

Governance Reform: A Values Framework for Canadian Public Administration

GARNET GARVEN[†]

INTRODUCTION

There are three areas of governance reform of concern to public administration. The first is electoral reform which has dominated much discussion and research across Canada but also internationally. The second is parliamentary reform, less visible but nevertheless an active part of the reform agenda. The third area of governance reform and the focus of this paper is public administration reform.

This paper is entitled governance reform, a values framework for Canadian public administration. Both electoral reform and parliamentary reform inform significantly discussions surrounding public administration reform. The fundamental values in the public service shape and provide a context for the reform agenda that the provinces, the federal government, as well as our municipal governments have been following. Initiatives involving core training programs and core values provide the support needed to deepen and strengthen the values of the public sector and public administration reform.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM

The notion of public administration reform is positioned between the ideas surrounding electoral reform and is significantly influenced by parliamentary reform. Public administration reform sits somewhere in the middle of this tension as the public administration tries to negotiate its role between electoral reform initiatives and parliamentary reform

[†] Garnet Garven, Dean, Faculty of Business Administration, University of Regina.

activities. The positioning of public administration reform in this unique place within the whole reform process has been a focus of much research over the last number of years.

The work of Bryan Schwartz and Darla Rettie for the Law Reform Commission of Canada entitled “*Valuing Canadians: Options for Voting System Reform*”¹ offers important insight. This research provides an interesting starting point for consideration surrounding public administration reform. The research suggests that the starting point for any debate on electoral options might reasonably be to ask what fundamental political values do Canadians share? Schwartz and Rettie list the values that citizens have—that we as Canadians have—which were captured in 1991 with the citizen’s forum on Canada’s future.² It details some of these issues that we as Canadians identified as being critical or core to our Canadian system. It provides values that form a strong part of both the reform of our electoral system and the reform initiatives in our parliamentary system. These values play a strong role in the notion of public administration reform—the focus of this paper. The core values identified by the 1991 Citizen’s Forum on Canada’s Future were:

- A belief in tolerance and fairness in a democratic society
- Belief in consultation and dialogue
- Importance of accommodation and tolerance
- Compassion and generosity
- Attachment to Canada’s natural beauty
- A commitment to freedom, peace and non-violent change

VALUES AND REFORM INTERSECTIONS

The undercurrent of this debate centers on “what matters.” In the field of public administration reform, there are two areas of attention: traditional public management and the new public management agenda. Traditional public management flows from the Westminster model of the independence of the public service and those values that have been traditionally attached to the Canadian public service and Canadian public administration.

The new public management agenda has found its way into public administration, and in many ways has shaped the reform agenda. The tension that it creates in both the new public management agenda and

¹ Canada, Law Commission of Canada, *Valuing Canadians: the options for voting system reform in Canada*, (Law Commission of Canada, 2003), online: <http://www.lcc.gc.ca/research_project/03_valuing_1-en.asp>.

² *Ibid.*

what is now called the post-bureaucratic model of public administration has not been addressed.

The intersections of reform that have occurred have impacted values, which deal with structure, organization, systems, machinery of government, ethics, accountability, etc. There have been many initiatives at all levels: federal, provincial, and municipal that intersect with the roles and the values that public administration offers to the system of governance. It is not possible to cover all the specific changes in this paper, but rather the focus of this paper will be to address the context surrounding the reform. In doing this, this paper hopes to provide some insight into the current discourse, the dialogue that senior public servants are having across the field of public administration, and again, positioning the notion of traditional public management with the new public management agenda.

A significant amount of literature in Canadian public administration has addressed the values question: how do public administrators balance values. These go back to some major pieces of public administration research. *The Governing Values*,³ back in 1987 was the first piece that specifically addressed public sector values, and the notion of shaping governing values. *Public Service 2000*⁴ (which came out in 1990) was another contributor to the notion of public administration values. *Dewar Systems* in 1994,⁵ and Kernaghan's research (from 1993 to 2000)⁶ was significant. Additional contributions by the Institute of Public Administration in Canada,⁷ which are ongoing, have made

³ Canada, Committee on Governing Values, *Governing Values* by Gracia C. Howard, (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1987).

