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EXPRESSING POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE VALUES THROUGH STORIES: A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF THE NATIONAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

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EXPRESSING POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE VALUES THROUGH STORIES: A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF THE NATIONAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

A dissertation APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

BY

Dedicated to Gwenda, Valerie, and Maureen

and to my

Mother and Father,

Raymond and Wilda Jo Sharp

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"Pooh began to feel a little more comfortable, because when you are a Bear of Very Little Brain, and you Think of Things, you find sometimes that a Thing which seemed very Thinguish inside you is quite different when it gets out into the open and has other people looking at it."

A. A. Milne, *The House at Pooh Corner*

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Abstract

This dissertation analyzes the underlying values motivating the National Performance Review (NPR) and the reception of these values by public administrators. The research question is: "Are the stories within NPR effective vehicles for communicating the values intended by the authors of the report?" NPR is compared with the implicit theoretical framework for effective organizations as suggested by organizational theorists. This framework is exemplified by the Competing Values Model (Quinn, 1988) based on numerous studies involving factor analysis and multidimensional scaling.

NPR is important because it is a high-profile administrative effort with strong political direction. It is the virtual embodiment of "reinventing government"and is an organizational model for all levels of government.

Semiotics serves as the major epistemological assumption governing this dissertation's methodological approach. *Semiotics* is a form of research which analyzes social life by attempting to discern underlying patterns of meaning as communicated through *signs* in the social universe. Within a semiotic framework, this dissertation employs two methods for uncovering the latent value structure of NPR. The first is a quantitative content analysis (based on the coefficient of imbalance) of NPR's lead report. The second method is a quantitative story analysis based on the values perceived to be promoted by the stories within NPR. Practicing

public administrators from various levels of government serve as evaluators for the story analysis. Partial correlation of the results of these two methods is conducted controlling for the professional values already held by public administrators in the sample.

The argument presented here is that the stories in NPR *are* effective at communicating the values intended by the authors of the report. This finding supports what many administrative theorists have recently postulated about the power of storytelling among public administrators. This research further shows that NPR is driven primarily by the values of change and productivity. Stories serve to intensify the communication of these values.

This dissertation contributes to (1) existing literature on the application of semiotics to social science research; (2) knowledge of how political and administrative values are communicated within the public administration community; and (3) substantive understanding of American bureaucratic reform.

Chapter 1.

Researching Values in Public Administration

Values are the lifeblood of politics. Values shape and direct the course of public policy. Values provide meaning to governmental action. In American pluralist democracy, interest groups are arrayed according to the competing values they represent. Even though we often assume that our bureaucratic institutions are designed to buffer administration against raw political interference, in fact, these government agencies tend to mirror the overall alignment of public values. "Our cabinet, for example, is the only one in the world where the members are charged by law with the representation of special interests—labor, agriculture, commerce, and so on" (Fischer, 1948, p. 31). American bureaucracy is therefore *not* immune from the competition of political values—and, in one important sense, represents the ultimate expression of these values.

For public administration and political science as academic disciplines which aspire to be scientific, the investigation of abstract concepts such as values represents a real challenge. The great political scientist and public administration scholar Dwight Waldo discusses the difficulty:

> The "stuff" political science addresses has a stubborn, intractable quality ... From one point of view, political science is a "natural" science. People, as well as objects and artifacts within the purview of political science, are of

> course physical phenomena. But political science is also inevitably a "culture" science, which must deal, however it can, with the intangibles of culture. These intangibles also may be held to be a part of the natural order and thus amenable to the methods of science. But even if this is granted in principle, what solution to crucial methodological problems does not necessarily follow. What language of politics is there, what language of politics can there be, that is not culture-bound? (1975, p. 117)

Borrowing a metaphor from an acclaimed stage play, political scientist Gabriel A. Almond describes differences in methodological approach as prompting various political science schools of thought to "sit at *separate tables*, each with its own conception of proper political science, but each protecting some secret island of vulnerability" (1988, pp. 828-829, emphasis added). Even within the community of public administration scholars in particular, little agreement exists on appropriate means for scientific analysis. The National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration states in a task force report that within public administration, "there are few well developed streams of research and research is less cumulative than in more developed fields" (1987, p. 4). As Donald F. Kettl notes in his recent essay on the current state of the discipline, "If anything characterizes the study of public administration, it is fragmentation" (1993, p. 407). For public administration, the development of strategies for building theory, selection of research methods, and the proper role of the discipline have become important issues (Ballard & James, 1983; Bozeman, 1993; Cozzetto, 1994; Douglas, 1996; Eberstadt, 1995; Fenno, 1990; Golembiewski, 1996; Hays, 1996; Hummel, 1995; Kash & Ballard, 1987; Kettl, 1993;

Kettl & Milward, 1996; Kingsley, 1997; Lynn, 1996; Marshall, 1998; McCurdy & Cleary, 1984; Meier & Keiser, 1996; Newland, 1997; O'Toole, 1995, 1997; Perry, 1991; White, 1986; White & Adams, 1994; White, Adams & Forrester, 1995). Public administrationist Gary Marshall comments, "The 1990s have been challenging years for theory builders in the public administration and public policy communities" (1998, p. 274). Kettl adds, "Public administration has long struggled with a ... basic problem — the accumulation of knowledge" (1993, p. 408). "In point of fact," declares Marshall, "the status of knowledge in public management is a central concern of the major contributors to the field's literature" (1998, p. 275). The fundamental mission is the generation of knowledge and development of the means to apply it constructively. The quest for methodologies to serve both purposes is a major endeavor of the discipline. "What the field of public administration needs is a strategy for coupling important questions with the techniques for answering them" (Cleary, 1992, p. 56).

Public administration practitioner and scholar Richard C. Box concludes, "In summary, research in public administration is in need of constructive change resulting from healthy debate over the nature of the problems to be addressed, appropriate methodologies, the linkage of theory and practice, and ways in which public administration research can be usefully compared to that of other fields" (1992, p. 69). Therefore, the search for an appropriate research model in modern public administration takes center stage.

A variety of different ways to understand and appreciate reality have been offered and attempted over the discipline's history. "The breadth and depth of concern about research in public administration" has prompted Jay D. White and Guy B. Adams in their comprehensive, edited work on *Research in Public Administration* to ask, "Are the truly important questions in the field approachable only from alternative methodological frameworks?" (1994, p. xiv). This dissertation offers *semiotics* not only as an effective methodological framework, but also as an interdisciplinary approach that provides an alternative perspective for analyzing social systems.

<u>An Overview of the Semiotic Perspective</u>

Semiotics is a research orientation unfamiliar to most political scientists although it has gained great momentum in aesthetics, anthropology, architecture, communications research, language studies, literary studies, marketing, medicine, music, and philosophy. Semiotics is a form of research which analyzes social life by attempting to discern underlying patterns of meaning as communicated through *signs* in the social universe. A sign is anything that evokes meaning, communicates thought, makes known, or represents something. As a research strategy, semiotics promises to help better explain many of the empty spaces of knowledge untouched by traditional methodologies alone. The breadth and importance of semiotics is such that some advocates argue that it could justifiably represent a major branch of epistemology (see *eiconics* in Boulding, 1977/1961; also, Cassirer, 1953; Jensen, 1995; Merrell, 1982). However, semiotics might best be thought of as a *foundation* upon which epistemologies and methodologies may be built. "Assumptions of an epistemological nature," defines sociological theorists Gibson Burrell and Gareth Morgan, "... are assumptions about the grounds of knowledge—about how one might begin to understand the world and communicate this as a knowledge to fellow human beings" (1979, p. 1). Semiotics, as an epistemological presupposition, assumes that we understand the universe through signs—and signs are used to communicate this understanding to other persons. Semiotics offers a bridge across the various epistemological camps; and it does so by acknowledging that in the quest for truth, a researcher must employ multiple methodologies according to the demands of the particular research process at hand. The researcher is still responsible for formulating the research question, identifying the relevant variables, and conceptualizing the methodological plan. Semiotics is therefore not defined by any specific method, but rather is more broad and encompassing in approach. Communications theorist Klaus Bruhn Jensen explains:

> Signs are not what we know, but how we come to know what we can justify saying we know .... The implication of ... semiotics for *epistemology* is that the categories of human reasoning are not imposed on minimal sense data, as suggested by Kant; rather, all phenomena are always already conceptualized

and subject to semiosis. (1995, p. 22)

The use of semiotics as a research form is recognition of some of the limitations of the behavioralist revolution in the social sciences. However, with its emphasis on observable "signs," and its disciplinary modeling of linguistics, social semiotics is planted firmly within the empirical tradition of science.

Etymologically, *semiotics* can be traced back to the pre-Socratic philosophers who employed the term *semion* as a synonym for *evidence* (*tekmerion*) (Clarke, 1990, p. 11). The first examples of conscious formal application of semiotics appears in the work of Hippocrates who advocated interpretation of signs (*semia*) in order to forecast the fate of his patients (Clarke, 1990, p. 12; Kirby, 1996; Nöth, 1990, p. 15). Borrowing medical examples from Hippocrates, Aristotle "explicitly stated for the first time the conception of a sign as an observed event or state of affairs that is evidence for its interpreter for what is at least temporarily absent" (Clarke, 1990, p. 11). The great political philosopher John Locke proposed *semiotic* as a discipline of sign interpretation related to logic:

> The third branch may be called *semiotike*, or *the Doctrine of Signs*, the most usual whereof being Words, it is aptly enough termed also *logike*, Logick; the business whereof, is to consider the Nature of Signs, the Mind makes use of for the understanding of Things, or conveying its Knowledge to others. For since the Things, the Mind contemplates, are none of them, besides it self, present to the Understanding, 'tis necessary that something else, as a Sign or Representation of the thing it considers, should be present to it: And these are *Ideas*. And because the Scene of *Ideas* that makes one Man's Thoughts, cannot be laid open to the immediate view of another, nor laid up any where but in the Memory, a no very sure Repository: Therefore to communicate our

> Thoughts to one another, as well as record them for our own use, Signs of our *Ideas* are also necessary. Those which Men have found most convenient, and therefore generally make use of, are articulate Sounds. (Clarke, 1990, p. 40)

In its classic, but more modern description, semiotics has been described as "the science of the life of signs in society" (Saussure, 1974). This simple, yet sweeping definition, offers a new framework for analysis of social systems. The emphasis is placed on the power of signs to communicate meaning. Semiotics as a science endeavors to make the association of meaning with signs more explicit. "No one can double-check everything that goes on as the mind deals with inner feelings, perceptions of experience, and thought processes," social science philosopher Kenneth R. Hoover explains, "Science brings the steps of inquiry out of the mind and into public view so that they can be shared as part of the process of accumulating knowledge" (1988, p. 9). As a model of knowledge, semiotics has its own distinguished heritage (see Clarke, 1987, 1990; Nöth, 1995). But its truest power appears to come from its ability to cross the three major domains of social inquiry as identified by knowledge philosopher Jürgen Habermas: empirical-analytic (positivist), interpretative, and critical-theoretic orientations (1971). At its most reduced form, semiotics (1) bases its approach upon observable signs fully available for scientific analysis (positivism); (2) focuses on the social transference and interpretation of meaning (interpretavism); and (3) attempts to unmask hidden patterns of meaning which underlie social interaction for purposes of encouraging change for the better (critical social science)(see Fay, 1987). Even in the latter characteristic, the normative stance of semiotics is one shared with the rest of the social sciences. "A science that is to be social must engage in a kind of balancing act between the scientific principle that statements must be verified and, on the other hand, the social necessity for doing something about the crises of civilization" (Hoover, 1988, p. 124).

The hub of all semiotic endeavors is the process of signification (Peirce, 1934-1936). D.S. Clarke, a noted professor of philosophy, elaborates on the role of signs within the semiotic perspective:

> A sign is any object of interpretation, a thing or event that has significance for some interpreter. It can stand for some object for this interpreter, signify an action to be performed, arouse in the interpreter a feeling or emotion, or combine two or more of these functions. Signs include natural events, ... sounds in the environment, ... forms of signaling, diagrams and drawings similar in some respects to what they represent, sentences formed according to the grammatical rules of natural languages, and segments of discourse formed by combining sentences. Semiotic is the general theory that attempts to specify the general logical features of signs and the similarities and differences between the great variety of forms they can take. (1990, p. 1)

Semiotics serves as a means to explore the phenomenological and philosophical basis of reality. "In its terms, everything in a culture can be seen as a form of communication, organized in ways akin to verbal language, to be understood in terms of a common set of fundamental rules or principles" (Hodge & Kress, 1988, p. 1).

Semiotics retains many of the vestiges of its linguistic and literary roots. It views the universe in all of its physical and social manifestations as a "text" available for study. The anchoring point for semiotics is the mind's ability to sense and make sense of phenomena occurring within the world around. Like the proverbial blind men and the elephant (see Adams, 1994; Carroll, 1992; Waldo, 1961, 1978), semiotics assumes an absolute reality, but requires social cooperation to make sense of it. As Marshall states, "The study of the public sphere ... reflects a concern for the social construction of meaning in the context of our civic life" (1998, p. 274).

The focal point of semiotics is the elusive nexus between reality and perception. As the Pulitzer Prize winning author Douglas R. Hofstadter acknowledges, "Reality and the formal system are different" (1979, p. 53). They may be different, but in very important ways, reality and formal systems can also be understood as "reflections of each other." If perception is to approximate any level of reliability, a change in reality should trigger a corresponding change in perception. What is often, but not always understood, is that a change of perception can affect reality in a myriad of ways both obvious and subtle. In the social world, this gives rise to the old political adage, "Perception is reality." Political science then should be about investigating reality *or any model of it* because formal systems, themselves, have political implications.

The investigation of signs and symbols within the realm of public administration and politics has been a growing endeavor (see the works of Edelman; see also: Arnold, 1962; Elder & Cobb, 1983; Fox, 1996; Fox & Miller, 1995;

Gusfield, 1986; Weiss, 1981). Many political scientists have been working in sub-fields of semiotics for quite some time without perhaps realizing the connection. For example, Charles Goodsell has spearheaded a stream of public administration research exploring the symbolic meaning of civic space in American government institutions (Carnevale, 1992; Carnevale & Rios, 1995; Domahidy & Gilsinan, 1992; Goodsell, 1977, 1988; Sarkis, 1997). These works on the political and social significance of human surroundings mirrors similar semiotic research within architectural studies (Krampen, 1979; Prak, 1968; Preziosi, 1979; Seligmann, 1982; Wagner, 1992; Wallis, 1975). Moreover, perhaps the leading political semiotician, Murray Edelman, publicly realized the connection of his research to semiotics only toward the end of his long career (1964/1985, p. 195). Semiotics, especially in relation to public administration, is a virtually untapped form of research. "Much work remains to be done in this regard," declares administrative scholars Thompson, Riccucci, and Ban, "For instance, while the standards for judging instrumental action are fairly clear (e.g. efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, responsiveness), the same cannot be said of the symbolic dimension of administration" (1991, p. 516).

