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Revisiting the Case for Professionalizing Public Administration

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Revisiting the Case for Professionalizing Public Administration

Abstract

It is time to revisit our ongoing discussion about the professionalization of public administration. This topic has emerged and reemerged for over 100 years, and we may be at a point where fundamental issues can be resolved. This is important, because professionalization should be the cornerstone of the field, as it provides a vital link between academics and practice. Misperceptions about the history of the field and the professionalization process have diverted public administration from its original course to some extent, but it is now possible to fully consider our past and move ahead (carefully).

Professionalization in one context or another may be the most controversial issue ever discussed in the academic public administration literature. Leaders in the field have debated all aspects of professionalization at different levels of intensity for over 100 years and the result has been a stalemate. Positive aspects of professionalization are widely acknowledged and broadly accepted, but the same is true of the narrative against it. As a result--in the present day--professionalization has become a fringe topic, lurking just out of view in the shade of other more popular matters.

The inability to accept and effectively nurture professionalization limits the prospects for dynamically linking an ever-richer academic knowledge base with practice. This state of affairs is even more unsettling because many oft-repeated arguments against professionalization are either outdated or rooted in misunderstandings. Professionalization brought public administration into existence and gave it purpose, and the lingering critiques diminish the rich history of the field, cloud the objectives, and dim future prospects.

At its inception, public administration was a field of study and practice focused on principles, values, and commitments expressed in large measure through professionalization. Given this, the accumulated concerns, complaints, and ambiguities regarding the value of professionalization--as both a process and a goal--deserve careful examination. This article will undertake this task and strategies for regaining momentum are also considered. The status quo is not desirable, and professionalization is far from being a lost cause.

Professionalization Derailed

Public administration began as a reform movement tightly linked to professionalization by proximity in both time and philosophy. Political abuse and scandals provided an initial push, and additional momentum flowed from the optimism and faith in progress that energized the early 1900s.

The starting point was a nearly across-the-board lack of executive authority in government. One telling example: Leonard White (1958) observed that United States Presidents up to Roosevelt (1901-1909) displayed “no responsibility for systematic inquiry into the methods of its public business” (367). At least initially, the most striking reforms were in the cities (Gulick, 1990). The first national conference for good city government took place in 1894, as did the founding of The National Municipal League, and the New York Bureau of Municipal Research followed in 1906. Other bureaus followed in other cities, and these collective efforts began to foster the development of a knowledge base and professional training. The New York Bureau of Municipal Research founded The Training School for Public Service in 1911, and universities soon followed with their own courses, seminars, and degrees. As McCarthy (1913)

stated in an early report on practical training for the public service, “There is no reason why the whole of the public service should not have the possibility of a career for trained men. Where are the trained men?” (305). From the beginning—public administration success was viewed as a cooperative affair requiring both administrative reform and the development of professional education (Stone & Stone, 1975).

Doubts, Concerns, and Pressing Issues

This momentum did not last, however, and the efforts to professionalize the field became a swirl of uncertainties. It is probably impossible to understand fully the tenor of past times when critiques began to unfold, but multiple factors were likely involved, including persistent doubts about public administration as a field of knowledge, disappointing comparisons with other professions, and a lack of acceptance by broader segments of society. This summary examines some issues that arose in the scholarly literature.

🚩 *Public administration lacks a body of academic knowledge.* This topic brought out the heavy hitters. Robert Hutchins (1953) wrote in the first issue of *Public Administration Review* that “it is impossible for a college to prepare men directly and specifically for public life” (227). He claimed accomplishing this goal would require education focused on practice, as was the case with medicine. Hutchins was president of the University of Chicago when his article appeared, and he was previously Dean of the Yale Law School. While he focused on public administration as an academic field, other luminaries focused directly on the value of the public administration knowledge base (Dahl, 1947; Simon, 1946). Wave after wave of these “formative” assessments have appeared in the literature of the field, making stark

contrasts to the high-level analysis often found in political science and economics.

The most current iteration of this long running debate was begun by Howard McCurdy and Robert Cleary (1984), who revisited the work of Hutchins, Dahl, Simon, and others...concluding that “scholars in public administration have had a difficult time coming to grips with the nature of research and its role in the field” (49). To paraphrase Charles Liebman (1963), professional aspirations require a body of knowledge...we can only teach what we know.