⁴ Canada, Privy Council Office, *Public Service 2000: The Renewal of the Public Service of Canada*, (Ottawa: Minister of Supply Services Canada, 1990), online: <http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/default.asp?Language=E&Page=publications&doc=1rept92/chap1_e.htm>.

⁵ Canada, Canadian Centre for Management Development, *The Dewar Series: Perspectives on Public Management*, (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1994), online: <<http://www.myschool-monecole.gc.ca/Research/publications/pdfs/valeur.pdf>>.

⁶ Kenneth Kernaghan, "The Post-Bureaucratic Organization and Public Service Values" (2000) 66 *International Review of Administrative Sciences* at 91-104; "Towards a public-service code of conduct – and beyond" (1997) 40:1 *Canadian Public Administration* at 40-54; "The emerging public service culture: values, ethics, and reforms" (1994) 37:4 *Canadian Public Administration* at 614-630; "Reshaping government: the post-bureaucratic paradigm" (1993) 36:4 *Canadian Public Administration* at 636-644; Kenneth Kernaghan, Brian Marson & Sandford Borins, *The New Public Organization* (Toronto: The Institute of Public Administration of Canada, 2000).

⁷ "IPAC: Core Values in Public Service" *IPAC*, online: The Institute of Public Administration of Canada

important contributions to the literature. Finally, the publication of *A Strong Foundation*⁸ (1996) addresses Canadian values in this reform agenda. While it appears to be a significant literature base, the research is not as deep or rich as one might expect.

First of all, *The Governing Values* study in 1987 was the first initiative that examined public values in Canada, which did address traditional public management and new public management; the terminology used in the study was one of the first, which addressed the issue in the new context of values. *The Public Service 2000* was a tentative initiative that moved the public service debate forward towards the concepts and ideas of new public management. Nevertheless, the study discussed traditional public service values that are often associated with the Canadian public service. In this series of research, two sets of public service values were proposed: Canadian values and public service values. Again, this was very much a normative study of what ought to be. There was very little research about what the public service really thought, or how it impacted the public administration reform agenda.

The next piece of research delivered a qualitative examination of values. It demonstrated the incorporation of emerging new public management values of efficiency, introducing initiatives from what might be called the business sector into government. But again, these were 'espoused' values rather than 'held' values. No testing of values was actually conducted. IPAC's ongoing work on the core values of the public service, and the discussion of issues that surround values was important. But this research only focused primarily on 'organizational' values, not 'individual' values of the people who actually lead and provide public service. None of this research addressed the questions of new versus traditional values. Some research attempted to identify those core values, but did not really move far enough to advance the debate.

A Strong Foundation focused on democratic values, professional values, ethical values, people values—but again, only addressed traditional and new values and how these worked together. The research was largely normative and very prescriptive.

<<http://web.archive.org/web/20010430123111/http://www.ipaciapc.ca/english/ethics/coreval.htm>>.

⁸ Canada, Canadian Centre for Management Development, *A Strong Foundation: Report of the Task Force on Public Service Values and Ethics*, (Ottawa: Privy Council Office, 1996) (Chair: John C. Tait, Q.C.), online: <<http://www.myschool-monecole.gc.ca/Research/publications/pdfs/tait.pdf>>; Canada, Canadian Centre for Management Development, *Public Service Culture: Results of the 1996 SYMLOG Survey, Presentations to the CCMD Management Committee*, (1996) [unpublished].

CANADIAN VALUES SURVEY RESEARCH

There has been a growing amount of large-scale survey research of public sector values. Various research surveys led by myself and other colleagues as well as CCMD and some very large Government of Canada surveys on values over the last five years have made important contributions.⁹

The *Garven and Paris* survey research study was interesting in that it provided a perspective on values from the federal public service identifying those values that underscore reform agendas. The survey research identified real difference between organizational and individual values. Traditional public management (TPM) values were seen in the current culture, but not desired by respondents. And new public management (NPM) values were generally desired by respondents, but not seen in the current culture.