The texts available for political analysis are innumerable and increasing as the political universe expands—there are more people, more groupings of people, and more avenues for political expression. Roland Barthes states about the selection of specific texts for semiotic analysis, "Before the infinity of narratives in the world, the choice must be arbitrary" (1985, p. 49). Although arguably an "arbitrary" selection, the National Performance Review should prove to be an interesting "text" for analysis. It is a high profile group effort with strong political direction. The National Performance Review has direct and indirect ramifications for the administrative side of all levels of government throughout the United States. It is the most visible manifestation of the "reinvention movement" inspired by Osborne and Gaebler (1993). Focus on one particular effort such as the National Performance Review allows a depth of analysis otherwise not possible. As Foucault understands, "A total description draws all phenomena around a single centre—a principle, a meaning, a spirit, a world-view, an overall shape" (1972, p. 10).

Political Values

David Easton, one of the founders of modern political science, offers his classic definition of the discipline's proper object of study: "What distinguishes political interactions from all other kinds of social interactions is that they are predominantly oriented toward the authoritative allocation of *values* for a society" (1965, p. 50, emphasis added). Yet, the existence and importance of values have often been taken for granted in political science research. Political scientist James Q. Wilson comments, "Analytical philosophers took seriously the argument that 'values' could not be derived from 'facts,' and tended to relegate moral judgments to the realm of personal preference not much different from a taste for vanilla ice cream" (1993, p. 3). This perspective, common in much research, undeservedly diminishes the importance of values within the context of social and political life. The risk is that technique is emphasized over substance. "Academics like their terms well defined and their analytical methods rigorous; their world is peopled with rational humans who are neither good nor bad; and they see explanations for social phenomena in events, rules, and policy, not in value judgements" (Aaron, Mann, & Taylor, 1994, p. 3). The link between values and the study of politics has never been severed, but recently, explicit research interest in values has experienced a strong resurgence within mainstream social science and even popular literature (Bennett, 1993; Carnevale, 1995; Carter, 1994 & 1998; Cozic, 1995; DeMott, 1996; Elliott, 1985; Fukuyama, 1995; Handy, 1998; Lerner, 1996; Menzel, 1997; Posner & Schmidt, 1994; Quinn, 1988; Reich, 1987; Wilson, 1993). Values and politics are two sides of the same coin. The literary and feminist scholar Linda Hutcheon states, "Cultural production is carried on within a social context and an ideology—a lived value system" (1989, p. 21). The complexities inherent in the overall class of what we call values should not be overlooked. "In spite of this surge of interests in values, the crucial—the term *value*—is still somewhat ambiguous" (Eisenberg, Reykowski, & Staub, 1989, p. xi.). The values which are sustained within a political culture over time are likely to have the most influence; especially in a policy-making system characterized by incrementalism (Lindblom, 1959).

"Many of our most important choices are clearly multi-valued" (Vickers, 1968, p. 112). A more complete understanding of the political system can only be gained through a perspective which acknowledges the important, latent structure of multiple values (Lindblom, 1959). This perspective should recognize that legitimate scientific knowledge often falls beyond the domain of value-free inquiry. "To the scientific mind, such phenomena as symbolic ideas are a nuisance because they cannot be formulated in a way that is satisfactory to intellect and logic," states the great psychologist Carl G. Jung, "I know enough of the scientific point of view to understand that it is most annoying to have to deal with facts that cannot be completely or adequately grasped" (1964, p. 80). As political economist and public administrator Robert Reich writes:

> Between the transient moods elicited by political advertising or lofty rhetoric and the detailed policy prescriptions manufactured by the inhabitants of Washington think tanks and universities spreads the conceptual terrain in which public problems are defined and public ideals are forged. This is a realm of parable and metaphor, the source of our collective vision. To dismiss this realm as "ideological" — meaningless because irrational and unempirical — is to miss the point that value, not fact, is the currency of the realm. It is to neglect the importance of values for motivating a society. It is to preempt or cheapen all discussion about whether we are motivated in the right direction. (1987, pp. xi-xii)

Values have a legitimate role to play, not only in acts of public administration and policy-making, but also in the formulation of the background information which makes sound public policy and good administrative decisions possible. A one-dimensional view of the life of values within a society is not sufficient. Public administrators must account for values as real political determinants in the world of public affairs. Policy analysts must make a vigorous assessment of their data in terms of value implications. Policy statistician Nicholas Eberstadt concurs:

> Cold statistics and purportedly value-neutral numbers seem to lead to moral issues in policy. Perhaps this should not be a surprise. When all is said and done, there can be no substitute for moral reasoning in human affairs, try as men may to devise one. The statistics-oriented, meliorative state may be new, but the question of how to use knowledge in a morally responsible manner is not. (1995, p. 26)

This dissertation represents an effort to gain insight into values and their meanings in the political arena. The goal is ambitious — for as Charles P. Cozic understates, "The set of beliefs—often interrelated—coming under the banner of 'values' is a large one" (1995, p. 13). Speaking about the field of public personnel policy in particular, but revealing for the policy process in general, Robert H. Elliott comments, "Before students and practitioners ... can understand the ... policy-making process, attention must be devoted to the field's underlying value dimensions" (1985, p. ix). Furthermore, the administrative role in the political powerplay over values is often overlooked. "The textbook definitions of politics in terms of ... 'the authoritative allocation of values' miss the phenomenological experience of politics," explains political semiotician Murray Edelman, "Valued benefits are indeed allocated through politics (usually by maintaining established allocations), but the value outcomes that matter usually flow from unpublicized administrative implementations" (1964/1985, p. 201).

The powerplay over values takes place in an ever-shifting political landscape. Within this unsettled climate, what are the modern political values? There are as many answers to that question as there are political observers. Modern political values can probably best be characterized as a fluid mixture of traditional values and those that speak to more contemporary concerns. The American nation is still struggling to live up to the values and ideals articulated by the Founding Fathers—freedom, justice, and equality. "Constitutional values are important even when they cannot be entirely satisfied" (Fisher, 1991, p. 287). In a more contemporary vein, political scientist Alan Ehrenhalt says, "Equality, individualism, and openness are the crucial values of American politics in the 1990s" (1991, p. 275). The administrative world in the U.S. has usually been concerned with the "Triple E" values—economy, efficiency, and effectiveness (Goodsell, 1992, p. 247; Menzel, 1997, p. 224; Rosenbloom, 1983, 1992; Stillman, 1991; Wamsley & Dudley, 198, p. 339). These values, and many other values relevant in political and administrative cultures, can be grouped in a variety of meaningful ways and analyzed from a host of different perspectives. Within academic theory, the study of values can be an interesting philosophical exercise. But in acts of policy-making and public decision-making, values play a real and significant role. Useful methods for examining the political influence of competing values is necessary for truly understanding the processes of government. Through close semiotic observation, patterns within the interplay of social values can surface. The difficulty is to recognize, identify, and isolate these values from the cultural domain which gives them voice.

The concept of values is nebulous—easily eluding our best efforts to rigorously approach such a complex abstraction. Values are transitional and often overlapping or contradictory. But as human beings, there is a common thread of values which sustains culture and society. Hoover relates:

> The notion of values is in itself peculiar. Writers have often tried to come to grips with what a value is and how one value can be separated from another. The sticky part is that values are hard to isolate. I may believe in freedom, but not freedom to the exclusion of equality, or freedom for certain kinds of behavior, such as theft. Values occur in webs of mutually modifying conditions. The confused self we all experience often may be seen acting out different sets of values at different moments, with a larger pattern visible only over a substantial time period. Still there remains a kind of consistency to human character—enough so that we can and do make general estimates of the orientation to life that people have. (1988, p. 65)

Whether welcome or not, the consequences of political values quickly emerge through implementation of policy. As Reich understands, "Public problems don't exist 'out there.' They are not discrete facts or pieces of data awaiting discovery. They are consequences of our shared values" (1987, p. 6). His assertion begs the question, *how are values shared*?

As with all human interaction, values are shared through the signs and symbols which create our social universe; they are shared through the myths and stories we tell each other; and they are shared through our collective participation in social rites and political rituals. Values are exemplified, maintained, and renewed through a continuous transformation of mutual understanding. In a democracy, the goal of governmental institutions is to actualize the political values of the electorate—to be responsive to elected leaders and to embody pragmatic concern for a diverse array of public interests. Bureaucratic organizations are human institutions accountable to multiple constituencies and masters. Bureaucracies exist in turbulent social environments and face constant demands for change both internally and externally. "Furthermore, this dramatic increase in the speed of change is not something that public executives have much control over" (Hyde, 1997, p. 8). Public organizations often use transformational efforts as a means to cope with the continual barrage of change. As a result, the importance of bureaucratic reform in the face of new and overwhelming environmental demands becomes a primary challenge for public administration.

Chapter 2.

Politics and Values of Bureaucratic Reform

Public administration as a formal discipline was born in the experience of bureaucratic reform. Since that time, bureaucracy has remained a key issue for political leaders and public administration scholars. Pragmatic and emotive concerns about bureaucracy are deeply ingrained into our political culture. Because the constitution speaks little about government administration, the quest to understand the role of bureaucracy has been a constant aspiration since the earliest days of the republic. "Bureaucratic reform is a time-weathered item on the agenda of American politics," notes political scientist Lawrence J. R. Herson, "From colonial days to the present, our society has been mistrustful of its bureaucracy, seeking ways to reform it, to impose constraints on it, constantly concerned that its powers have gone astray" (1986, p. 23). "Indeed, government reform movements have appeared many times over the history of American democracy," continues administrative scholar Pan Suk Kim and public administrator Lance W. Wolff, "not the least of which was the campaign launched in the 1780s to revise the Articles of Confederation" (1994, p. 73). Throughout American history, wary political observers and participants have been quick to propose and join calls for bureaucratic reform. "It should be recognized that the United States is built on a tradition or foundation of change or 'reinvention,' starting with the revolution of 1776," comments Robert L. Hollings, "At that time the government in power did not adjust to the changes in citizen demand—the result was a fundamental change in the organization of government" (1996, p. 3). The labels have varied, but reform goals have evidenced some consistencies in calls for change over time.

The subsequent conflicts among, Jeffersonian, Hamiltonian, and Madisonian ideals is perhaps the most striking example from early American history of the tension surrounding the proper role of executive administration. "The tension between democracy and administration, both as they were construed in the American founding and as their meaning has altered through time, has powerfully affected how the public sector in the United States has evolved" (Adams, 1992, p. 364). Bureaucratic reform has been a tempting answer for resolving that tension. However, reform seems to offer, at best, only a temporary delay from the inevitable onset of the recurring anxiety surrounding bureaucracy. "Despite valiant attempts at reconceiving bureaucratic theory in a more democratic vein—such as participatory bureaucracy, bureaucratic representation, and New Public Administration—American public administration has been unable to develop a satisfying and enduring conception of democratic administration" (Kravchuk, 1992, p. 374). Executive administrations turn over and political pressure quickly mounts for new and even better administrative reform. In terms of success, reform efforts have achieved mixed results—yet bureaucratic change remains a perennial goal. The lessons of the past are our only guides for an uncertain future. As Peters and Nelson advise, "The probability that future political reforms *will* fail is a direct function of our neglect of the reasons why past political reforms *have* failed" (1979, p. 249).

The constitutional framers never foresaw the tremendous extent to which bureaucracy in the American state would grow. It has continually paralleled society's overall growth and increasing complexity over time. The tension of an unelected bureaucracy's existence within a republic based on democratic ideals exists to this day. "Modernity exacerbates the question of a legitimate role for public administration with the American state," declares public administrationist Guy B. Adams, "The tension between a meaningful, democratic politics and an expert, specialized administration, embedded in our nation's founding and intensified greatly by the flowering of technical rationality nearly 100 years ago, remains at the forefront of any possible claim to legitimacy for public administration in the American state" (1992, p. 370). A major challenge, usually unstated in American administrative theory, has been to keep bureaucracy "weak enough not to be able to seize power, but strong enough to administer reasonably well" (Riggs, 1998, p. 27). Bureaucratic theorists grapple with a host of issues relating to the awkward presence of such a large administrative contingent (see Adams, 1992; Goodsell, 1985; King & Stivers, 1998; Rohr, 1985; Waldo, 1948; Wamsley, Goodsell, Rohr, White, & Wolf, 1992).

Elaborate theories, such as justifying bureaucracy as "representative" in the fashion of old-style, Madisonian pluralism and new-style diversity values, have been developed to justify bureaucracy's post-Constitutional blooming on the American scene. Still, the representative bureaucracy concept remains inadequate to address the cooperative mechanics essential for constitutionally-designed institutions to effectively govern. "It was not and is not readily apparent how a public administration with the capability to make government proactive fits into the American constitutional design in which the three branches share powers over administration" (Wamsley & Dudley, 1998).

Americans have traditionally shown a great distrust for the role of bureaucracy, especially one often perceived as "big government" (Henry, 1992, pp. 3-4). Over the course of this past century, the word *bureaucracy* has evolved into a rarely questioned pejorative. Pulitzer Prize winner and political linguist William Safire states, "*Bureaucracy* is a convenient weapon for citizens frustrated by what might be the delay of sensible administrative review, or what may be in Shakespeare's phrase, 'the insolence of office and the law's delay'" (1993, p. 654).

Despite all of the bureaucratic bashing which takes place in American popular and political culture, there is also a feeling (or hope) that bureaucracy can be "fixed." Alexis de Tocqueville wrote that Americans have a deeply-held, optimistic belief that "human institutions" are "malleable, capable of being shaped and combined at will"

(1840/1945, p. 45). The American people as well as their political leaders have proposed solutions for the bureaucracy problem on an almost regular and predictable basis over the course of this nation's history. Events of that history still inform much of our understanding of modern administration.

Administrative Reform in Historical Context

Mosher describes the formative years of American government as "government by gentlemen" (1968, p. 58). The "gentlemen" in question were usually white male owners of property with socially acceptable pedigrees. "In the first four years of American history, President Washington established the sometimes erroneous precedent for government by gentlemen (those of socially prominent families, the most formal educational backgrounds and the most prestigious occupations)," explains Kim and Wolff, "Washington declared his intent to make 'fitness of character' his primary objective in evaluating such persons (White, 1948; Johnson, 1992)" (1994, p. 76). The "fitness of character," however defined, at least showed the rudiments of a prototype merit system. In addition, the organs of government administration were relatively small and considered adequate to meet the needs of the day. The role of bureaucracy was not yet an issue of great importance. Henry offers another label for this era, "The Guardian Period":

It corresponds principally to George Washington's influential administration as president. Washington set the moral tone of the early federal bureaucracy by appointing men to office who were reputed to be persons of character as well as competence. Character was synonymous with merit, and merit during the administrations of Washington, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson meant a respected family background, a high degree of formal education, and substantial loyalty to the president—in short, being a member of the establishment. (1992, p. 232)

Administrative demands were minimal. Washington governed the first administration with a subdued style in accordance with the relatively slow-paced bureaucratic activities of his day. Loyalty was perhaps the most prominent value—loyalty not only to the president, but sincere commitment to the new Constitution represented real concerns at this early and still fragile stage of American history. In Washington's speech and in his writings he expressed a rather mild, yet distinguished approach to managing the fledgling administration:

> In every act of my administration, I have sought the happiness of my fellow citizens. My system for the attainment of this object has uniformly been to overlook all personal, local, and partial considerations: to contemplate the United States as one great whole; ... and to consult only the substantial and permanent interests of our country.—*To Selectmen of Boston, July 28, 1795*
>
> Let me in a friendly way impress the following maxims upon the Executive Officers. In all important matters, to deliberate maturely, but to execute promptly and vigorously; and not to put things off until the morrow, which can be done and require to be done today. Without an adherence to these rules, business never will be *well* done, or done in an easy manner, but will always be in arrear, with one thing treading upon the heels of another.—*To James McHenry, Secretary of War, July 13, 1796* (as quoted in Padover, 1955, p. 381)

Even at this early historical juncture, Washington expressed some concern for the values of efficiency ("execute promptly"), effectiveness (happiness of my fellow citizens"), productivity ("vigorously" and "not to put things off until the morrow"), and quality ("*well*-done"). The burdens of bureaucracy were relatively inconsequential as government was beginning a long-lasting era of, as Lowi describes, "distributive" politics—the allocation of plentiful resources among the citizenry (1964, p. 691).