✚ *Public Administration does not meet professional standards.* Many contemporary critiques of professional ambitions for public administration focus on an “ideal” type established in the field of sociology (Ammons & King, 1984; Bowman, 1982-83; Pugh, 1989; Schott, 1976). The Progressive era brought new energy to the field of public administration (Kettl, 2002), but the pace of development did not match the dominant professions of the day. The knowledge base was again a critical issue—the knowledge public administration had to offer practitioners and the ability to both generate and control new knowledge. As Larson (1978) explained, independent control over specialized knowledge was essential to the development of the professions. Schott (1976) assessed the public administration knowledge base and concluded, “... its stock of systematic, coherent

The Professions
(Initially Sociology Definition)

- A sense of collegial responsibility;
- The existence of a professional organization able to insure the competence of practitioners and enforce ethical standards;
- Independent control over the development of new knowledge and the setting of work standards.
- Autonomy in exercising competencies; and
- Specialized knowledge acquired as the result of prolonged training.
- A service ideal.

knowledge is slim indeed” (254). There was the lack of empirical foundations that related back to writers such as Dahl and Simon and the lack of *exclusiveness*. Related issues were a lack of autonomy and a lack of public support. As Rohr (1999) noted-- at best public administration offers expertise in governing, which is a job generally reserved for amateurs in the United States.

✚ *Professionalization of public administration is a threat to democracy.* It can be assumed that most public professionals seek to do good work, producing outcomes that benefit others and impact society in positive ways, but they are certainly motivated in some respects by personal ambition--like protecting their status, income, and image (Larson, 1978). They “...seek to secure for themselves a certain degree of insulation and relative independence from direct democratic control...” (Pugh, 1989, 5).

By resourcing worthy efforts, professionalization further empowers such individuals who oftentimes have ready access to the levers of power. Responding to claims of bureaucratic independence, Finer (1941) famously said, “servants of the public are not to decide their own course; they are to be responsible to the elected representatives of the public, and these are to determine the course of action of the public servants to the most minute degree that is technically feasible” (336).

Professionalization can also have unintended impacts. Rosenbloom (1982) noted how easily well intentioned public managers can run afoul of the constitution, for example, and Cooper and Gulick (1984) contended “the drive for neutrality, order, efficiency, control, standardization, and quantification” reinforced the idea of

a “passive citizen” or consumer of government services (147). Of course, the more recent advocacy for more entrepreneurial public managers only amplified existing concerns (Terry, 1998).

✚ *Professionalization of public administration presents practical challenges.* Public administrators work in a range of distinctly different contexts. Schoolteachers, police officers, spies, medical doctors, computer experts, city managers, astronauts, and others carry the mission of government forward, but as Schott (1976) noted, “the employment of the generalist administrator in the public service is almost never contingent on the applicant’s possessing a degree in public administration or public affairs” (255). Public affairs education made considerable progress since Schott reached this conclusion, but controlling entry into public service positions is beyond imagining. Progress also has been slow in another problem area noted by Schott—the ongoing disagreements about the appropriate curriculum for professional training. Schott noted the lack of accreditation standards, which is no longer the case, but significant variations remain an issue.

Overall, this short summary illustrates that many common arguments against professional status for public administration draw extensively from unflattering comparisons with the sociological model. As Bowman (1982-83) put it, “...public administration generally is not a profession, and...attempts to make it conform to traditional notions of professionalism are dysfunctional...” (50). Occurring at roughly the same time as an indictment of professional motives published by Larson in the late 1970s, the negative assessments offered by prominent public administration authors such as Bowman, Schott, and Pugh left proponents of

professionalization with considerable explaining to do. Also in the mix was Dwight Waldo (1975), rightly referred to as a luminary by Pugh, who took a negative position on the professionalization issue, stating...“I don’t even believe it should, *if it could*” (223).

Fighting the Downward Slide

Disagreements over professionalization are troublesome in their own right, but they actually help form an interconnected web of “thorny” issues, including public administration and democracy (Kirlin, 1996), the weighting of theory and practice (Denhardt, 2001), and the nature of the politics-administration dichotomy (Svara, 1998). In sum, these many diverging views on core issues make a negative statement about the value and purpose of the public administration field. Ongoing differences of opinion are the norm in academic circles, but public administration does seem more torn over core fundamental existential issues than others.