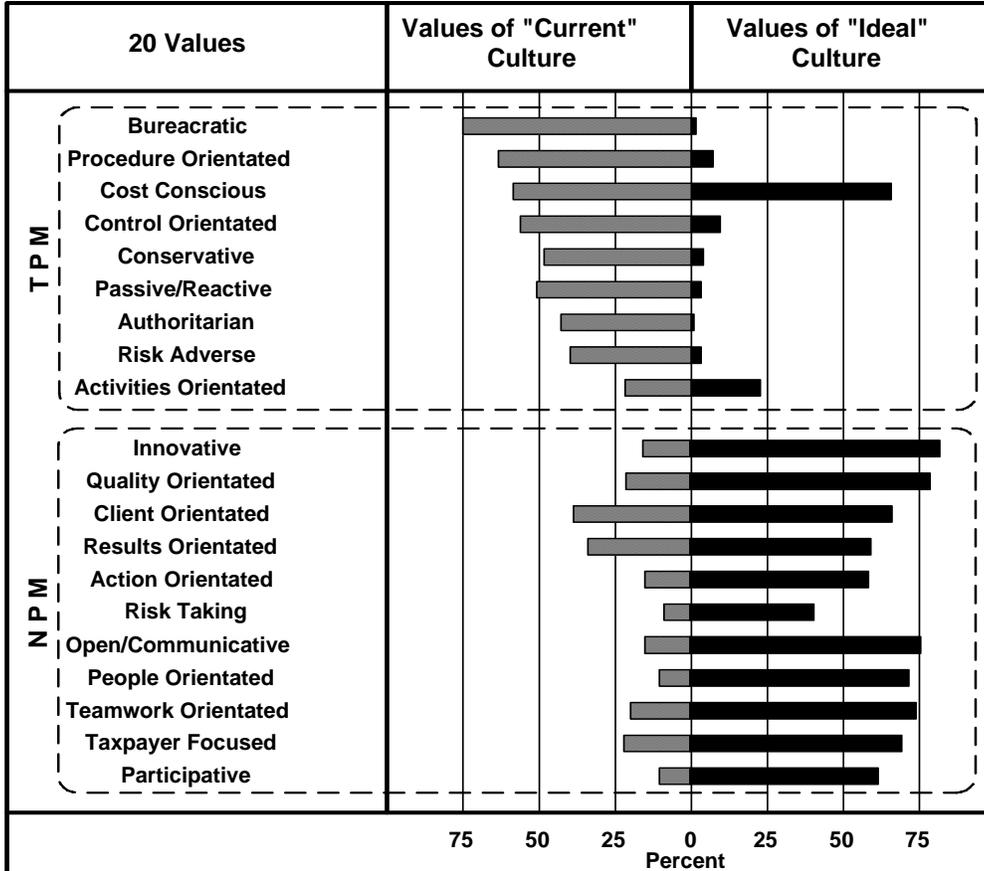
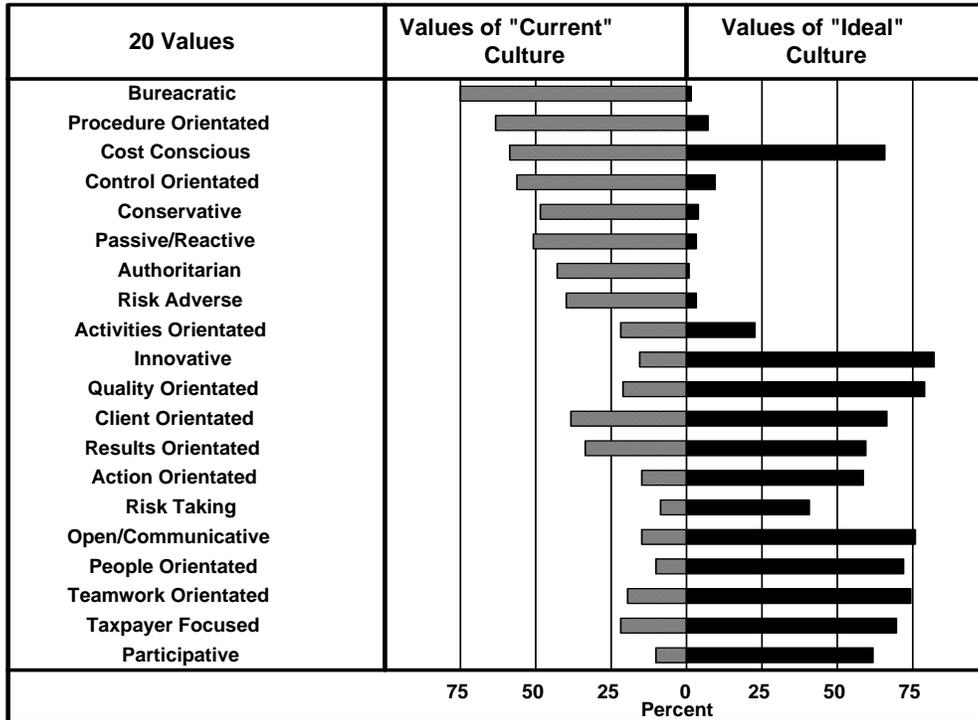
There was an interesting contrast of values identified. We saw a split in our research between the traditional values that we associated with government: procedure oriented, conscious, control oriented, conservative, and reactive—all of these were seen as values that existed in the current structure. But again, the notion of new public management values, were ones where respondents said the ideal culture would be innovative and quality oriented. Issues that focused on open, communicative values came out of the new public management but were not seen in the organization (see Figure 1).