President Washington's immediate successors governed administration in similar fashion (Henry, 1992, p. 232). But with the election of Andrew Jackson, this seemingly quaint approach to public administration was forcefully disabused by powerful political rhetoric. The age of the "common man" had arrived along with the maturation of western frontier politics. President Jackson articulated a new philosophy of bureaucratic reform. Jackson's administrative style rejected any hint of justifying administrative appointments based on "respected family background" or any other such class distinctions. Loyalty was re-emphasized and evaluated according to the degree of active political support for the party in power. Administrative patronage was viewed as a mechanism for bureaucratic control as well as a means for rewarding the party faithful. Although Jackson's new approach would prove to be a point of growing controversy, it was a significant reform which was justified on the basis of political responsiveness and it, in effect, democratized the growing civil service by upholding the growing American value of *equality*:

> Deep in the consciousness of the submerged masses is ever the desire for

> self-assertion, for "equality," while just as firmly planted in the minds of the fortunate few is the desire to control. The developments of the Revolutionary period had gone far toward liberating the masses from political and economic oppression, but it had by no means put them in control of the government. The period immediately following the Revolutionary era was not favorable to any further developments along this line. Indians and foreign powers gave trouble; the population was engaged in the occupation of new frontiers, and strong leadership was vital to the very life of the new nation. The man who could furnish this leadership was looked up to as a public benefactor. [Jackson] regarded himself in that light when he accepted public office, and if he could contrive to make his official position contribute to his private fortune, it was only a just reward for his services. The small group of leaders in any community were closely connected, and offices were passed around among friends and kinsmen as a matter of course. (Abernathy, 1976/1932, p. 21)

Thus began the so-called "spoils" period, an era acquiring "its name from a remark made in 1832 [by] Senator William L. Marcy of New York: American politicians 'see nothing wrong in the rule that to the victor belong the spoils of the enemy'" (Henry, 1992, p. 232). The spoils system was in actuality a large and unabashed patronage form of politics. With successive administrations, the spoils system continued to grow within the American political system. Its pervasive use countered emerging values of accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness with its own values, mainly political responsiveness and equality. Over time, notions of political corruption began to be associated with continued patronage practices. Henry reports:

> The corrupt excesses of the spoils system during this period eventually resulted in a reform movement determined to rid government of those bureaucrats who owed their office to no more than party hack work. From 1865 to 1883, a small group of intellectual idealists agitated for thoroughgoing reform of the entire personnel system. Notable in this respect were George William Curtis, Carl Schurz, Richard Henry Dana, and Thomas Jenckes. Largely as a result of their efforts, the New York Civil Service

> Reform Association, the nation's first, was founded in 1877. In 1881 thirteen associations modeled after the New York group merged to form the National Civil Service Reform League, now known as the National Civil Service League. (1992, p. 50)

The story of President Garfield's assassination in 1881 by a "dissatisfied job seeker" resonated within the American popular consciousness. The president's slow and untimely death served as a major catalyst for reform. The event energized the National Civil Service Reform League and other "progressives." Consequently, the Progressive Movement gained great momentum in becoming a true and powerful political force. Early Progressive activities culminated in 1883, with passage of the Pendleton Civil Service Act. Progressives were thus able to use the Pendleton Act as a model for subsequent bureaucratic reform in the cities and states.

During this same period and prior to serving as president himself, Woodrow Wilson set the course for the emergence of public administration as a formal discipline with his seminal essay, *The Study of Administration* (1887). In this profoundly influential work, Wilson introduced the concept of the politics-administration dichotomy which has bedeviled American administrative scholars ever since. The politics-administration dichotomy became a source of administrative values expressed as political neutrality with an emphasis on efficiency. "It has been useful," states Svara, "for asserting the normative relationship between elected officials and administrators in a democratic society" (1998, p. 51). More importantly, Wilson showed that public administration was a significant discipline worthy of serious scholarship.

Wilson's essay borrowed heavily from Progressive principles, but called for even grander reform. "The present movement called civil service reform must," Wilson writes, "after the accomplishment of its first purpose, expand into effort to improve, not the *personnel* only, but also the organization and methods of our government offices" (1887/1941, p. 481). Professionalism increasingly became a force which bestowed upon the bureaucracy some prestige. As Rourke notes, "Leading figures in the Progressive movement agreed that the distinctive contribution of administrators to national policy making was what Herbert Kaufman (1956) later described as 'neutral competence'—a wealth of knowledge and skills available in the corridors of bureaucracy that all elected officials, no matter what their political persuasion, could call upon for both useful information and disinterested advice in designing national policy" (1992, p. 539). "The progressive movement had several effects on public administration," notes political scientists Benjamin Page and Mark P. Petracca, "Efficiency gained prominence as a goal along with neutrality (the key to the civil service reforms of the 1880s)—further supporting belief in the natural separation of administration from politics" (1983, p. 200). Page and Petracca also note about the progressive era:

> An important manifestation of this movement was the Budget and Accounting Act of 1921, which inaugurated the concept of the executive budget. Its main purpose was to provide for central direction of federal spending. The traditional legislative budget had found executive agencies

> going directly to congressional committees with requests for appropriations. The result had been an exceedingly fragmented process that lacked any central overview whereby the values of efficiency and economy could be invoked. In addition to encouraging the pursuit of these values, the act also established the budget as one of the president's most important sources of control over the bureaucracy (1983, p. 201).

To summarize, several reform values have been emphasized to varying degrees during the first century of American administrative history. These values include accountability, anti-corruption, effectiveness, efficiency, equality, loyalty, merit, political neutrality, productivity, quality, and responsiveness. The attempt to implement these values at an operational level has been buttressed by, as Tocqueville notes, a distinctive American optimism which assumes that success can be achieved through institutional change. The model of the politics-administration dichotomy articulated by Wilson served as a theoretical model underlying progressive principles and calls for reform. President Theodore Roosevelt carried forward many of the reform values of the progressive era (Kim & Wolff, 1994, p. 76). Many of these values have proven to be enduring elements of subsequent reform efforts aimed at bureaucracy.

The Ritual of the Blue Ribbon Commission

Political control over bureaucracy comes in many forms. One of the most prominent, and one that has become a ritual of politics in the United States, is the so-called "blue-ribbon commission." These "task forces" are often appointed by reigning executive administrations at the local, state, and national levels. Others are legislatively-created, self-appointed, or extensions of research foundations. They are usually charged, in some form, with the mission to investigate the current state of bureaucratic affairs and to make significant recommendations for reform. These commissions are numerous—one might say in the modern political era that they are inevitable. They provide symbolic evidence that elected officials are taking action (Edelman, 1964/1985).

A listing of these organizations with national exposure could begin with the National Civil Service Reform League at the turn of the century and continue into the twentieth-century with the Keep Commission (1905-09); Taft Commission on Economy and Efficiency (1910-13); Joint Commission on Reorganization (1921-24); the Brownlow Committee (1936-37); the two Hoover Commissions (1947-49 & 1953-55); Study Commissions on Executive Reorganization (1953-68); the Ash Council (1969-71); the Bush Commission (1981); the Grace Commission (1982-84), the Volcker Commission (1989), and the Winter Commission (1993) (for related listings of major reform efforts see: Cozetto, Pedelski, & Tipple, 1996, p. 32; Kim & Wolff, 1994, pp. 73-74; Moe, 1994, p. 116). Many other similar commissions have originated at state and local levels (see for example: Arkansas Quality Advisory Council, 1993; Arizona Governor's Office of Strategic Planning and Budgeting & Governor's Office for Excellence in Government, 1994; Little Hoover Commission - California, 1995; Michigan Public-Private Partnership Commission, 1992; Oklahoma Governor's Commission on Government Performance, 1995; Oregon Progress Board, 1994; Texas Performance Review, 1996; Virginia Blue Ribbon Strike Force, 1994). In fact, some of the power of reform commissions at the national level results from their subsequent cascading effects. Concerns shown at the national level are used as reference points by lower levels of government. Imitative commissions are formed that disperse values similar to those that motivate the national task forces.

At the national level, gaining and maintaining control of the bureaucracy is one of the president's earliest and most important tasks. "The permanent bureaucracy must know what the President wants to do, what he can do, and how much time and effort will be put into the presidential activity," explains political scientist Howard Ball, "This means that the President and his senior staff responsible for working with the permanent bureaucracy must devote considerable time (a major dilemma for the White House) to the formulation and implementation of various strategies to achieve this balancing and guidance of the federal agencies" (1984, p. 29).

In the midst of the Great Depression and on the eve of a series of historical events which would eventually lead to America's involvement in World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt quickly became convinced of the necessity of managing the federal bureaucracy. In 1936, President Roosevelt formed the President's Committee on Administrative Management under the direction of Louis Brownlow. Unlike, previous efforts, the Brownlow Committee drew heavily upon the expertise of several renowned scholars and practitioners in the still emerging discipline of public administration. In the words of Page and Petracca,

> Roosevelt recognized the growing need for an adequate advisory and management staff to help presidents handle their new policy and administrative responsibilities. In 1936, he appointed the President's Committee on Administrative Management, headed by Louis Brownlow. The committee's main purpose was to study whether and how to increase the president's administrative supervisory power. The Committee recommended the following: a clear-cut hierarchical organizational pattern for all agencies; the consolidation of existing departments into a more manageable number so that the president could exercise more meaningful supervision; incorporation of independent agencies into the major departments; and an increase in the president's personal staff to help him supervise the administrative functions of planning, budgeting, and personnel. (1983, p. 201).

"The impetus for this change apparently came directly from the President's experiences in seeking to administer the government's burgeoning and increasingly chaotic Executive Branch" (Wamsley & Dudley, 1998, p. 327). The thrust of the Brownlow Report was its forceful recommendation to centralize command and control under the president. The report encouraged consolidation of fragmented departments and establishment of clear lines of executive authority. Furthermore, the recommendations of the Brownlow Committee were antithetical to the increasingly specialized professional class within the public service. "Generalism, too, was a clear value of the Brownlow Committee" (Henry, 1992, p. 236). This perspective was based more on political considerations rather than technical concerns. Resistance to specialization could be considered as an instinctive response to growing "technocratic" power. But Roosevelt and the Brownlow Committee members recognized that the presidential office necessarily depended upon professional administrators to implement policy. Presidential scholar Richard E. Neustadt relates:

> "The President needs help," wrote the Brownlow Committee of 1936 in its famous report on administrative management. Since then "help" has been heaped upon his office in the form of staff facilities of every sort. The visibility of this development has been so high that scholars have a name for it: the "institutionalized Presidency." Some of its advantages have been so obvious that competent observers are unstinting in their praise. "It converts the Presidency," writes Clinton Rossiter, "into an instrument of twentieth century government; it gives the incumbent a sporting chance to stand the strain and fulfill his constitutional mandate." (1990, p. 128)

That "constitutional mandate" is precisely the subject of controversy in some academic circles. Public administrationists Gary L. Wamsley and Larkin S. Dudley argue that the Brownlow Committee Report fundamentally transformed conventional conceptions of the Constitution in favor of an ideology which strengthened the presidency:

> The leading figures of public administration consciously collaborated with a sitting president to significantly alter our understanding of the executive, nor given the context should it seem surprising. They did this by recommending reorganization of the executive branch as though it were a hierarchical organization with monocentric power. Reorganizing the executive branch in such a manner in a government of separate institutions

> with shared powers has the effect of altering our conception of the basic constitutional design—one of polyarchic power. Gulick and his colleagues, with the city manager or corporate CEO in mind, looked to the presidency to become the point of democratic responsiveness and responsibility. A popularly elected chief executive would direct an executive branch configured hierarchically and staffed with non-partisan, competent administrators. The context of their time, their conception, and rationale converged with FDR's desire to strengthen his hand and preserve the New Deal against Republican counterattack. The results—the consequences—were monumental. Regardless of the context and the rationale and rhetoric used, one cannot reorganize the executive branch in the manner Gulick, Brownlow and Merriam proposed without reorganizing the polity and changing our understanding of the Constitution as well. (1998, p. 332-333)

Significantly expanding presidential power could easily prove to be a controversial point. This more fundamental reform was masked somewhat by proclaiming the value of apolitical professionalism—the values of efficiency and political neutrality would now supposedly drive the public service. Wamsley and Dudley explain:

> However, a positive state and expanded presidential power could only prove acceptable if there was a way to attract support from the center of the political continuum while deflecting criticism that would come from the ends of the political continuum. According to Peri Arnold, the solution brought forth by administrative management (through Gulick and the Brownlow Committee) was a public administration based on a claim of neutral or non-partisan competence and dedicated to efficiency under the democratically elected president as manager of an executive branch staffed with such public administrators. The keystone for all this was a championing of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness, the triple E values. There was no better way to demonstrate commitment to such values than a political ritual with considerable power for Americans—a staged enactment called government, more precisely executive branch, reorganization. (1998, p. 339)

Although temporarily delayed by the uproar over Roosevelt's attempt to "pack" the Supreme Court, many of the Brownlow Commission recommendations were subsequently enacted into law. "Some of these recommendations were ignored, but—as we have seen—the Executive Office of the President was established in 1939 (in response to the Brownlow committee recommendations), to provide the president with a general staff that helps him mold policy and oversee administration," observe Page and Petracca, "To a large extent the New Deal established the federal administrative structure today" (1983, p. 201).