Many writers in the field have advocated strategies to move public administration beyond the liabilities of ongoing disagreements and better empower practitioners. Norton Long (1954) called for an administration based on “applied science” and with a base of values and capacities that could “enforce the presentation at the highest level of all the relevant facts—and their most significant possible interpretations” (30). Of course, new public management has generated an intense focus on government operations over the past two decades (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992), with an emphasis on market-oriented reforms, entrepreneurial leadership, and business values; “new public service” is a more civic minded variation, stressing service, collaboration, and coalition building (Denhardt, 2000). Also seeking to break ranks with new public management, Charles Goodsell (2006) presented a thoughtful new vision for a field of

public administration not the captive of executive authority, a business mentality, or private interests—focused on building public trust. He also assessed the cost of failure, “the field’s sense of self-worth and image of significance will continue to wane as the new century unfolds” (634).

There have also been formative efforts to restore commitment to professionalization. York Wilbern (1954) encouraged training of generalist public administrators who could bring a balanced perspective to the public service. Kearney and Sinha (1988) built on the education theme—contending education could reconcile professionalization with the need for bureaucratic responsiveness, while Green, Keller, and Wamsley (1993) developed these ideas further, offering additional detail on professional roles and the need for normative competencies. There has also been empirical research over the past few decades demonstrating professionalization benefits (Dunn & Jerome S. Legge, 2001; Kellar, 1995; Streib, 1992).

Efforts to bolster public administration, offered at regular intervals since the days of Woodrow Wilson, have certainly enriched our understanding of the field and generated some positive change, but the circular pattern is clear. Each new critique generates others, and the same is true of every reform; in the end, the process generates more critiques and reforms than benefits and a reasonable conclusion is that new assessments and prescriptions can continue for many more decades. The position presented here is that professionalization is the key to progress; it is the *mechanism* of change. Others have tried to make this case in different ways in the past, but this issue deserves a revisit. Conditions have changed, and the prospects for meaningful progress are better than ever.

Revisiting the Case against Professionalization

In their zeal to engage a popular idea, past authors have overstated the case against professional status (and professionalization as a process), and these assessments never received the scrutiny they deserved. Of course, some objections are simply dated. This section will revisit past claims and introduce some important new research, trends, and developments. While writers in the field of public administration have hardly been of one mind on the issue of professionalization, we have been collectively chasing our tail, and these circular arguments have obscured areas of common agreement. Some relevant examples follow—accepting the reality of a politics administration dichotomy that never existed; giving credence to a mythical standard for professional status; distorting the earnest commitment of early leaders to professionalization; and substituting the goal of professional status for the process of professionalization.

Accepting the Politics-Administration Dichotomy

Provocative recent articles have laid bare a mistaken belief that early public administration leaders earnestly believed politics and administration were distinctly different activities (Lynn, 2001; J. H. Svara, 1998). The accepted fact is that the view well articulated by Sayre (1958) that public administration is “...a separate world, with its own separate values, rules, and methods...” (102) has been soundly rejected. In an odd twist, a new generation of writers and advocates used these dim characterizations of an “old” public administration that never existed to strengthen the case for a “new” public administration, ultimately producing Milward & Provan (2000) called the “hollow” state.

In the main, new public administration was an indictment against a largely fictional “old” public administration, and the result was a decidedly more private-sector oriented approach. While authors such as Norma Riccucci (2001) detailed the public administration opposition to new public management (NPM), including Frederickson’s (1996) characterization of NPM as “bureaucrat bashing,” the realities of what happened continue to sink in.

The shadow of the dichotomy likely restrained efforts to develop public administration in ways that would have reduced susceptibility to comprehensive reform efforts, and a more energetic approach to professionalization was a likely component of such a scenario. Professionalization does challenge adherents to a strict politics-administration dichotomy. Herman Finer’s vision of political control requires a strict dichotomy by definition, the view presented by Friedrich argues for professionalization—providing what Gaus (1936) called the “inner check.”

The Friedrich-Finer debate appears repeatedly in the literature of public administration (Kirlin, 1996; Rosenbloom, 1984; Stivers, 1994; Waldo, 1952), suggesting an ongoing conflict between these two competing perspectives. When seeking to work through the challenges presented by a post-dichotomy public administration, Svava (2001) echoed the arguments of Friedman when he called for *complementarity* between political control and allowing “...administrators to maintain their independence to adhere to professional values and standards...” (179).