Garven and Vogelsang (see Figure 1) expanded this research to consider values that had not been captured in the past. Some of the new areas that we looked at were related to integrity and ethics, accountability, responsibility and service, fairness and equity, commitment, dedication, recognition, loyalty, leadership, neutrality and representativeness. These were all notions built on the weaknesses of some of the previous research. We attempted to capture this, what was called a value

⁹ Garnet Garven & H. Paris, "Changing Labour Management Relations in the Federal Public Service: A Professional Employees Opinion Survey Approach" (1995) (Paper presented to the National Conference of the Institute of Public Administration of Canada, 1995), [unpublished]; Garnet Garven & Jason Vogelsang, "Valuing Public Service Values: Research from Saskatchewan" (1999) (Paper presented to the National Conference of the Institute of Public Administration of Canada, August 1999), online: <<http://nonprofits.accesscomm.ca/ipac/pdf/Paper.pdf>>; Canada, *Public Service Employee Survey 1999*, (Ottawa: Treasury Board of Canada, 1999), online: <http://www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/survey-sondage/1999/1999_archive_list_e.asp>; Canada, *Public Service Employee Survey 2002*, (Ottawa: Treasury Board of Canada, 2002), online: <http://www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/survey-sondage/2002/Menu_e.asp>.

imbalance experienced between TPM values and those in the new public management values.