President Truman followed through with Franklin D. Roosevelt's attempts to strengthen the president—surprisingly, through another former president from the opposing political party. Truman had appointed Herbert Hoover to head the Commission on the Organization of the Executive Branch of Government (Hoover Commission). "After much study, the Hoover Commission recommended that the presidency be strengthened, not diminished" (Milkis & Nelson, 1990, p. 281). Wamsley and Dudley comment, "The first Hoover Commission ... was a virtual replay of the Brownlow study" (1998, p. 340). Truman capitalized on the Hoover Commission's report to garner bipartisan support for reform legislation. In 1949, congress passed the Executive Reorganization Act which further united support for the growing presidential power. "Hoover's endorsement of executive reorganization suggested that a political consensus gradually was emerging in support of the modern presidency," explains political scientists Sidney M. Milkis and Michael Nelson (1990, p. 282). Later, Herbert Hoover again served as chair of a reform commission, but this time the call came from Congress:

> A second Hoover Commission was created by Congress in 1953. Republican leaders in the House and Senate hoped for a replay of the first Hoover Commission, this time with the assurance that it would not be sidetracked from its mission to reduce the size of the government. These hopes were realized. Although the first Hoover Commission had become interested primarily in improving the administrative management of the executive branch, the second concentrated on issues of policy and function. At the heart of the second Hoover Commission's recommendations was the idea that many of the Roosevelt-era programs and agencies had been counterproductive. But the commission's conservative ideological approach guaranteed that it would have little influence on the Eisenhower administration, which accepted most of the changes brought by the New Deal. (Milkis & Nelson, 1990, p. 292)

Calls for wholesale change in government have usually been tempered by the incrementalist pace of policy-making which characterizes the American political system (Lindblom, 1959). The 1950s are perhaps best viewed as a time of rebuilding and healing following the turmoil and problems of the previous two decades. The decade of the 1950s exemplified the incrementalist mode. Public policy theorist Francis E. Rourke observes, "Because he was not himself bent on making radical departures in national policy, passive immobility on the part of the bureaucracy was not a great source of frustration for Eisenhower" (1992, p. 541). Government reform during that period was played out by tinkering at the edges rather than a full-scale assault on some real or imagined bureaucratic monolith. "Eisenhower's own contribution to [bureaucratic reform] was the creation of the now familiar category of Schedule C positions within the civil service—a category embracing both middle-level policy making and politically sensitive roles within the bureaucratic establishment," explains Rourke, "As a result of the changes he initiated, presidents now have the luxury of taking political allegiance into account in making appointments to many more executive posts" (1992, p. 541).

The momentous events of the crisis-driven 1960s deflected many of the calls for formal bureaucratic reform. However, during this "anti-establishment" period and in the wake of the divisive Vietnam War, all the institutions of government were seemingly under attack. President Lyndon B. Johnson began to solidify and expand the New Deal programs through his Great Society and War on Poverty programs. However, he was ultimately forced to sacrifice himself politically in order to instill some balance in a political system rocked by the great social tensions arising out of the Vietnam experience.

The challenge to gain control of bureaucracy is that much greater when the newly elected president arrives in Washington with the congressional majority held by the opposing political party. Such was the case with Richard Nixon who consequently looked "to achieve policy aims through administrative action, as opposed to legislative change" (Ball, 1984, p. 48). Strategies for achieving control of the bureaucracy are well documented for history through the notorious Malek Manual. Written by Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Frederick Malek, the report outlined a Macchiavellian approach for commanding an unwieldy bureaucracy not perceived as sympathetic (Aberbach & Rockman, 1976) with the Nixon administration. "The Malek Report to Nixon clearly portrayed the strategy: political control of agencies precedes management, policy, or program control" (Ball, 1984, p. 49). Even though the Nixon administration could understandably feel that it was under siege from several quarters (e.g., a Congress held by the opposing party and an aggressive media), a survey of attitudes among public administrators at the time suggest that they did not oppose Nixon's policies to the extent that the White House believed (Cole & Caputo, 1979).

Nixon also made use of the traditional strategy for taming the bureaucracy—the blue ribbon commission. Ball describes Nixon's reform effort:

> As soon as he took office, President Nixon asked Roy Ash, president of Litton Industries to chair an Advisory Council on Executive Management. During the first two years of the Nixon administration, the Ash Council came up with a number of recommendations concerning [independent regulatory commissions] and executive management, executive department reorganization, and suggestions for a more effective White House management of the federal bureaucracy. These plans for government reorganization, noted Nixon, were "sending seismic tremors through the federal bureaucracy." (1984, p. 50)

Before the events of Watergate overwhelmed the Nixon administration, the Ash Council enjoyed some success in getting its recommendations implemented:

> The major success came early in the Nixon administration with congressional approval in July 1970 of a major reorganization of the White House Office. Reorganization proposal no. 2 called for the creation of a Domestic Council and the conversion of the Bureau of the Budget into an enlarged Office of Management and Budget. The plan called for a Domestic Council (analogous, in policy-making terms, to the National Security Council) to

> develop centralized, coordinated national domestic policy, largely implemented through administrative actions instead of asking for legislation. The OMB was developed from a policy-neutral agency to a policy arm of the President in order to implement presidential domestic proposals through various controls over the federal bureaucracy. The plan was approved by Congress without much discussion. (Ball, 1984, pp. 50-51)

Nixon's attempts to reform bureaucracy continued with the values of centralization and control. Nixon justified many of his actions taken toward the bureaucracy under the value of political responsiveness. Rourke explains:

> Just as his predecessors, Richard Nixon strongly distrusted the bureaucracy, and certainly no president worked harder at developing White House organizations that might forestall bureaucratic efforts to influence administration policies. Nixon also saw something that his predecessors had not. He saw the discretionary power vested in the bureaucracy by the statutes they administered as representing an opportunity as well as a problem for a new president. If the exercise of this discretion could be controlled by the White House, it could be used to advance presidential rather than congressional objectives in the everyday administration of the laws that executive agencies were charged with enforcing. All that this strategy appeared to require for its success was a significant expansion in the number of appointees at the top echelons of the bureaucracy who would be highly responsive to presidential goals in administering the statutes over which Congress had given them authority. Thus was born what Richard Nathan (1975) was eventually to call the administrative presidency. Under this new regime, responsiveness rather than neutral competence would be the star that would guide administrative behavior. (1992, p. 542)

The reflection of these particular values through Nixon's administrative efforts were probably due to the unique political situation of the time as well as the president's own personal style. Nixon's distrust of the bureaucracy was so profound that he believed that he "had to create a counterbureaucracy"(Price, 1977, p. 194) embodied by political appointees loyal to the president and in assumed odds with career civil servants. The Watergate experience further heightened American distrust of government.

During President Gerald Ford's brief presidency, economic inflation was the major issue of the day. Ford directed his administrative reforms in that direction through the use of several executive orders dealing specifically with inflation. The goal was to "sensitize mid-level bureaucrats to the importance of" curbing "inflation by lowering, where possible, government-mandated cost increases" (Ball, 1984, p. 53). Congress supported this strategy by creating the Council on Wage and Price Stability (COWPS). Governmental policies and regulations were thus treated to a systematic cost-benefit analysis in order to measure whether potential outcomes possessed inflationary tendencies. "Virtually all regulatory agencies came under the purview of COWPS, where a small group of economists reviewed newly proposed regulations and their supporting documents" (Ball, 1984, p. 53).

"Regulatory reform was an issue in the 1976 presidential campaign; both Ford and Carter discussed the value to the general community of streamlining the federal bureaucracy" (Ball, 1984, p. 54). With Jimmy Carter's electoral victory, came a spate of initiatives culminating in legislation known as the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978. Ball discusses:

> President Carter came to Washington, D.C., with a primary goal: to reduce the complexity, duplication, wastefulness, and carelessness of federal regulatory practices. to accomplish this basic goal meant to develop strategies that would eliminate unneeded regulations and unnecessary

> burdens on consumers and businesses. The perennial challenge for any President concerned about the practical and normative consequences of regulatory sprawl is to overhaul the regulatory process without totally dismantling it and demoralizing those working in the agencies. Carter's administration was the first contemporary presidency to work on this challenge for the full term .... There were no fewer than five major plans—reorganization efforts, personnel moves and development of the senior executive service, budgeting initiatives, economic deregulation, and regulatory management techniques in various executive orders—that Carter's administration tried to implement in order to reach their goal. (Ball, 1984, pp. 54-55)

The reform efforts under Carter may have represented an ambitious program overall, but given that the reforms were presented as separate packages and over the entire four years of the administration's tenure, the approach was very consistent with the preferred political mode of incremental changes. As James Kilpatrick stated when remarking about President Jimmy Carter's 1978 governmental reform proposals, "Reform is like garlic in salad. A little goes a long way" (quoted in Gibbs, 1994, p. 106).

Reagan launched his reform effort on two fronts. The first was a blue ribbon commission called the Task Force on Regulatory Relief (Bush Commission) led by Vice-President George Bush. The second was the more visible Private Sector Survey on Cost Control (Grace Commission) headed by entrepreneur J. Peter Grace. Following the market-oriented ideology of the Reagan administration, thousands of business leaders were brought to Washington in order to investigate government practices through a private-sector perspective. The Grace Commission produced

2,478 recommendations (Peters, 1989, p. 238) and claimed to have "discovered that more than $424 billion could be cut out of the federal deficit simply by eliminating waste and inefficiency from the national bureaucracy" (Kennedy & Lee, 1984, p. 1). Findings by the Grace Commission were received with great skepticism within the public administration community. "Many of the recommendations have been deemed unfeasible by experts in government management, and many ignored the political realities of government" (Peters, 1989, p. 239). The Grace Commission also confused policy choices with promoting efficiency. Declaring that a particular program should be abolished for political reasons does not speak to how well the program is run in terms of efficiency and productivity. However, the Grace Commission afforded the Reagan with substantial political ammunition to be used against the demonized bureaucracy.

Bush, alone among the modern presidents, had forged his managerial style in the thickets of public administration in a host of appointed administrative positions including U.N. Ambassador, Chief of the U.S. Liaison Office to the People's Republic of China, and CIA Director. Even as Vice-President, he chaired his own task force on bureaucratic reform. Managing the federal bureaucracy was a mantle of responsibility Bush wore relatively easily and comfortably. Compared with Reagan, Bush had a more low-key, less-ideological ("kinder and gentler") approach to governance which he used to quietly consolidate the values of the Reagan

Revolution.

Perhaps the Reagan/Bush administrations' most important contribution to altering contemporary understanding of the bureaucratic role came through numerous initiatives undertaken to foster an orientation to market dynamics. This market-approach represented an important break from previous administrations and set the stage for the "reinventing government" movement to emerge in force. During the close of an era of Republican dominance in the White House, Lan and Rosenbloom outline what they call a "public administration in transition":

> The Reagan-Bush administrations have given impetus to a public administration that differs dramatically from previous models. They have favored deregulation, load shedding, privatization, devolution of functions to the state and local governments, and public choice initiatives. Some would add "hollowing," that is, underfunding of and underinvestment in government, as well. These initiatives have not been accompanied by anything resembling a coherent "white paper" such as the Brownlow report of 1937. Indeed, there is not single label that has been applied to them. However, their underlying logic is to make public administration as market-based as possible. The chief claim of this approach is that public administration can achieve its historic quest for both efficiency and responsiveness to the public through competitive market-like practices. Rather than posing an administrative apparatus run by politically neutral experts, as did the Progressives, or one sensitive to organized interests, it sets up a populistic approach in which public administration is driven more directly by citizens' demands for public services. (1992, p. 535)

Although not articulated as such, the Reagan/Bush reforms began to engender a prototype of administration which greatly valued the business perspective. The market-orientation, for example, can be argued to have begun a redefinition of citizen as political participant to citizen as customer. The total quality management (TQM) movement supported this emerging view with its redefinition of customer within a systems perspective.

According to Lan and Rosenbloom, the Reagan-Bush legacy of values include (in addition to traditional values such as efficiency, economy, and effectiveness): cost-effectiveness, entrepreneurship, competition, quality, public choice, and personal responsibility (p. 536-537). After almost twelve years of Reagan-Bush, the public began to rally around a new value which was ingenious in its ability to assimilate almost all other values under its banner. That new value was *change*. "Change is something that enshrouds each of us daily and, more to the point, it has become our expectation for government" (Gibbs, 1994, p. 105). The stage was set for the reinvention movement to make its grand entrance. Even before the Clinton-Gore administration took office, reinventing government had already arrived. With the publication of Osborne and Gaebler's book, *Reinventing Government* (1992), political and administrative reformers took in hand a new manifesto to implement the widespread call for change. As Moe states, "Change, almost literally for change's sake, has acquired a theological aura discouraging discussion within the public administration community" (1994, p. 113).

One of the first blue ribbon commissions that adopted a change orientation consistent with reinvention was the National Commission on the State and Local Public Service, or the Winter Commission. The commission's first report (National

Commission on the State and Local Public Service, 1993), focused on the bureaucratic reform needs of state and local governments. Christine Gibbs as president of the American Society for Public Administration writes, "Although the reform package submitted on state and local reform by the Winter Commission suffered from [bad timing] upon its release in juxtaposition to the National Performance Review, it warrants careful if not equal attention" (1994, p. 105). Not so surprisingly, the Winter Commission parallels previous reform efforts at the national level in many ways. It speaks to the traditional values of efficiency, budget reform, deregulation, open/responsive government, and strengthening of executive power. It also captures the distinctive flavor of the reinvention movement by advocating strategies which highlight the values of flattening bureaucracy and increasing flexibility. Moreover, the report embraced the value of change even going so far as to challenge "programs of public affairs and administration to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be catalysts for change rather than guardians of the status quo" (Dunn, 1994, p. 109). Political scientist and former state budget analyst Richard C. Elling states that the Winter Commission "owes an intellectual debt to the 'reinventing government' arguments of David Osborne and Ted Gaebler" (1994, p. 107). "But," Elling also notes, "the commission does not completely embrace this worldview. There is, for example, only very limited discussion of privatization" and the report recognizes that privatization is "far from a cure-all" (1994, p. 107). In addition, the Winter Commission Report addresses several unique areas such as campaign finance reform, citizen volunteership, health care reform, and the "learning" style of organizations. These are values that were apparently of particular concern to state and local governments. The report summarizes the recommendations:

> The Commission believes that the path to high-performance government based on the *trust and lead* strategy is clear: Give leaders the authority to act. Put them in charge of lean, responsive agencies. Hire and nurture knowledgeable, motivated employees, and give them the freedom to innovate in accomplishing the agencies' missions. Engage citizens in the business of government, while at the same time encouraging them to be partners in problem-solving. Finally—and a key to further progress—solve the health care funding crisis. (National Commission on the State and Local Public Service, 1993, p. 9)

In line with the reinvention metaphor for bureaucratic reform, the Winter Commission rejects incrementalist approaches. As the report states, "This program challenges those who say that American can somehow stumble to recovery through the coming decade by tinkering here and there" (National Commission on the State and Local Public Service, 1993, p. 9). The Winter Commission promised a lot in terms of planed output subsequent to its first report. However, the Winter Commission has not issued any major publications since and does not even have a detectable presence on the World Wide Web—very unlike its national counterpart, the NPR.

In summary, blue ribbon commissions targeting administrative reform have been significant features on the political landscape over this past century. "Critics of the 'committee approach' to management point to a long history of what they view as failed attempts to manage by committee" (Moe, 1994, p. 117). However, these task forces have carried a variety of bureaucratic values and have had some observable influence on the changing role of public administration. These values include the time-honored administrative value of efficiency as well as newer values such as flexibility and change. Citing the "checks and balances" and "separation of powers" concepts, Chief Justice Warren Burger points out that the constitutional framers "ranked other values higher than efficiency" (quoted in Ball, 1984, p. 7). Although progressive values still retain a presence in modern politics, to a significant degree, these values compete with an increasing emphasis for alternative values. Rourke, for example, argues that the value of political responsiveness has to a great extent displaced the value of neutral competence as a result of the desire by modern presidential administrations to control the bureaucracy coupled with newly available expertise found outside of government (1992). The values of bureaucratic reform are channeled through guiding philosophies representing the prevailing management theories of the time.