Professionalization is certainly not the easy path. Most likely, the easy alternative was to accept the dichotomy concept. The route outlined by writers such as Svava and Lynn is that progress requires *confronting* the dilemma of “reconciling capacity with control. “ This

challenge has certainly been revisited in recent years, and the field of public administration is much richer as a result, but the catalyst came from the outside in the form of the new public administration challenge issued by Osborne and Gaebler (1992).

Failing a Mythical Ideal

In recent years, strict adherence to the sociology model locked the professionalization gate for public administration. This only makes sense if the definition is widely accepted as valid and unalterable, and this is hardly the case; the absence of a clear definition of professionalization is a distinguishing feature of this literature. At the roots, we find authors such as Carr-Saunders and Wilson (1933) who examined a range of professions and found the distinguishing characteristics to be “application of an intellectual technique...acquired as a result of specialized training” (401), and they confidently presented the British Civil Service as a profession.

A later analysis of the then growing literature on professionalization concluded that there was “...no general agreement...” or “authoritative statement” on the definition of a profession (Cogan, 1955, 105). Researchers also question the methodology used to define professions. Habenstein (1963) described these efforts as “what should be avoided if sociological theory is to progress” (292). Of course, public administration writers have noticed these definitional problems. Burke (1988) stated, “there is no agreement about what constitutes a profession” (177). Likewise, Bowman (1982-83) acknowledged that “...no occupation is fully professionalized,” and that professionalism “...is not much more than a matter of degree, debate, and semantics” (49).

In the end, discarding the idea of a public administration profession is much like someone dropping piano lessons because they will never be a concert pianist. Professionalization is about commitment and the embrace of an ideal: goals and outcomes can be flexible, and excellence is somewhat dependent on the context. Medical doctors are certainly not renouncing professional status now that many (or most) work under some sort of managed care environment. Researchers have noted this growing loss of independence among the established professions. Friedson (1994), for example, concluded that “Professionalism is being reborn in a hierarchical form...” (9), and Larson (2007) advocated that medical professionals be designated as *civic* professionals.

Subverting Public Administration Idealism and Advocacy

When looking back at the intransigence over the politics-administration dichotomy and the application of the sociology “ideal type” model for professionalization, it does seem that there was comfort in these barriers, whether real or imagined. Some climbed over, of course, but the trajectory of the field stayed essentially the same.

White (1937) displayed an early but totally contemporary understanding of the sociological model and offered a reasoned assessment of the professional standing of the field as a whole and subfields. Later, York Willbern (1954) revisited White’s work and found a strong endorsement of professionalization in the 1939 edition of his public administration text, and he also called attention a statement in the 1942 edition of that same book that appeared more ambiguous. He stated, “Leonard White, who had looked forward with considerable anticipation to professionalization in 1926, and welcomed it with open arms in 1939, apparently had some questions in his mind in 1942...” (15). Willbern may be right about this, though the White

passage he quotes at length is largely positive about the value of professionalization. Clearly not mentioned, however, is that the same section on professionalization Willbern (1954) touted in the 1939 book appears in exactly the same form (minus some references to England) in the 1948 edition of that very same book.¹

In the end, Willbern was not a strident opponent of professionalization, as will be addressed shortly, but Pugh (1989) took this observation by Willbern to fashion a far more negative argument. He concluded the reservations expressed by White were, “remarkably similar to those stressed by American educator Robert M. Hutchins of the University of Chicago in the 1930s, when he challenged the validity of university training in anything as amorphous as administration” (4). Thus, one of the foremost supporters of public administration professionalization morphed into the ideological partner of one of the most vigorous opponents...in the pages of *Public Administration Review*.

Mixing Professional Status with Professionalization

Ironically, amidst the controversy, the opposition to the professionalization of public administration is virtually zero. There is profound opposition to *claims of professional status*, but the importance of this distinction between professionalization and professional status has never received sustained attention. Getting back to Pugh (1989), he presents York Willbern as an opponent of professionalization, which is simply not the case. He states “Willbern openly challenged what he regarded as the ‘standard and orthodox attitude’ toward the professionalization of the public service,” (4), and he went on at some length about Willbern’s

¹ Compare pages 424-425 in the 1939 edition of Leonard White’s, *Introduction to Public Administration* to pages 444-445 in the 1948 edition. Of course, there other portions of these two books also support the view that White’s views remained positive, though circumspect.

views. While the quotations Pugh uses are correct, they exploit the pro-and-con style of this frequently cited article. Some conclusions Willbern (1954) reached after assessing arguments for and against professionalization include:

- ✚ “development of the characteristics of professionalism among public employees where those characteristics are absent, or slow in developing, should be encouraged.”
- ✚ “...the wave of professionalism should be ridden and directed, not stemmed.”
- ✚ “We must continue to promote the professionalization of the public service, while recognizing that professionalization in the public service poses various problems” (15).