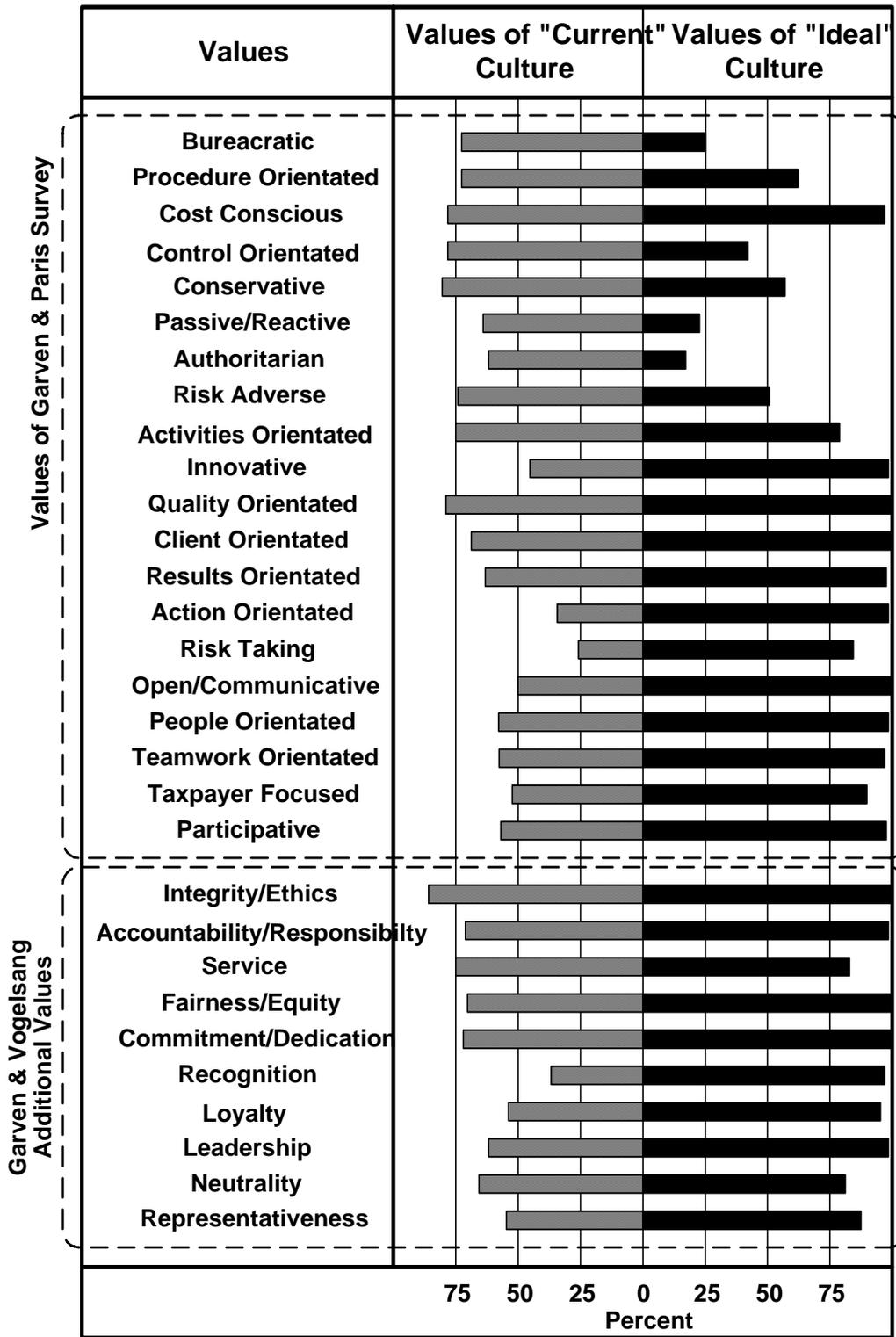
Figure 1 - Garven and Paris Survey Research



TPM

NPM

Figure 2 - Garven and Vogelsang Survey Research



The CCMD study involved a five country examination of the values of public service culture, comparing Canadian values to these countries. The study was trying to:

- develop current organizational culture profiles
- determine which values were rewarded
- develop a culture profile that would ensure an effective organization in the future
- determine a values profile of the most effective organizational leaders

One of the goals of the research was to allow researchers to look at the organization in the future and produce a values profile of the most effective leaders in the public sector. The research suggested that public servants experience TPM values but desire NPM values. This research was limited because it only considered the senior management ranks of the public service.

The Government of Canada studies involved two large-scale surveys in 1999 and 2000. The surveys indicated that public service organizations encourage innovative behaviour, teamwork, and service to clients. The public service is open, communicative, flexible, and respects employees' needs. Unfortunately, the surveys did not focus on values that underscore and support the reform agenda. Also, the survey research only examined the federal public service and did not include other levels of government.