Management theories are fluid entities which have a historical dimension. The intellectual legacies of previous management philosophies seem to live on as new ideas come to the fore. Analysis of a particular reform effort is best undertaken with an appreciation for the context of the underlying administrative theory and key ideological assumptions.

Administrative Reform in Theoretical Context

"For all the controversy, expense, and preoccupation with public administrative reorganization, not nearly enough is known about the phenomenon" (Garnett, 1980/1984, p. 198). The lack of depth in understanding of bureaucratic reform is perhaps one symptom of a deeper gap in understanding of bureaucracy itself. "American social scientists have thus far failed to take bureaucracy seriously," remarks bureaucracy theorist Larry B. Hill, "That is, although public bureaucracy has emerged as a significant political phenomenon in recent decades, Americans have neglected to integrate this development into their general understandings of the political process" (1992, p. 16). Public administration theorist David H. Rosenbloom (1983) postulates that the difficulty in achieving a coherent bureaucratic theory results from the historic development of three independent streams of administrative research. The first is associated with the executive branch and presents a managerial orientation which emphasizes the values of efficiency, economy, and effectiveness. The second is associated with the legislative branch and presents a political orientation which emphasizes the values of accountability, representation, and responsiveness. The third is associated with the judiciary and presents a legal approach which emphasizes equity, justice, and procedural due process (see also Lan & Rosenbloom, 1992). Public administrationist Robert S. Kravchuk builds upon Rosenbloom's theory but sees administrative theory as shackled even more by inconsistencies which underlie liberalism itself:

> Although the separation of powers is a powerful motif for understanding the centrifugal tendencies of modern administrative theory, the tensions which exist between the divergent approaches to public administrative theory are best understood within the context of more basic tensions which characterize the "deep structure" of liberal thought. Benjamin Barber explores liberalism's tensions by exposing its three dominant "personalities," which he terms the "anarchist," "realist," and "minimalist" dispositions (Barber, 1984). Liberal politics combines aspects of all three dispositions. Each of the three dominant dispositions may be seen as a political response to conflict. Conflict is regarded as the fundamental condition of liberal democratic politics. Each disposition suggests quite different approaches to the social amelioration of conflict. Anarchism, for instance, is the antipolitics of liberalism. Conflict is viewed as a problem created by politics rather than a natural condition of society to be ameliorated through politics .... The realist disposition is the "realpolitik" of liberal thought. Conflict is viewed as natural in civil society and indeed as one of its defining features .... The minimalist, in contrast would deal with it through tolerance, seeking to invent or shape institutions, customs, and attitudes in a manner that will enable society to live with conflict and dissensus. The minimalist tends to be hostile both to individuals (anarchists) and to state power (realists); for concentration of power in either is dangerous. (1992, p. 375-376)

According to Kravchuk, "In liberalism, an unresolveable tension exists between the notion of a minimal state, which seeks to prevent expansion and abuse of governmental power, and that of a powerful state, which seeks to expand power in the effort to secure the proper ends of government. The two appear to be hopelessly opposed; yet, both are required by the logic of liberalism" (1992, p. 377). Kravchuk concludes:

> Public administrative theory is therefore confronted with problems at its roots. The field of public administration is today without a unifying core because no such unity is permitted within the deep structure of liberal thought. Liberalism denies to public administration a fair chance to integrate the diverse strands of contemporary administrative theory. The identity crisis of American public administration derives from the generally schizophrenic character of liberalism. As such, public administration has inherited from its liberal parent the intellectual baggage of a split personality. [Therefore] public administrators ... often must navigate between conflicting values. (1992, p. 378)

Conflict over values provides the necessary impetus for the attempt to reform bureaucracy. Even though understanding of bureaucracy may be limited, the longstanding practice of administrative reform is alive and well. Miewald & Steinman comment:

> It is not quite true that Americans only talk about the weather but do nothing about it. There is a long tradition—ranging from half-demented rainmakers to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration—of trying to "reform" Mother Nature. And we have been no less industrious in our attempts to control and improve the bureaucracy, an institution which other cultures have often regarded as unchanging as the physical elements. True, despite all this effort, our parades are rained on as frequently as anywhere and perhaps our administration is not better and no worse than any other. The remarkable thing is that we keep trying. (1984, p. 1)

American bureaucracy is an extremely pervasive network of institutional systems and represents a great divergence of functional areas. Bureaucratic reform then is an activity which takes place on multiple levels and may address very general or very specific issues. *Reform* means different things to different people. "Part of the difficulty is that *reorganization* is an umbrella term," observes political and organizational theorist Karen M. Hult, "Typically labeled as reorganization are plans to transfer, eliminate, merge, and separate units; to change boundary lines at the level of the office, bureau, agency, or the entire executive branch; to 'coordinate' programs; and to add or substract functions (see, e.g. Grafton, 1979)" (1987, p. 7). Underlying each effort to reform bureaucracy have been prevailing management theories and political ideologies. As Moe observes, "All reports on governmental organization and management have their basis in some theory about the nature of government and about the management of that government" (1994, p. 111). These theories and ideologies form patterns over time as they re-emerge back into administrative and popular consciousness, often with different labels or slight variations of the theme. Adams offers a useful analogy:

> Because canvas and stretcher bars are expensive, it has been a common practice for centuries for artists to paint over their earlier paintings in an effort to save money. Over the years, though an image—a *pentimento*—from the earlier painting may bleed through what has been painted on top. Likewise over the years, public administration theorists have painted new versions of public administration theories over the old, with the traditionalists (White and McSwain, 1990), the new public administration, and the interpretive and critical versions, all among them. Although each of these versions of public administration is thought of as affording an entirely new view of the field, the old images continue to bleed through. These old images—images of technique and rationality—are part and parcel of modernity, and they are not so easily covered over. (1992, p. 370)

A major influence, perhaps in an historical sense *the* major influence of American public administration, is the business orientation fostered by the nation's capitalist economic system. Contrasts and comparisons between the public and private sectors saturate much of the reform literature over time. For example, public administration's early preoccupation with the value of efficiency coincided with the influential business paradigm of the time, Frederick Taylor's scientific management (1911; see also Gilbreth, 1912; Lowry, Maynard & Stegemerten, 1940), which sought to maximize efficiency in work processes. "Taylor found a ready audience for the notion of scientific management during the Progressive Era" (Adams, 1992, p. 366). The administrative concern for the value of efficiency had it roots in the Progressive Movement, but it soon evolved into the predominant value in the reform arena. Henry elaborates:

> The ultimate value of this period was efficiency—in other words, doing the job with the least resources. The values, concepts, and structure of the civil service were most compatible with the notion of efficiency. During the reform period, efficiency had been associated with morality and lack of corruption. Efficiency also was "neutral," another traditional value of the civil service and public personnel administration. Thus, a somewhat inconsistent, but soothing, amalgam of beliefs emerged that packed goodness, merit, morality, neutrality, efficiency, and science into one conceptual lump. Of these values, efficiency came to represent the best of the rest, a value "more equal" than the others—what "good" public personnel administration was all about." (1992, p. 234)

The practical ideology hidden behind the prevailing value of business-like efficiency is once again the politics-administration dichotomy. In its most powerful form, the politics-administration dichotomy serves as a fundamental mythology within political and bureaucratic arenas which governs the behavior of participants in the administrative process (Montjoy & Watson, 1995; Roberts, 1994). On the surface, it speaks to democratic values by holding a neutral administration responsive to political masters. However, the theoretical base of the politics-administration dichotomy supports an overall orientation which can be characterized as anti-democratic in value in at least two ways. First, on the administrative level, it promotes instrumentality at the expense of sound evaluation of political judgement. It attempts to deny public administrators from participating in the political process at the point of policy implementation. As Waldo states, "Autocracy at work is the unavoidable price for democracy after hours" (1948). If the politics-administration dichotomy acted in the way it was intended, it would in effect, trade one value (the right of administrators to participate in the polity as administrators) for a higher value (the acquiescence of bureaucracy to the public will). In reality, the literature suggests that the separation of politics and administration is not quite so clear (Koven, 1992; Nalbandian, 1994; O'Toole, 1987; Rourke, 1992; Spicer & Terry, 1996; Svara, 1998; Waldo, 1987). The values of public administrators *do* find some expression throughout the policy process from initial interpretation of laws through actual policy implementation (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973). Of course, this is the other side of the coin—such administrative liberties, unless reconceptualized under another theory, do not account for—and may even be at odds with—the wishes of the citizenry.

The second and perhaps more important way that the politics-administration dichotomy is evidence of anti-democratic values is its intimate relationship with the increasing rationalization of social life. The politics-administration dichotomy is, itself, a rationalist perspective. Its roots can be traced to the bureaucratization, first described by sociologist Max Weber, that was beginning to emerge in almost all forms of human organization toward the end of the Nineteenth Century (1948). The separation of politics and administration coincides on a grand, society-wide scale with one of Weber's many characteristics of bureaucracy— namely, the separation of ownership and management. In this case, the "owners" are the citizenry and the managers are the public administration professionals. The politics-administration dichotomy and its conceptual cousins, the values of efficiency and political neutrality can therefore be viewed as manifest symptoms of overall bureaucratization. The organizational force behind bureaucracy's efficiency is the division of labor which is, as Marx first revealed, a source of self-alienating power (1845-1846/1978). In accordance with the onset of modernity, the bureaucratic ethic embodied by the dichotomy replaces political sentiments with instrumental action. Emphasis is on procedure, technique, and organizational form. It redefines human relationships according to governing bureaucratic norms (Hummel, 1994). Henry articulates the concept: "Bureaucracy is the inescapable political expression of technology" (1992, p. 9). As such, it delivers an impersonal quality to those within its sphere of influence (Hummel, 1994; Marx, 1845-1846/1978, p. 160; Weber, 1948). Attacks against government bureaucracy can be seen as a protest against the dehumanizing power of encroaching bureaucratization. As technological advancements make it more difficult to understand the true significance of participation in life events, humans demand that such technology address human needs, wants, and desires at a personal level—a process Naisbitt refers to as "high tech/high touch" (1982, p. 39; 1990, p. 12). "What happens is that whenever new technology is introduced into society, there must be a counterbalancing human response—that is, *high touch*—or the technology is rejected" (Naisbitt, 1982, p. 39). Bureaucracy, viewed as a technology of organizational form would be no exception to strong social demands for a more human-oriented approach. The history of bureaucratic reform exhibits the political powerplay over the tension between the insatiable quest for efficiency and the deep concern for the human condition. As Carnevale and Hummel observe, "Reforms seem to swing perpetually back and forth between concern for the task and concern for the person" (1996, p. 1).

The quest to emulate the great advancements seen in the technological sphere of life has somewhat clouded understanding of management endeavors. Confusion has usually arisen out of the attempt to oversimplify the dynamics of human relations. The politics-administration dichotomy as a descriptive model of bureaucratic process has been shown to be somewhat deficient. Because some of the most intense and significant political maneuvering takes place during the time of policy implementation (Bardach, 1977; Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973; Sabatier & Mazmanian), the politics-administration dichotomy as an absolute value is shown to be a rather naive model of reality. However, this is not to suggest that the politics-administration dichotomy, especially in its guise as the value of efficiency, does not have enormous influence—it does.

Efficiency as a guiding value found much support within the business paradigm of management. Taylor and other adherents to scientific management aspired to better the productivity of organizations and — although rarely acknowledged — thereby improve the lives of workers as well. "In contrast to the emphasis on principles of organization and management, the Scientific Management school focused on the measurement and structure of work itself" (Bowditch & Buono, 1985, p. 9). Like other aspects of bureaucratization, the rationalization of work promoted under scientific management was soon criticized as a dehumanizing force. Organizational theorists James L. Bowditch and Anthony F. Buono characterize how the precepts of scientific management were received:

> As early as the 1920s, a number of social critics began to point out the potentially harmful effects of trying to standardize people as well as jobs. Although many of the basic tenets of classical organization and management theory (such as structure and stability, division of labor, and task specialization) were *not* directly challenged, criticism *was* focused on those individual managers and theorists who appeared to treat employees as mere appendages to machines. In fact, when Frederick Taylor proposed his theory of Scientific Management, his work was met with antagonism and hostility. Taylor defended his principles on the basis of a "mental revolution" that would take place in the attitudes of management and labor in which both sides would recognize the need for cooperation, and the importance of scientific investigation rather than individual judgment and opinion as the basis for structuring work assignments. Others, however, argued that while management might seek to standardize skills and methods, it could not expect perfectly standard, emotionless behavior from its employees. (1985, p. 11)

The rationalization of work gained additional expression through the "principles" movement led by the influential management theorists Luther Gulick, W.F. Willoughby, and others (Fayol, 1930; Gulick & Urwick, 1937; Mooney & Reiley, 1939; Willoughby, 1927). The work of Gulick and his associates were based on an understandable, yet naive, assumption that the laws governing human behavior were sufficiently similar to the laws of nature (i.e. physics) that human behavior could be understood and predicted according to intrinsic and unchanging precepts. "There are principles which can be arrived at inductively from the study of human organizations which should govern arrangements for human association of any kind," explains Gulick's associate, Lyndall Urwick, "These principles can be studied as a technical question irrespective of the purpose of the enterprise, the personnel comprising it, or any constitutional, political or social theory underling its creation" (Gulick & Urwick, 1937, p. 49). In short, they viewed management as management and worker as worker regardless of the context. Like cogs in a machine, the human actors were considered to be interchangeable.

The first attack on the principles movement focused on its internal inconsistencies. In fact, Herbert Simon, in a classic essay (1946) and a follow-up academic treatise (1947) showed that it was not possible to reduce public administration to a set of principles at all. He did so by illustrating that although a particular management principle viewed independently may seem valid on its face, when viewed in combination with another management principle, together they were often inherently contradictory. For example, the principle that managers need a tight span of control conflicted with the equally self-evident proposition that organizations must be structured with as few hierarchical layers as possible to facilitate internal communications (1947). Simon's criticism was so devastating that it dealt a virtual death blow to serious scholarly treatment of so-called "principles" in management. Public administrationist Donald E. Klingner points out some key inconsistencies:

> Despite the attractiveness of uniform solutions, critics charges that the principles of administrative science were either too dogmatic to apply to all situations, or too general to give specific advice in particular situations. James March and Herbert Simon, in particular, dismissed the tenets of administrative science as mutually contradictory parables like "look before you leap," but "he who hesitates is lost." (1983, p. 47)

The second major attack on the scientific management and principles movements was the early recognition of the human dimension within the organization. Harvard researchers conducting behavioral experiments over a period of several years at the Western Electric Hawthorne Plant near Chicago were forced to interpret much of their findings as resulting from relevant, human-based variables (Mayo, 1933; Roesthlisberger & Dickson, 1939). That is, they discovered an "informal" side to the business organization which had significant implications for worker productivity. This simple revelation gave birth to what later became known as the human relations movement.