As was stated previously, Leonard White understood the orthodox sociology model back in the 1930s. Attacking the sociological model derived from professions very different from public administration is a straw man argument, and it does nothing to undermine professionalization as a desirable undertaking. This is certainly what Waldo (1975) meant when he recommended that public administration should “act like a profession,” whether it was one or not.

Discussion

Professionalization raises some genuine concerns, but there is no plan B. If public administration is not professionalizing, then what is it doing? Bowman proposed the alternative of the public administration *occupation*—“a group of professional non-professionals.” This perspective is much like professionalization, of course, and the argument illustrates the kind of linguistic trap that awaits anyone seeking to establish a desirable nonprofessional alternative. Right or wrong, professionalism is nearly universally viewed as a plus, inside and outside academic circles. Can we envision schools of public affairs offering “occupational” training and

the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration accrediting “occupational” training for public affairs? Bowman presents a thoughtful and compelling case, but viable alternatives to professionalization do not exist. We can search Web sites and articles in *Public Administration Review*, and the words profession and professional arise repeatedly, by the hundreds.

We might simply ride the wave of professionalism and use the term in the vernacular, as most do, but this is a betrayal of public administration history and a denial of public administration commitments. Simply agreeing to disagree could create a comfort zone for a time, but this is not going to work over the long term. In his discussion of the criteria and objectives of public administration, Marshall Dimock (1936) stated, “...administration is more than a lifeless pawn. It plans, it contrives, it philosophizes, it educates, it build for the community as a whole” (133). Professionalization is essential to this agenda. It offers an organizing principle of a sort and a framework for guiding and assessing progress. Dimock described public administration on a mission, which is a far better idea than a public administration on a walkabout.

Well into the last century, noted authors presented a vision of a robust and centralized public administration profession (or professionalization process) linked tightly to higher education. Frederick Mosher (1968), for example, wrote with knowledge and authority on such matters, describing professionalization as a conveyor belt “between knowledge and theory on the one hand and public purpose on the other” (103). He saw universities playing an important role in the development of public administration: “...university faculties will have growing responsibilities for preparing and developing public servants both in their technical specialties

and in the broader social fields with which their professions interact” (219). There may be different views on how well this plan has worked out, but most can probably agree that this has been a struggle—a history well described by Chet Newland (2000).

While academics can examine developments in a contemplative way, the world does move on with or without our involvement and writings in public administration have never acknowledged the realities of *decentralized* professionalization. This is unfortunate, as this appears to be the current trajectory of the field...toward rapidly expanding credentialism. In this model, associations form, individuals with an affinity for these groups join and pay dues, and professional training of different sorts usually follows along with appropriate credentials. Higher education involvement is certainly possible in decentralized professionalization, as opportunities arise, but market forces will fill whatever gaps exist. Credentialing is widespread in the public sector, and it appears to be gaining ground. The developments in city management are noteworthy (Streib, 1992), and the slow and steady progress in public procurement is also significant (Thai, 2001). Credentialing can certainly spur development and help spread practical knowledge, and—depending on the commitment level, professional associations can develop and even enforce ethical codes. Impacts may be local...on up to international. The inherent weakness is the ad hoc linkages with higher education. City management transcends this definition in a significant way, as a credential exists in addition to secure higher education connections, but this is not the norm.

There are obvious benefits to credentialing, but also dangers. While medieval guilds may have reinforced artisan values (Goodsell, 1992), they were also business associations focused on financial gain, and an excessive self-serving focus is a kind of guild professionalism that

threatens the public interest (Yates, 1982). The centralized approach to professionalization, flowing from higher education, would appear to offer greater potential for instilling an appreciation for the broader public interest—if only because higher education might reach a share of public managers before they have more specialized interests. Organizations formed by and for those with specific economic goals are certainly more suspect.