Increasingly in more of literature, new public management and associated values have become more predominant. Nevertheless, most of the research literature does not directly address the central issue of public service values. There appears to be an imbalance in the research of values. In particular, there is very little research that considers individual values. The research that has been conducted positions the level of analysis at the organizational level. It seems that the values of the organization are the central focus, not what individual managers and public servants believe. Another significant shortfall is that the research of the past two decades has not at all addressed the different organizational levels or forms of government. The research has also not spanned the sectors enough to support research conclusions inter-organizationally or even between provincial or federal agendas. And the research has lacked focus. Finally, the research has not been methodologically rigorous. The research has been fairly high-level survey work and has lacked the depth and breadth that is found in most organizational research.

A VALUES FRAMEWORK

So what is it that we are trying to express through these public service values? Traditional public management tends to view the public service from a top-down perspective. TPM values are primarily concerned with purpose defining functions: vision, mission, the intent of the public service. New public management tends to view the public service more from the bottom-up. The NPM perspective tends to view values around operational issues: implementation questions, roll out issues, a greater focus on strategy and operational managerial issues. There is this tension in the system that the public service managers or 'actors' tend to value the operational, action-based ideas, where organizationally the conversations are about traditional views. Figure 3, offers a framework that contrasts these two perspectives.

Figure 3
Organizational Framework Perspectives

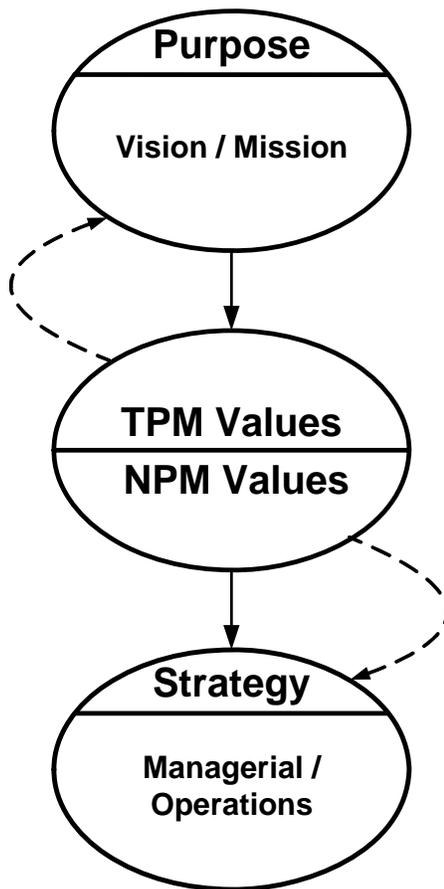


Figure 4
TPM and NPM

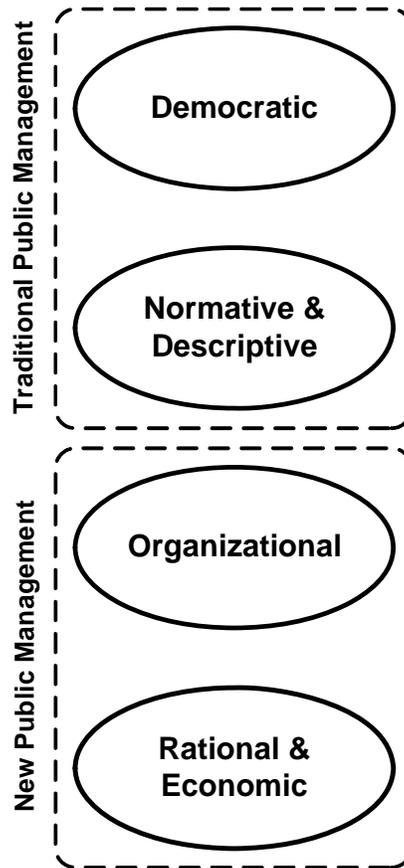


Figure 4, offers a structured values framework to better understand this issue and to frame the values considerations.¹⁰ Four 'frames' are presented. The first explores the notion of a 'democratic' view in building a framework of values. This perspective focuses on the public sector's broader purpose and role within a democratic state, including its role within society, the political structure, and the legal system. The second frame is presented as a 'normative and descriptive' perspective of values. This perspective explains and interprets the current state of the public service while providing solutions that 'ought' to be implemented for improvement and future success of the public service. This approach suggested that the public sector is like other organizations and should be managed as such.

