered with justice" is sound. However, several of his judgments along the way seem doubtful; for example, the idea that the Tait Committee's categories of *ethical* and *people* values ought to be merged is misguided. Evert Lindquist presents an interesting commentary on the destabilizing impact of sustained change on the public service and the need for superior leadership to transform turmoil into positive change. However, the second half of his piece explores the murky area of "commitment, meaning and spirituality in public administration," which appears only loosely connected to the first half. Jacques Bourgault and Esther Parent examine the contribution of pride and recognition programs to building professionalism in the public service. The analytical aspects of the piece present well the idea that morale is more important than qualifications; however, the results of their survey of pride and recognition programs between 2000 and 2005 are meagre.

Part III on "Service Delivery" presents several informative overviews. Sandford Borins and David Brown look at several federal and Ontario examples of e-consultation, illustrating that results so far have been modest. Jennifer Berardi draws out the lesson that if partnerships are the way of the future, the Niagara Casinos partnership with the Ontario Lotteries Corporation is a cautionary example of secrecy, uncertainty, and political posturing. Brian Marson summarizes Canada's remarkable world leadership in citizen-centred service, involving admirable intergovernmental collaboration, clarity on the "drivers" of service satisfaction in the public sector, and most importantly, tangible improvements in such satisfaction.

Finally, Part IV on "Spreading the Word" looks at what might be called the infrastructure of the public administration field, describing the successful

evolution of the Institute of Public Administration of Canada from a creaky membership association to a sustainable non-governmental organization in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the apparently unbridgeable gulf between theory and practice in public administration journals, and the evolution of the case study method in the field in Canada. In each of these areas, Ken Kernaghan was far-sighted and central to moving ahead constructively.

As a recently retired associate deputy minister in the federal public service, this reviewer was struck by the lack of dialogue or even much interaction between senior practitioners (at least at the federal level) and the academic profession of public administration in Canada. The simple truth is that offi-

cials do not follow debates that rage in the academy. And this collection in several places evidences a lack of familiarity with the everyday reality of life in the public service. Which is all too bad. Because practitioners desperately need perspective, and professors would benefit from closer exposure to practitioners' dilemmas. Several of the articles in the *Festschrift* offer a useful invitation to connect. Nothing would be a more fitting tribute to Ken Kernaghan's magisterial life-work than progress on blending theory and practice in Canadian public administration.

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Internationalization and Canadian Agriculture: Policy and Governing Paradigms

by Grace Skogstad. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008, 373 pp.

Author Grace Skogstad, a political scientist at the University of Toronto, is one of the few non-agricultural economists who consistently studies and writes about agricultural policy in Canada. Her work is always refreshing because she can stand back and take a broad view of policy development in the sector. Economists do not tend to write books and as a result information on agricultural policies in Canada is scattered throughout a large number of sources. While I do not think it was Professor Skogstad's intention, she has in the process of putting forth her thesis collected together in one convenient (and readable) place the history of agricultural policy in Canada since the Second World War. There has long been a need for such a book, and I will suggest that every one of my new graduate students read it. It provides a great way to "get up to speed" on how Canada ended up with its peculiar mix of agricultural policies, who the major stakeholders are, and how the policy-making process works.

As the title suggests, Professor Skogstad is interested in the effect that internationalization—latterly globalization—has had on agricultural policy-making in Canada. Her approach is to examine five major policy concerns in the agri-food sector: (a) low and fluctuating farm incomes, (b) the international marketing of grain—the Canadian Wheat Board, (c) supply management in dairy and poultry, (d) food safety, and (e) the regulation of genetically modified crops. Broadly speaking her thesis is that once established, policies tend to be "sticky"—they remain in place until there is a major paradigm shift. She examines the five policy areas, which have had very different outcomes, to see if changes in the international sphere have had sufficient influence to cause a paradigm shift.

She suggests that there are three broad paradigms: (a) the state assistance paradigm based on farming

being an exceptional sector worthy of subsidies or other forms of income support; (b) the market liberal or competitiveness paradigm; and (c) a multifunctional paradigm whereby farms provide, in addition to agricultural output, a number of rural and environmental amenities that they are not compensated for due to market failures—and in which government intervention is justified on the basis of correcting the market failures.

The market liberal paradigm is set up as the straw man, and I am not convinced it is an entirely credible paradigm in the case of Canadian agriculture, although it may have taken hold in a few places such as New Zealand. Leaving aside multifunctionality for a moment, the issue in Canada, the United States, the European Union, and Japan is the degree of distortion that is acceptable. Policy interventions such as income support are not static, but dynamic. The types of policies that have been put in place in developed countries cannot accomplish their stated goals without ever-increasing budgetary expenditures (or rising relative consumer prices) and other externalities such as conflicts with trading partners. For example, the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy, which was initially based on raising prices for farmers through import restrictions, set in motion a dynamic process that increased output substantially, leading to ever-expanding surpluses that required costly export subsidies. Large quantities of European subsidized exports led to direct conflict with US exporting interests. At some point these spiralling costs (both economic and political) had to be addressed. The subsequent scaling back of the degree of support is not evidence of an acceptance of the market liberal paradigm but represents only a reduction in support that entails to some extent a return to market mechanisms. One of the problems is that economists tend to use the competitive market solution as the benchmark against which to measure policy distortions, but this should not be taken as evidence of support for a policy paradigm based on market liberalism. Thus there has been a paradigm shift away from unconditional state assistance. This took place in Canada, as noted by

Professor Skogstad, largely for domestic budgetary reasons—the Canadian government was not generally constrained by the limits to subsidies it had agreed to during the Uruguay Round. In supply-managed products, where support is not provided by budgetary expenditures, there has been little retreat from the state assistance paradigm.