The human relations movement supported the prevailing belief that management could not expect to get the highest productivity if it treated its workers "as if they were mere extensions of an organization's structure and machinery" (Bowditch & Buono, 1985, p. 12). The human relations movement and the related behavioralist school fostered a wide range of management theories which gained prominence and that still retain some influence on current thinking. Foremost among these include Maslow's hierarchy of psychological needs (1954), McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y (1960), Argyris's work on the impact of the organization on individuals (1957), Alderfer's ERG theory (1972), McClelland's socially acquired needs theory (1961), and Herzberg's motivation-hygiene factor theory (1968). The main critique of the human relations movement was aimed at the perceived hypocrisy of manipulating social relations among management and workers to increase productivity while doing so in a way that made it appear that management was sincerely concerned about worker welfare.

Another major management paradigm, systems theory, revolutionized the study of management. Systems theory was actually borrowed from the natural sciences (see Von Bertalanffy, 1967), but it quickly proved useful for analysis of social organizations (Parsons, 1952). Its utility derived from its basic simplicity and service as a powerful metaphor. Systems theory used the analogy of a living organism (Parsons, 1952) as a means to view other systems as a sequence of inputs, process, and outputs (Katz & Kahn, 1966/1978; Easton, 1965). Later refinements to the theory included accounting for interaction with the environment and the addition of a "feedback" loop to the basic model (Katz & Kahn, 1966/1978). Within systems theory, two classes of systems are distinguished. The first is a closed system which operates insulated from its environment. The second is an open system, which has significant interaction with its environment. Organizational theory viewed public bureaucracies as examples of "closed systems." In this view, bureaucracies are structured in ways that place protective boundaries against the environment in order to ensure internal stability and equilibrium. "Its relationship to its environment is regulated and stabilized in such a way that one can, analytically, ignore that environment when describing, dissecting, and manipulating the system" (Harmon & Mayer, 1986, p. 162). Open systems have been offered by management theorists as organizational types ideal for emulation. The fluid and flexible nature of open systems are seen as conducive for quick adaptation to ever-changing environments.

System theory generated three important outgrowths important to management thought. The first is contingency theory (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Fiedler, 1967; Hersey & Blanchard, 1982) which is simply the recognition that effective managerial styles are dependent upon the particular situation within an organization and its environment.

The second outgrowth of systems theory is total quality management (TQM) pioneered by W. Edwards Deming (Deming, 1986; Walton, 1986). TQM has become one of the most powerful management philosophies to influence modern organizational theory. Its most important contribution is probably the perspective of looking at systems as a whole to identify problems rather than blaming individual managers or workers. TQM further promotes statistical process control all along the chain of work processes so that quality is built into the product or service rather than depending upon subsequent quality inspection. TQM also offers a new view of customer service—defining all of the parties involved in the delivery of product or service including fellow employees, suppliers, and distributors as customers. At the start of the 1990s this new paradigm emerged within public management circles and TQM precepts of quality control and customer service were promoted (Wagenheim & Reurink, 1991). In order for TQM to work properly, according to its major theorists, it requires both top-management support (Boyett, Schwartz, Osterwise, & Bauer, 1993, pp. 142-147; Crosby, 1984, p. 101) and a considerable investment in time (Deming, 1986; Walton, 1986). It has not been promoted as a quick fix panacea to organizational problems. TQM was originally designed for manufacturing settings, and revolutionized those industries worldwide with great success (e.g., Japanese and American automotive industries). However, the potential for the quality movement to be successful in the public sector arena was not at all clear.

The third outgrowth of systems theory was a new focus on the relationship of the system to its external environment. Once again the natural sciences provided the metaphor—*complexity* (Stein, 1989; Waldrop, 1992). Instead of viewing the universe as orderly and stable (the Newtonian paradigm), new research was showing that at some fundamental level of the universe, *chaos* reigns (Gleick, 1987). *Chaos*, in this sense, is more than just "random," haphazard phenomena, it is in fact a realization that events within the natural world can best be understood by an appreciation for *nonlinear dynamics*. That is, even though prediction may still remain elusive, many events within the natural world can be understood as resulting from deterministic formulae. Nonlinear dynamics provides a new means for explanation of complex systems, especially in the face of change. This new paradigm became known as *chaos theory*.

Concurrent with these advancements in the natural sciences, organizational and management theorists began using the concept of chaos to illustrate the kinds of challenges modern organizations must face in day-to-day operations. Chaos became a prevailing metaphor for modern management (Drucker, 1985; Farson, 1996; Morgan, 1990; Peters, 1987; Vaill, 1989). Certain administrative theorists took chaos theory beyond the metaphoric level and actually began introducing nonlinear dynamics studies and applying the new science to management settings (Kiel, 1994). In fact, social scientists for perhaps the first time, became leaders in this new, emerging science (Evans, 1996; Kiel, 1994; Overman, 1996; Zohar & Marshall, 1994). Physicists, for example, studying chaotic phenomenon were beginning to wrestle with many of the same dynamics which have traditionally plagued the social sciences, much as in an earlier day, Werner Heisenberg's uncertainty principle in physics (Bartusiak, 1986, 258-260; Cassidy, 1993; Heisenberg, 1958; Miller, 1990) seemed to mirror the Hawthorne Effect of management theory (Roesthlisberger & Dickson, 1939).

Chaos theory, also begins to help explain the importance for storytelling among managers. "In a nonlinear world with multiple dynamics, it is the unique aspects of organizations that create their special 'organizational dynamics' and make public management an exciting endeavor," comments chaos and administrative theorist L. Douglas Kiel, "The interesting stories that managers have to tell are those that describe the singular aspects of their experience and the unparalleled elements of the organizations in which they served" (1994, p. 101).

A concept related to chaos theory is the so-called butterfly effect (catastrophe theory) which shows that a minor variation in the values of variables at the beginning of a theoretical model may result in widely divergent results. "The metaphor that the flapping of a butterfly's wings in Tokyo may cause a tornado in Oklahoma represents the surprising and unpredictable behavior that nonlinear dynamic systems can generate" (Kiel, 1994, p. 7).

Even more important for organizational theorists, especially those from the Organizational Development (OD) school of thought who have long actively engaged in planned intervention for organizational change, is the work by biochemist Ilya Prigogine (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984). Kiel describes Prigogine's discovery:

> The study of nonlinear dynamics was also enhanced by the discovery of chemist Ilya Prigogine as he examined complex chemical compounds with many nonlinear interactions. Prigogine discovered that these compounds were constantly bombarded by internal and external events that tested their stability. He found that at times these events amplify the churning of nonlinear interactions making the compounds unstable and breaking apart the organization and structure of the compound. This breaking apart led to a cascading chaos of disorganization and disorder. Yet, over time, Prigogine realized that these compounds reformed themselves into completely new and even more complex structures. He had discovered the mysterious process of how new forms and increased complexity occur in nature. He had discovered the process of qualitative, or transformational, change and had found that the creation of novel forms in nature came through discontinuous leaps to new forms and processes. (1994, p. 8)

The systems approach to management entered a new era, in which whole systems were deliberately reorganized in order to form better structures and processes for handling environmental change. This concept was first applied in the private sector as part of TQM but also under the new banner of *reengineering* or *process reengineering* (Andrews & Stalick, 1994; Benveniste, 1994; Champy, 1994; Gouillart & Kelly, 1995; Hammer & Champy, 1993; Martin, 1993; Naisbitt & Aburdene, 1985; Peters, 1987, 1992; Waterman, 1987).

The reengineering branch of systems theory was subsequently adapted as a model for the public sector (Barzelay, 1992; Eggers & O'Leary, 1995; Ingraham & Kettle, 1992; Linden, 1996; Meehan, 1993; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992; Osborne & Plastrik, 1997; Wheeler, 1993). The goals of reengineering as applied to the public sector promised much and soon became the mantra of a new management movement. "The latest management concept to roar from business school is one with a distinctly industrial sound to it: 'process reengineering,'" explains John Martin, "The idea does in fact have its conceptual roots on the factory floor. But it is tales of its astonishing effect on bureaucratic productivity that are currently beguiling government people all over the country" (1993, p. 27). One of the prime conduits for these tales was Osborne and Gaebler's book (1992) which popularized the related moniker of *reinvention*.

Reinventing Government

Like so many previous management theories, the values of reinventing government are disseminated by riding the waves of trend. There is an almost *religious*—perhaps *evangelical*—quality to the advance of true believers who spread throughout the managerial hinterlands to preach the "good news" just received from on-high. Adherents to each of these fads, and the list is numerous—OD, MBO, TQM, and now REGO—learn to speak a language all of their own. "People get consumed by terminology" asserts South Carolina's quality coordinator, Nathan Strong (Walters, 1998, September, p. 50). The new jargon is useful for separating the true believers from those not yet faithful. Reinventing government possesses the added power, first among modern management theologies, of belonging exclusively to the culture of government. Its language is geared directly for the public administrator's world; and, it was in that world that the reinventing gospel first reached out.

The reinventing government movement did not offer much that could be considered truly innovative. Many of the strategies and themes have been proposed numerous times before. But it was uniquely marketed to an audience eagerly awaiting solutions to vexing public policy and management problems. "As competent entrepreneurs, Osborne and Gaebler know how to repackage old goods as well as sell new ones" (Goodsell, 1993, p. 86). In short, Osborne and Gaebler offered the following ten principles of reinventing government:

1. Catalytic government: Steering rather than rowing.
2. Community-owned government: Empowering rather than serving.
3. Competitive government: Injecting competition into service delivery.
4. Mission-driven government: Transforming rule-driven organizations.
5. Results-oriented government: Funding outcomes, not inputs.
6. Customer-driven government: Meeting the needs of the customer, not the bureaucracy.
7. Enterprising government: Earning rather than spending.
8. Anticipatory government: Prevention rather than cure.
9. Decentralized government: From hierarchy to participation and teamwork.
10. Market-oriented government: Leveraging change through the market.

(1992)

In a *Public Administration Review (PAR)* article, Goodsell delivered one of the first academic responses to *Reinventing Government*: "Contracting out, decentralized and participative management, public-private partnerships, and strategic planning have been around in our field so long that no one bothers any more to attend conference panels on them" (1993, p. 86). Gibbs concurs, "Much of what is presented these days as governmental reform is neither new nor profound" (1994, p. 105). Obviously, Osborne and Gaebler were promoting a set of ideas whose time had come or were very skillful merchandisers or both. "David Osborne and Ted Gaebler have hit a publishing jackpot," reports Goodsell in his *PAR* review, "Their book, *Reinventing Government*, is the talk of the town in Washington, must reading for state and local executives across the country; on the bestseller charts; and a hot topic for seminars, lectures, and talk shows" (1993, p. 85). The mechanics of why a certain management philosophy catches and inspires the management community is unclear. John Walters has a couple of persuasive explanations for the speed in which reinventing government was adopted as the new government management paradigm:

> Not long ago, an appealing new business management technique—performance-based budgeting, say, or TQM—might have taken years or even decades to migrate to the halls of government. These days, with the pressures on state and local officials every bit as intense as those besetting corporate CEOs, that lag time has evaporated .... Few of the government reengineering projects now under way were called that at the time they were started; it hasn't been that long since the concept was invented. But savvy managers have been quick to pick up on the term's appeal and retrofit it to just about any pet project. (1993, p. 27, 30)

This author was privileged to view one instance of the transmission of reinventing government values from a first-hand, close-up perspective. While working as a public administrator in a state personnel department, the *Reinventing Government* book by

Osborne and Gaebler began its circulation around the agency with the following cover memo from the agency director:

To: [Department Heads]

From: Oscar B. Jackson, Jr.
Administrator & Secretary of Human Resources

Re: REINVENTING GOVERNMENT

Date: August 17, 1992

Enclosed is a copy of "Reinventing Government," written by David Osborne and Ted Gaebler. Governor David Walters provided each Cabinet Secretary with a copy of the book .... and he has even given us a reading assignment. In order to complete the assignment, I will need your assistance and cooperation.

Governor Walters has asked me to provide him with a list of ideas from the book that would be relevant and adaptable for my area of responsibility. **Therefore, by September 1, 1992, I would like for each of you to provide me with a list of at least three ideas from the book that you find relevant and adaptable for your area of responsibility** I have also asked the agency administrators in the Human Resources Cabinet Department to assist me in a similar manner.

I have also enclosed several articles about "Reinventing Government" which I believe you will find interesting reading, especially "Why Total Quality Management is Only Half a Loaf."

After you have read the book, I encourage you to share the book with other employees in your areas of responsibility and to discuss the principles noted. I also plan to have similar discussion with each of you.

It may be helpful to note that the book addresses ten (10) principles around which entrepreneurial public organizations are built. The principles are described in Chapters 1-10, and are as follows:

1) they steer more than they row;

2) they empower communities rather than simple service delivery;
3) they encourage competition rather than monopoly;
4) they are driven by their missions, not their rules;
5) they fund outcomes rather than inputs;
6) they meet the needs of the customer, not the bureaucracy;
7) they concentrate on earning, not just spending
8) they invest in prevention rather than cure;
9) they decentralize authority; and
10) they solve problems by leveraging the marketplace, rather than simply creating public programs.

I really believe you and your staff will be fascinated by the book, and will discover implication for many aspects of the services provided by the Office of Personnel Management.

I look forward to visiting with you and your staff about your ideas from "Reinventing Government."

Enclosures
(State of Oklahoma Office of Personnel Management, intra-office memo, *emphasis in original*)

An interesting point to note is that the book started at the Governor's level, had moved down through the Cabinet Secretaries to the agency administrators, from the agency administrators to the department heads; the department heads are then encouraged to circulate the book around to other employees within the office, presumably mid-managers, professionals, and possibly front-line workers. Even more interesting is that the memo contains a specific directive for the department heads to glean from the book three relevant ideas and apply them to their work. As the above memo illustrates, the reduction of the book's theoretical thrust down to ten principles, each with memorable labels, facilitated communication of the book's points.

Meanwhile, the professional and trade journals and advertisements for government professional conferences switched from TQM-oriented topics to "reinventing government" themes. For those administrators who were participating in training programs or taking college courses, a similar process was occurring. Within the academic setting, whole political science and public administration courses were being devoted to reinvention of government. Many public administration professors started to assign Osborne and Gaebler's *Reinventing Government* as one of the class textbooks.

Despite all the rave among practitioners and academics, "reinventing government" as pioneered in the City of Visalia, California by Gaebler when he was city manager there, has had less than a resounding success. Unsound investment in a risky hotel venture and other "entrepreneurial activities" have resulted in severe fiscal stress for Visalia, calling into question many of the recommendations and principles promoted by Osborne and Gaebler (Gurwitt, 1994; Kim & Wolff, 1994). Other critics have voiced concerns not only about the likely outcomes of reinventing government in terms of efficiency and productivity, but also about the possibility that reinventing government as a managerial philosophy will have deleterious effects to the American democratic system.