These are two perspectives that inform the change agenda (reform agenda) and describe the traditional public management perspective (or mindset or worldview) capturing both the democratic and normative-descriptive processes of change agendas and values. The model presented in Figure 4, suggests that the 'democratic' and 'normative and descriptive' perspectives are most associated with the traditional public management (TPM) approach to values.

The new public management (NPM) set of values captures organizational issues, transference points across organizations, and a rational economic review of the efficiency and effectiveness of government. The bottom half of Figure 4, proposes 'organizational' as a frame of reference and maintains that public sector organizations are like any other organization and should be managed as such - concerned with all functions of the organization. As well, the 'rational and economic' view contends that if the public service needed to facilitate government intervention, it should do so in the most economically efficient manner, with the minimum cost to the taxpayer, and with minimal economic distortion – the economic, rational view of values.

What is presented in the model or framework is a separation of views and values between traditional public management and new public management. This split explains part of the tension that is being witnessed in the public service. This is the difference between those who aspire and espouse the notion of more new public management values, more reform change agendas. As we try to categorize which values we saw in our research, these appear more closely aligned with traditional public management values. Included in these values were accountability questions, neutrality, responsiveness, impartiality, integrity, efficiency, equity, representativeness, responsiveness, fairness, loyalty—those traditional values that were held by the organization but not so much by the individuals in the organizations.

¹⁰ Some of this research was conducted with graduate student Jason Vogelsang.

The new public management values related more to innovation, creativity, service, quality, teamwork, entrepreneurship, leadership, openness, communication, and recognition. We tried to capture a conceptual view of these values: how do we explain the organizational orientation of this reform values agenda with the individual orientation and challenge to individual public servants or public managers. We tried to position this democratic high-level perspective and then the rational economic perspective. This is a perspective from which the reform agenda has been influenced. Notions of openness, innovation and creativity tended to fall on the individual orientation, rational economic perspective.

Figure 5, provides a listing of the major values aligned under the two approaches.

Figure 5 – TPM and NPM Values

Traditional Public Management Values	New Public Management Values
Accountability	Innovation / Creativity
Neutrality / Impartiality	Service
Integrity	Quality
Efficiency	Teamwork
Effectiveness	Entrepreneurship
Equity / Representativeness	Leadership
Responsiveness	Horizontality
Fairness	Openness
Loyalty	Communication
Anonymity	Recognition

FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

Figure 6, presents a comprehensive values framework, which is proposed to offer a research agenda or framework to consider the further integration of public administration values. This will be important as a guide to shape the thinking as public administration advances through its reform agendas. The framework categorizes values in a meaningful manner and allows the incorporation of a number of

become much more rigorous and comprehensive. As good as it is, the Canadian public administration literature is substantially weaker in its examination of values than exists in the general organizational literature. Previous public administration research is generally very descriptive, very normative work, failing to address key issues.

This paper calls for more detailed and expanded research in order to more fully inform the reform agenda, including the integration of individual level values that surround these change agendas. The potential influence (and push-back) of new public management is increasingly predominant within the Canadian public service and remains unclear. It appears that new public management will shape and challenge emerging administrative reform. The framework offered in this paper proposes to address many of these issues and trends. Certainly, the new push will be on values in general, but particularly new public management and what is described as the emerging post-bureaucratic structures.

The reform challenge remains at the values level. There is much happening federally, provincially, and municipally on public administrative reform, but much more to be accomplished. It is hoped that this values framework will advance much needed research in the field.