Professor Skogstad's examination of the evolution of food safety policy and the regulation of genetically modified products is of particular interest. I suspect hers is the first comprehensive look at these more recent policy issues. Policy formulation in these two areas is complicated by the need to include multiple actors such as all of those involved in the supply chain as well as civil society groups and consumers. This is a very different policy process than that which consisted largely of farm groups and the government. The insights provided by Professor Skogstad into this process are particularly valuable. One omission I would have liked to have seen dealt with is how Canada ended up agree-

ing to two extremely divergent policy regimes for regulating international trade in genetically modified products: the liberal World Trade Organization (WTO) and the extremely restrictive Biosafety Protocol. Canada has not, as yet, ratified the latter policy, but how it could have been accepted in the first place given our WTO commitments is a policy process I have never understood. This is, however, only a small oversight in what is an excellent discussion of food safety and genetically modified products.

In short, Professor Skogstad has produced an insightful and comprehensive look at Canadian agricultural policy-making during a period of increasing globalization. I think it should be read by anyone interested in agricultural policy-making in Canada as well as by those who have a broader interest in Canadian public policy.

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Creating a Failed State – The US and Canada in Afghanistan

by John W. Warnock. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2008, 209 pp.

This volume provides a comprehensive and popular discussion of international developments leading up to and including Canada's current involvement in Afghanistan. John Warnock argues that major power interests and elite political interests in Canada have produced policies that are creating a failed state in Afghanistan. He concludes that Canada should focus on providing health care, housing, food, and agricultural development rather than the heavy emphasis on military operations.

The text itself consists of nine chapters. Chapter 1 provides a broad overview of the deleterious consequences of US counter-insurgency in Afghanistan. Chapter 2 explores the concept of a failed state and critiques its polemics. Chapter 3 gives a balanced historical summary of Afghanistan. Chapter 4 examines US strategic interests in Central Asia. Chapter 5 is an historical survey of the US reaction to al Qaeda's terrorist attacks. Chapter 6 presents a history of the creation of the current regime in Afghanistan. Chapter 7 discusses women's rights in Afghanistan. Chapter 8 discusses Canada's role in Afghanistan up until early 2008. Chapter 9 examines different policy options and attempts to ascertain the state of public opinion and the emerging unpopularity of the direction of Canada's Afghan policy.

The discussion of the politics of women's rights (Chapter 7) is the strongest in the book. It provides an insightful anthropological, historical, cultural, and political survey of a hot button issue in both Canada and Afghanistan. Women's rights are in many ways key to the policy justification pursued by the Canadian government, as well as one of the principal causes of local resistance to foreign occupation in Afghanistan. Warnock convincingly outlines the complexity and difficulty of naively and precipitously imposing social reforms. However, throughout the book he recalls periods in Afghani-

stan where wide-ranging reforms were at least begun, and in some cases (1964) successfully implemented, by indigenous elites.

Chapters 2 and 3 are also well argued. Exploding the failed state concept and exposing the US's neo-liberal development project in Afghanistan, Warnock briefly shows how state-led industrial development was successful in the past. His historical survey is also parsimonious and provides an excellent context to show how contemporary Western policy is in part a recurrence of previous colonial enterprises.

Creating a Failed State is intended for a non-academic audience. Consequently there are many controversial claims that have no citation and need more than the bibliographic discussion provided at the end of the text. Many of the claims made in Chapter 3 (on 9/11) come from the online "9/11 Truth Campaign," which is academically suspect, in my opinion. For example, it is implied that Timothy McVeigh's associate was not Terry Nichols but a "Middle Easterner," and that Terry Nichols had received training from the al Qaeda-associated Abu Sayyaf movement in the Philippines. There are also the usual insinuations that 9/11 was preceded by stock manipulations, suggesting widespread insider knowledge of an imminent al Qaeda attack on the World Trade Center.

Warnock proposes that Canada return to its role of peacemaker and disengage militarily. This is the commonsense approach most of our NATO allies have taken. However, he does not examine the political repercussions this would have with the United States. Warnock assumes that the Afghans prefer a negotiated solution to end the current insurgency, to exclude warlords from government, and to achieve state-directed industrialization, and that they are capable of establishing their own system of governance. In these assumptions I believe he is correct. He exaggerates the extent of failure as much as the Canadian establishment has exaggerated its success. The insurgency in Afghanistan is at a persistently

low level of intensity. Consequently, he criticizes the “no choice” strategy of remaining involved in a war without end. If citizens continue to volunteer to serve in Afghanistan and there is no major political upheaval against this policy, especially in Quebec, then this is an eminently sustainable policy, however pointless. Warnock attributes this to manipulation of public opinion by the Canadian

political, military, business, and media elite, when a much simpler explanation is that most Canadians are in general agreement that Afghanistan should not be left on its own, and a small minority of unformed Canadians, both French and English, seek to serve abroad.

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