The National Performance Review

The challenge for the Clinton administration is that it arrived in Washington with an agenda for change and fundamental bureaucratic reform. The Clinton administration placed its agenda for reform under the reinventing government banner by establishing the National Performance Review, (1993-Present) headed by Vice-President Al Gore. The National Performance Review (recently renamed the National Partnership for Reinventing Government) is both riding the wave and helping to drive the course of the current "reinventing government" movement inspired by Osborne and Gaebler (1992). It bases its recommendations for bureaucratic reform on different values than those traditionally offered by the political left or right. As President Bill Clinton describes, "We have successfully advanced a different philosophy of government, going beyond the old argument that government was the problem or that government is the solution to which people are entitled" (Brownstein, 1998, p. 24). As Boyer comments, "If Republicans hated government, Democrats loved it too much, and the New Democratic idea was, at its core, simple pragmatism: to forge a centrist politics by holding that government should solve problems but first had to win faith by showing itself efficient and clean" (1988, p. 81).

This centrist point of view, recently termed "Clintonism" (Brownstein, 1998, p. 24) views government, despite its inherent problems, as an instrumental necessity worthy of constructive reform. Continuing with the mechanistic metaphor of *re-*

engineering, government is perceived as needing to be overhauled to remain effective in the modern age. The National Performance Review assumes that government has an important role to play. It parallels the perspective of Osborne and Gaebler by advocating fine-tuning government in order to make it more effective and efficient.

With the obvious significance of the National Performance Review as a major force in the area of administrative reform at the national level, it's easy to forget its more humble beginnings. White House observer and author Peter Boyer describes the National Performance Review's embryonic start under Vice-President Al Gore:

> Before taking office, Gore had Clinton's assurance of a key party role, but which of the high-profile projects would he get? Hillary claimed health care, and no one argued. Gore wanted welfare reform — a bell-ringing New Democratic issue that had been central to the campaign and would, if accomplished, help to define Clinton's Presidency — but several people in the President's circle worried that it was too good an issue to give away .... What the White House had in mind for Gore was something a little more *Vice*-Presidential, a worthy but unexciting chore that seemed, at the time, to hold almost no box-office appeal .... In the early days of the Administration nobody was particularly enthralled by reinventing government, including Al Gore. Health-care reform and welfare reform — those were the big, bold initiatives that would give the Clinton Administration its own New Frontier identity, and Gore was deeply disappointed not to get the leadership of either. But, characteristically, he embraced his new assignment with enthusiasm. "It took him about thirty minutes to get excited about it," Roy Neel, who was then Gore's chief of staff, recalls. (1997, pp. 79-80)

As Boyer relates, the National Performance Review continued very much as a secondary priority in White House political calculations:

> Inside the White House, Gore's project was the ugly stepchild, and it was given no people and no money from the president's staff budget, forcing Gore and his team to scrounge for staff and resources .... Gore got the assignment in March of 1993, and by August the work was nearly done.

> Gore was proud of his team's effort and downright giddy about the project's prospects. His reinventing-government task force identified efficiencies that could reduce government costs by $108 billion and cut the federal workforce by 252,000 over five years .... Gore argued for a splashy rollout for the project, asking two weeks of White House attention and a major investment of the President's time. Clinton's advisors said no, and Hillary Clinton's team, already annoyed because the NAFTA debate had pushed aside health care, worried that too much attention to Gore's project would just be more background noise distracting from the Administration's signature undertaking. (1997, p. 80)

Over time, the status of the National Performance Review within the political strategies of the White House dramatically turned around. Boyer relates further:

> Instead of the two-week rollout that Gore wanted, reinventing government got a few days, and although Gore later made a small splash by going on "The Late Show with David Letterman" with his ashtray-smashing routine, his project quickly fell between the cracks of the White House's and the public's attention. Health care became a beast whose shadow covered all else .... A year later, with the defeat of health care, and the White House searching for a winning issue, reinventing government was rediscovered. It is now loudly touted by the President, and will be given high priority in the second half term ... The government efficiency project was a major score for Gore, and, what was most significant, it was a vital, if lonely, connection to the neglected New Democratic theology, which Clinton now desperately needs in order to survive. (1997, p. 81)

A major challenge for the National Performance Review effort to be effective was to communicate its message on multiple fronts: the federal workforce, political leaders, and public supporters. John Daly, a motivational consultant hired by the National Performance Review told staff members that effective communication was the key to the reform effort's success (Moe, 1994, p. 111). To that end, the National Performance Review has issued more than six dozen published reports (and counting), an interactive CD-ROM, a video accompanied by a complete training curriculum, a newsletter, and one of the world's earliest and most fully developed web sites (http://www.npr.gov/).

The National Performance Review offers a unique situation for political analysis because of its place in history. It is part of a long train of similar efforts. The Grace Commission closely precedes it with a strongly contrasting perspective — namely, government *is* the problem and should be eliminated or privatized wherever possible.

The first National Performance Review report was issued concurrently with other major reform efforts at the state and national level, most notably the Winter Commission Report, *Hard Truths/Tough Choices: An Agenda for State and Local Reform* (National Commission on the State and Local Public Service, 1993). That same year the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) also issued a major report entitled *Leading People in Change: Empowerment, Commitment, Accountability*. Furthermore, the National Performance Review shares a long heritage of similar reform efforts. According to Wamsley and Dudley,

> Even in the most recent reorganization effort, the National Performance Review (NPR), the legacy of the Brownlow Committee is reflected, not in the specifics, but in a common ontology that assumes that the government is broken, the president is managerial chief executive, and a managerial fix will cure the discontinuities built into the American political process. In promoting mostly decentralization, deregulation, and a bottom-up reorganization, the NPR does extend to an extraorganizational focus with a concern for relationships among agencies and between customers and organizations. Yet, in promoting managerial and organizational solutions, the NPR, like its predecessors, is strangely silent on the problems of

> governance, of the processes, laws, and structures connecting legislative, executive, and judicial. It, too, loses or never comprehends the concept of a polity; this time, not just by a focus on the organization, but on organizational processes and the service delivery relationship between customer and agency. Once again, managerial solutions are proposed for organizational problems rather than political solutions for governance problems. Even with our richer inventory of organizational theory, we still have not learned the lesson Dwight Waldo tried to teach in *The Administrative State*. We still do not "get" the distinction between an organization and our polity, or, for that matter, between a customer and a citizen. (1998, p. 337-338)

The goals for the National Performance Review were ambitious. The National Performance Review was originally conceived to be "a six month examination of how to streamline the bureaucracy, cut costs and propose ways to make government work better" (Barr, 1993, May 25, A8). Acknowledging the complexity of the task at hand, the project soon turned out to be of much greater magnitude. "One thing we learned from the past four years was that even with a clear and compelling vision, getting consensus on a governmentwide approach—the 'silver bullet'—for civil service reform was too difficult," admits Elaine Kamarck, senior policy advisor to Vice President Al Gore and director of the reinventing government initiative during its first four years. (1997, p. 13).

To take credit for the balanced budget and much reduced federal deficit, the National Performance Review has competed with the Republican *Contract with America* (Gillespie & Schellhas, 1994), a powerful opposing view concerning the best direction for government reform. Finally, the National Performance Review has formally entered into its second phase which includes a reorientation of its fundamental mission as well as a substantive change in name to the National Partnership for Reinventing Government (*Reinvention Express*, 1998, p. 1). This continuity provides another dimension for analysis. As the great anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss explains, "By showing institutions in the process of transformation, history alone makes it possible to abstract the structure which underlies many manifestations and remains permanent throughout a succession of events" (1963, p. 21).

The National Performance Review forcefully advocates a certain set of political values. As Vice-President Al Gore told the staff members of the National Performance Review on the day the reform effort was initiated, "Our long-term goal is to change the very culture of the federal government" (quoted in Moe, 1994, p. 111). The array of values contained within the Gore Report becomes more explicit within the context of both complementary and adversarial visions of bureaucratic change as embodied in other reform efforts. The numerous reports issued by the National Performance Review also reveal an underlying value structure which influences its areas of investigation and resulting recommendations. "The NPR's framing of the performance problem of the federal government is interesting," observes public administrationists Don A. Cozzetto, Theodore B. Pedeliski, and Terence J. Tipple, "Rather than blaming the usual suspects (such as entrenched bureaucrats, public unions, poor leadership, legislative gridlock) the Clinton administration chose to focus on the inappropriateness of the organization structures, work processes, and environments that characterize the federal government" (1996, p. 33). Moe characterizes the National Performance Review's style of presentation:

> The report largely rejects the traditional language of adminstrative discourse which attempts, not always with success, to employ terms with precise meanings. Instead, a new highly value-laden lexicon is employed by entrepreneurial management enthusiasts to disarm would-be questioners. Thus, the term "customer" largely replaces "citizen" and there is heavy reliance upon active verbs—reinventing, reengineering, empowering—to maximize the emotive content of what otherwise has been a largely nonemotive subject matter. (1994, p. 114)

The longstanding metaphor of government administration being equivalent to private-sector management spawned a language within the reinvention movement that is highly reliant on business terminology. "At the highest level of critique is the argument that the authors have forgotten what an early public administration scholar said years ago, that government is different" (Cozzetto, Pedelski, & Tipple, 1996, p. 38). The profession of public administration operates (and should) from a different value system than that offered by private industry. "More specifically, some of the values associated with entrepreneurial government (autonomy, a personal vision of the future, secrecy and risk-taking behavior) could potentially be at odds with some values associated with our democratic form of government (accountability, citizen participation, open policy-making processes, and 'stewardship' behavior" (Cozzetto, Pedelski, & Tipple, 1996, p. 38). Hence, the reinvention movement's use of the word "customer" in place of "citizen" is not without significant implications. Some critics have pointed out that the customer-citizen phraseology within the National Performance Review disregards the foundational principles of American governance. "The highest value in the entrepreneurial paradigm, to all accounts, is customer satisfaction," reports Moe, "This precedence of economically based values over legally based values is evident throughout the report's recommendations" (1994, p. 114). "In other words, some critics claim that this latest wave of performance proposals overemphasizes values associated with businesslike efficiency and minimizes values associated with our political system such as responsiveness and inclusion of minority interests" (Cozzetto, Pedelski, & Tipple, 1996, p. 38). For example, DuPont-Morales criticizes the National Performance Review for "articulating a public service restructuring plan" which did not include "a clear statement recognizing the social value and importance of strides made by women and other minorities" (1997, p. 289).

The National Performance Review reports have come to represent a newly-formed canon of virtuous officialdom. For many public management leaders throughout all levels of government it has become political scripture — a source of enduring principles through which better government is created. Anthropologist Richard J. Parmentier claims, "As language clothed in 'verbal vestments,' authoritative speech confronts speakers and writers as unquestionable, distant, and powerful" (1994, p. 71). This imposing and impressive set of reforms articulates a grand vision of government. The Gore Report evokes powerful symbolism by deliberately orchestrating the symbols salient for political purposes. As political scientist Charles Fox comments, "The Clinton presidency is the most comfortable of Democratic administrations (still not as good as the Hollywood original) with postmodern symbolic manipulation" (1996, p. 258).

To fathom the power of signs and symbols for the human experience, we must go to their source — an intellectual journey which will take us to the earliest moments of human history and carry us forward to the outermost edges of modern, information-based society. The journey requires both reflection and speculation. It demands a critical examination of our own views of reality.

Chapter 3.

Symbolic Constructions of Reality

As a biological and cultural legacy, humans view their world through symbolic frames. The creation, exchange, recognition, processing, and interpretation of symbols and signs represent the core of human consciousness. The great philosopher of language, Kenneth Burke, declares, "*Man is the symbol using animal*" (1966, p. 3). The profound implication of Burke's simple assertion is that everything that we know—everything that we can know—is experienced only *indirectly*. Burke continues, "And however important to us is the tiny sliver of reality each of us has experienced firsthand, the whole overall 'picture' is but a construct of our symbolic systems" (1966, p. 5). Hunt states, "Every human being fashions a world out of the formless tumult, and sets each thing in its proper place. Not, of course, in actuality, but in the model of actuality within the mind, where the inane welter of incoming sense impressions is sorted out, shaped, and assembled into a coherent representation of the outer world" (1982, p. 157). Our minds feed and grow off sensory input received from our environment. It is an interactive process in which human thought attempts to impose cognitive order on a deluge of chaotic external sensations. Management consultants, Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal explain, "Faced with uncertainty and ambiguity, human beings create *symbols* to resolve confusion, increase predictability, and provide direction (Events themselves may remain illogical, random, fluid, and meaningless, but human symbols make them seem otherwise)" (1991, p. 244). Jung agrees, "Because there are innumerable things beyond the range of human understanding, we constantly use symbolic terms to represent concepts that we cannot define or fully comprehend" (1964, p. 4).

The degree to which our life is experienced at a distance from the physical universe we point to as *reality* may even be greater than traditional philosophy has claimed. The legendary Harvard psychologist, Edwin G. Boring notes, "No stimulus or response is every directly observed. We accept the sign for the reality signified" (1933, 1960, 1963, p. 10). Jung adds:

> It is not easy to grasp this point. But the point must be grasped if we are to know more about the ways in which the human mind works. Man, as we realize if we reflect for a moment, never perceives anything fully or comprehends anything completely. He can see, hear, touch, and taste; but how far he sees, how well he hears, what his touch tells him, and what he tastes depend upon the number and quality of his senses. These limit his perceptions of the world around him.. By using scientific instruments he can partly compensate for the deficiencies of his senses. For example, he can extend the range of his vision by binoculars or of his hearing by electrical amplification. But the most elaborate apparatus cannot do more than bring distant or small objects within range of his eyes, or make faint sounds more audible. No matter what instruments he uses, at some point he reaches the edge of certainty beyond which conscious knowledge cannot pass .... even when our senses react to real phenomena, sights and sounds, they are somehow translated from the realm of reality into that of the mind." (1964, p. 4)

We are composed of matter and energy, but we are also matter and energy that contemplates itself and the world around. Yet, we often act as observers to ourselves;

detached in significant ways from our own experience. Psychologist Joseph Mortenson points out:

> The only matter we convert into experience is the matter within our nervous systems. All the rest is matter that we can never experience directly. The great exterior world can act on us only by causing the cells of our nervous system to fire. Our contact with the outer world is limited to the impulses it excites in our nerve cells. What we receive from the world outside our experience is a steady flow of messages. The external world excites our sensory cells, which then pass electrochemical impulses up our nerves. (1987, p. 4)

The human mind, as wondrous as we know it to be, is nevertheless merely elegant patterns of electrical and chemical messages acting in concert. These physical processes work through sophisticated synaptic structures and harmonize together to produce a single human consciousness. This is the grand biological achievement of human development.

The mystery remains—how do signs from outside the brain merge together with our mental processes to form our images of the world? How do we cope with endless environmental intrusions upon our conscious being? With what strategies has evolution equipped us to handle the challenging complexities of our existence?

As a species, we humans have created mental models of the world which help us to filter, organize, and prioritize the unpredictable. We've been performing this miraculous feat all our lives — so it is easy to take for granted. "Probably the most universally accepted construction of reality rests on the supposition that the world cannot be chaotic — not because we have any proof for this view, but because chaos would simply be intolerable" (Watzlawick, 1984, p. 63). Social construction of reality is a survival mechanism. Semiotics represents our attempt to come to grips with this basic phenomenon. Sebeok states that "it is clear that what semiotics is finally all about is the role of mind in the creation of the world or of physical constructs out of a vast and diverse crush of sense impressions" (1991b, p. 20). We are buffeted by sensations during all of our existence — we are beings that swim in a sea of signs and symbols. As the great poet Gerard Casey once wrote, "We are the 'wonder eyes' ... opened in Chaos. What more can be said?" (Wetmore, 1996, p. 45).