Mosher stressed the importance of higher education as a way to control the aggressive tendencies that can accompany professionalization. He portrayed desirable public administration as value-based, showing a level of breadth and wisdom. In his own words, he emphasized that “truly meritorious performance in public administration will depend at least equally upon the values, the objectives, the moral standards which the administrator brings to his decisions, and upon his ability to weigh the relevant premises judiciously in his approach to the problems at hand” (1968, 218). His ideas built upon the earlier ideas of Willbern (1954)—who stressed the importance of professional generalists and stated, “Every effort should be made to try to incorporate at least a breath of generalism into professional education” (20). The goal of these efforts was not to block professionalization, but to nourish it in ways that advanced the public interest.

Conclusion

While this is certainly not the first article seeking to unify public administration and professionalization, the timing is certainly more favorable now. Admittedly, this is a broad generalization without much data, but perhaps it is now clear that concerns about issues like the politics-administration dichotomy and professionalization impeded development of the

field—Waldo’s own characterizations of the dichotomy have stressed confinement (Svara, 1999). We are entering a new era.

Interest in what is more likely called public management than public administration is now a dynamic international pursuit, as noted by Hood (1991). Indeed, this article is anachronistic in the sense that it focuses nearly exclusively on the US experience, which is increasingly less common. In addition, as any researcher knows, there are many more excellent journals available now than at any point in the past. There is no way to precisely pin the public administration doldrums on the reasons noted above, but we can certainly say that concerns about a politics-administration dichotomy did not deter new public administration advocates. They rewrote public administration history to accommodate a new narrative (Lynn, 2001). While this is disturbing in some respects, this public administration rally does illustrate the exciting potential of the field; as noted above, though, we left it to outsiders to break public administration out of a conceptual and commitment roadblock.

The task now is to merge the energy and growing knowledge base of public management with the heritage of public administration—including the unabashed commitment to professionalization and a set of prescriptions for adapting public management to democracy. Reconciling these previously these once antagonistic ideas certainly presents some challenge, but the potential benefits are considerable. Traditional public administration still controls a large part of public administration education, which makes it essential to forward progress. It also has much to offer, as Mosher and Willbern emphasized. More recently, Wamsley and Wolf (1996) noted, traditional public administration contributes ideas such as collaboration, a moral perspective on the public interest, a concern for democratic administration, and pragmatism.

Battling to protect the pre-new public management status quo is certainly not very appealing. Setting aside the appeal of new public management does not serve either academic research in public administration or practice. Nor is it possible to progress further as an applied field without professionalization in the mix. Whether public administration seeks to row, steer, or serve, each new academic breakthrough is just words on a page without professionalization to put them into action, find flaws and shortcomings, and maintain forward progress.

While it is important to recognize the historical commitments to professionalization and the contemporary importance, there is also a need to acknowledge that many have raised legitimate concerns about the dangers of professionalization—even recently (Adams, 2004), and such concerns need to be part of the ongoing dialogue. Whatever our academic take on the politics-administration dichotomy, for example, there is no question that many think it serves the interest of professional public administrators (Montjoy & Watson, 1995). Asserting professional prerogatives at every turn is not a recommended strategy. As Adams illustrated, the history of government professionals is tarnished at best. That said, though, we must affirm the goal of doing better.

While the details on moving ahead need more discussion, the basic outlines are clear. The first step is to refocus linkages between what we can best call public affairs research and education and practice, following the ideas of authors such as Mosher and Willbern. Professional education itself “systematically conveys learning from one generation to the next while each generation builds new knowledge through research and practice with an accepted paradigms” (Nalbandian, 2005, 314).

The goal of this article was to help refocus attention on the importance of professionalization and help to renew commitment and strengthen resolve. As Rohr (1999) has noted, we are entering a post dichotomy world. If we look at the acceptance of a dichotomy as an “aberration,” then one of our most important priorities is to reestablish professionalization as an important goal of the public administration field. This fits well with the ongoing development of new public administration ideas, which do expand the responsibilities of appointed administrators in significant ways. Professionalization (with increased attention to skill development and ethics) is essential to this agenda. The goal is certainly not to ape other professions, but to move ahead with an agenda consistent with the responsibilities of the public administration field. Views on the meaning of professionalism are also changing of course—and moving in a direction that suits public administration...stressing management expertise, leadership, trust, transparency, and accountability (Middlehurst & Kennie, 1997). There is even a renewed interest in a profession of business management (Khurana & Nohria, 2008). The future of a revived public administration field is both challenging and bright.

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