If politics is often accused of being a mostly symbolic enterprise, the reason is probably that our political institutions are often given responsibility to take care of areas related to human existence, which ultimately cannot be controlled. The problems are so complex and the ramifications of the few political steps which can be taken run so deep that retreating into simple ideologies is often the most comfortable path. Political scientists Dan Nimmo and James E. Combs remark:

> At the risk of sounding philosophical, we may ask ourselves the age-ole question: What, after all, do we really know? We are mortal, finite, limited beings who exist in a particular space and time, culture and personality. The amount of knowledge—in whatever form—available to us in any situation is limited, as are the capacity of our brains and the willingness of our personalities to accept certain things. Nevertheless, we have to cope with the onrush of experience, the necessity of choice, the desire to understand. And so we *define* situations as real and act upon that knowledge. We use our imaginations to extend our experience. We build our image of the world by making connections, constructions, and pictures of reality *as if* they were true. We impute an order and meaning to the world by importing into our images of the world a variety of symbolic structures to which we give reality.

(1980, p. 5)

The logical consequence of this biological and cultural reaction, is that almost all of our knowledge is mediated. Ross Fuller, an artist/craftsman and author, remarks, "Everything is translated in us: it is perhaps what we are for" (1995, p. 33). The world we know is literally created from the sensory inputs of "out there." Our contact with other sentient beings likewise originates "out there" when we communicate with "others." Burke asks:

> Just how overwhelmingly much of what we mean by "reality" has been built up for us through nothing but our symbol systems? Take away our books, and what little do we know about history, biography, even something so "down to earth" as the relative position of seas and continents? What is our "reality" for today (beyond the paper-thin line of our own particular lives) but all this clutter of symbols about the past combined with whatever things we know mainly through maps, magazines, newspapers, and the like about the present? (1966, p. 6)

The recognition of the importance of symbolicity for the human condition is the heart of the semiotic endeavor. All of our art, history, popular culture, science, and technological progress are dependent upon vast and varied semiotic structures which undergird modern society. Semiotician David Sless states:

> From the muffled darkness of the womb we emerge into a noisy and ever changing visible world. We are held, looked at, talked to, and acknowledged. From the start we are enveloped in information and messages: they are a condition of existence without which there is nothing. All experience and action is mediated, transformed from one state to another, and in that transformation can be discerned the basis of semiosis, that is, the process of making and using signs. (1986, p. 2)

The medium is the signs and symbols that we use to interpret reality. "Though man is typically the symbol-using animal, he clings to a kind of näive verbal realism that refuses to realize the full extent of the role played by symbolicity in his notions of reality" (Burke, 1966, p. 5). This advanced life consciousness we experience depends on a relatively sophisticated symbol-making capacity, and yet, somehow, we underestimate the extent our picture of reality is based on our own artificial constructions. "Even though we are inevitably surrounded by signs, we do not accept these signs *as* signs .... the West ... creates signs and denies them at the same time" (Barthes, 1985, p. 97). Walter Truett Anderson explains:

> We humans find our loves and hates, our successes and failures, our status and identity and orientation to the world through use of symbols. Even our most primal drives (see sex) are channeled through ideas and images, shaped in the mold of culture. In the long time scale of evolution, we are still new to this symbolic medium. We don't yet know how to get around in it very well. We hardly even know we are in it. We repeatedly create symbolic systems of meaning — religions, political ideologies, scientific theories — and then forget that they are our creations; we have a devilish habit of confusing them with the mysterious nonhuman reality they were meant to explain. We have constructed about ourselves (and within ourselves) an environment of symbols and cannot tell where symbol leaves off and nonhuman reality begins, cannot (as the general semanticists put it) tell the map from the territory. (1990, p. ix)

In the computer age, "telling the map from the territory" has become even more difficult. Information is processed for us in a multitude of ways. Our communication is increasingly mediated by optical fibers and satellite transmissions. "The media have become our verbal environment, at once encapsulating the higher learning into formulas and clichés and centralizing folk or popular culture" (Stivers, 1982, p. 2).

We "channel surf" across dozens — soon, probably hundreds — of television channels. Many of us now "cruise the Net" and "tour the Web." The rapid growth of the Internet is but the latest incarnation of the movement toward signification in modern society. We talk as if we really do travel on the so-called "Information Superhighway." We think of it as a form of government-supported infrastructure akin to the federal interstate freeway system. We refer to computer-generated universes as "virtual reality." We are geographically distant from each other, yet we are connected in seemingly intimate ways through the wondrous powers of technology. "Paradoxically, the very technology that threatens to depersonalize our society offers a way to connect people, to restore a sense of community in our lives, to deepen our relationships" (Farson, 1996, p. 49). The quickening pace of technological change and the increasing dependence on "virtual" control mechanisms are fundamentally altering the nature of humanity. It seems that modern society has entered a new stage in human development. More and more of our essential life activities are governed through symbolic systems. Even our labor, as Harvard business professor Shoshana Zuboff says, "becomes the manipulation of symbols" (1988, p. 23). This trend is likely to continue into the next millennium. As cultural sociologist Todd Gitlin predicts:

> The first ... word that will define popular culture in the next century is *saturation*. The imagescape is everywhere and inescapable. When we walk or drive down the street, it is up on the billboards. It drives past on buses. It flashes out of large screens and small. We surf and scroll through it. It

> resounds from elevators and restaurants. It may someday be beamed directly into us, who knows? (1998, p. 70)

To accept the premise that our reality is mediated through signs and symbols, is to also acknowledge the implication that negative consequences may follow from the natural or intentional distortions of which symbols are by definition susceptible. Cassirer notes, "All symbolism harbors the curse of mediacy; it is bound to obscure what it seeks to reveal" (1953, p. 7). "All we actually know of what exists outside our heads are the perceptions inside them, but of course perceptions can be falsehoods, as is the case with delusions, hallucinations, and dreams" (Hunt, 1982, p. 31). As members of the human family, we communicate our understanding of the world with each other. We attempt to bridge the gap between our own limitations and the infinite; but, our efforts are always insufficient. Mythologist Robert W. Brockway adds, "Story mirrors life and interprets it, but the mirror-image being is distorted, as in a fun house, and the interpretations are always subject to error and misunderstanding" (1993, p. 16). Murray Edelman elaborates:

> Only man among living things reconstructs his past, perceives his present condition, and anticipates his future through symbols that abstract, screen, condense, distort, displace, and even create what the senses bring to his attention. The ability to manipulate sense perceptions symbolically permits complex reasoning and planning and consequent efficacious action. It also facilitates firm attachments to illusions, misperceptions, and myths and consequent misguided or self-defeating action. (1971, p. 2)

A community represents the coalescing of individual interpretations of signs and symbols in the environment. There is a continuity of sign interpretation across culture, even across humanity. Noted semiotician Umberto Eco expounds, "To see human beings as signifying animals—even outside the practice of verbal language—and to see that their ability to produce and to interpret signs, as well as their ability to draw inferences, is rooted in the same cognitive structures, represent a way to give form to our experience" (1984, p. 13). Perhaps the most influential individualist in Western political philosophy, Thomas Hobbes, validates his observations with the fundamentally interpretive claim that to know one's self is to know others:

> But there is another saying not of late understood, by which they might learn truly to read one another, if they would take the pains; and that is *Nosce teipsum, Read thy self*: which was not meant, as it is now used, to countenance, either the barbarous state of men in power, towards their inferiors; or to encourage men of low degree, to a sawcie behaviour towards their betters; But to teach us, that for the similitude of the thoughts, and Passions of one man, to the thoughts, and Passions of another, whosoever looketh into himself, and considereth what he doth, when he does *think, opine, reason, hope, feare*, &c, and upon what grounds; he shall thereby read and know, what are the thoughts, and Passions of all other men, upon the like occasions.(1651/1968, p. 82)

A large portion of that quality we call sentience must therefore be allocated to the sharing of perception among other conscious beings.

Government itself is an abstract concept based upon the mutual understandings intrinsic to human cooperation. "The basis of the founding and legitimacy of governments, the civic myths of countries unite their citizens by an acceptance of common symbols" (Bierlein, 1994, p. 20). A democratic government, particularly, exists because its citizens *agree* that it exists. A democracy is thus sustained and nourished by the cultural norms and practices in which it is enmeshed. Telling stories and participating in rituals provide meaningful ways for citizens to reaffirm their social consensus. Thurman Arnold in his classic treatise *The Symbols of Government* states, "Almost all human conduct is symbolic. Almost all institutional habits are symbolic" (1962, p. 17). Arnold also outlines the hope: "It meets a deep-seated popular demand that government institutions symbolize a beautiful dream within the confines of which principles operate, independently of individuals" (1962, p. 33). The political process is a continuous exercise in mutual understanding creating the social institutions which maintain and guard the social fabric of our lives. We can discover what constitutes political reality only through the medium of symbols. "Though symbolic cues are not omnipotent," Edelman admits, "they go far toward defining the geography and the topography of everyone's political world" (1977, p. 41). Reforming these mutually-created social institutions requires building new agreements on the meaning of signs in the common arena of human activities. Arnold writes in a fashion which seems to speak to our most contemporary concerns: "In times like the present, when institutions fail to function adequately, we rush to theories and principles as guides. Questions as to the soundness of the law or the prevailing economic doctrines rise to the level of popular debate. Everyone becomes a reformer; everyone becomes a social planner" (1962, p. 105).

Semiotics is a value-laden perspective. Some may wonder if it easily falls prey to the excesses of relativism. Edelman quips, "To understand [that] multiple realities are prevalent is liberating, but such understanding in no way suggests that every construction is as good as every other" (1988, p. 6). Like other positivist tenets, semiotics is anchored by an assumption of an absolute reality; that is, there are signs in the natural world which exist *a priori* to human perception. Jung states, "When something slips out of our consciousness it does not cease to exist, any more than a car that has disappeared round a corner has just vanished into thin air" (1964, p. 18). But there is also a normative dimension to semiotics which is directly influenced by cultural convention. We may never fully understand reality, but we can make a difference for the better, and *should*. The semiotic research process is one of involvement and intervention, not one of sterile detachment and cold observation.

The Linguistic Model

Philosophers have explored the meaning of knowledge for centuries, but advancements in the cognitive sciences only now seem to be giving us some of the answers. Like most highly developed animals, humans receive input from their visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile, and taste sensory organs. However, unlike other organisms on earth, humans have also evolved a distinctive capacity for language. "The intermingling of ourselves with a language encompassing us is a human trait that allows us to connect to a larger dimension beyond the confines of speaking and listening" (Lewis, 1995, p. 28). Words, formed into sentences, convey meaning from one human to the next. Words recorded on durable media convey meaning from one generation to the next. It is a process that binds humanity through history. "Language is a uniquely human ability," neuroscientist Eric R. Kandel explains, "In both its written and spoken forms it represents meaningful interactions between individuals—not just in the present but also across time" (Kandel, 1995b, p. 648).

Language is quintessential among symbolic forms. Edelman notes, "Linguistic reference engenders a 'reality' that is no *phenomenologically* different from any other reality" (1977, p. 35). Language serves as the basic medium through which society's symbols, stories, and mythologies intermingle and coalesce into distinct culture. The path of civilization is bounded by the mythic frames of human experience communicated among social participants within a temporal, linguistic dimension. "Language is essentially constitutive of institutional reality" (Searle, 1995, p. 59). Culture and its institutional manifestations are the reflective expressions of symbolic thought. As the political philosopher Hannah Arendt notes, "Speech is what makes man a political being" (1958, p. 3). Edelman continues:

> A political act is always an incomplete symbol, because it is not physical actions but language about them that the public experiences. Even when people witness a political event they regard as meaningful, it is the language that describes it that gives it significance, for witnessed movements are only impressions yet to be interpreted. Language, then, is the paramount form of action in creating political phenomena, suggesting that politics has more in

> common with literature and art than it does with competitive or cooperative enterprises in which interested people participate. (1964/1985, p. 196)

Language is quite an amazing process for the manipulation of symbols generated by, and for, a far-ranging group of sentient beings; which in the modern age of telecommunications, has at times included most of the human population. Through mechanisms for translation, language can jump many boundaries.

At its simplest, language is sensory input in the form of a verbal or written message initiated by one human in order to communicate with another. This use of language, according to some of the newest theories, is *instinctual* (Pinker, 1994). "Nothing about the new view is as sharp a departure from behaviorist doctrines as the notion that the human brain is hard-wired to form certain kinds of concepts even without the benefit of feedback" (Hunt, 1982, p. 173). The capacity for language exists prior to cultural intervention. The brains of human infants for example, can be viewed as advanced computer "hardware" preprogrammed during development to understand language. Hunt explains, "'Hard-wired' is the key word. It's a computer-science term that refers to built-in characteristics — those resulting from fixed circuitry rather than from programming. Applied to human beings, hard-wiring refers to innate abilities or, at least, predispositions, as opposed to learned behavior" (1982, p. 166). In this same view, language itself is considered analogous to computer "software." Biologist and medical journalist Shannon Brownlee reports on the concurrent development of language with infant brain development:

> Linguistic leaps come as a baby's brain is humming with activity. Within the first few months of life, a baby's neurons will forge 1,000 trillion connections, an increase of 20-fold from birth .... Images made using the brain-scanning technique positron emission tomography have revealed, for instance, that when a baby is 8 or 9 months old, the part of the brain that stores and indexes many kinds of memory becomes fully functional. This is precisely when babies appear to be able to attach meaning to words. (1998, p. 54)

Language is a cultural construct separate in some abstract fashion, but nevertheless dependent upon that remarkable biological organ we call the brain. Pulitzer Prize-winning science author Carl Sagan describes the current understanding:

> Most organisms on Earth depend on their genetic information, which is "prewired" into their nervous systems, to a much greater extent than they do on their extragenetic information, which is acquired during their lifetimes. For human beings, and indeed all mammals, it is the other way around. While our behavior is still significantly controlled by our genetic inheritance, we have, through our brains, a much richer opportunity to blaze new behavioral and cultural pathways on short time scales. We have made a kind of bargain with nature: our children will be difficult to raise, but their capacity for new learning will greatly enhance the chances of survival of the human species. In addition, human beings have, in the most recent few tenths of a percent of our existence, invented not only extragenetic but also extrasomatic knowledge: information stored outside our bodies, of which writing is the most notable example. (1977, pp. 3-4)

Language, in terms of the evolutionary time scale is a relatively recent adaptation. Philosophers have had difficulty separating the concept of language from the concept of thought, often going so far as to say that thought does not occur without language.

In the biological perspective, language is a *parallel* system for comprehending reality. This view is validated by the simple fact that often we struggle to find words to express exactly what we really mean. Medical research also supports this view. "Geneticists and linguists recently have begun to challenge the common-sense assumption that intelligence and language are inextricably linked, through research on a rare genetic disorder called Williams syndrome, which can seriously impair cognition while leaving language nearly intact" (Brownlee, 1998, p. 48). At an even narrower level, the brain interprets human vocal *sounds* separately from spoken *language*. Kandel expounds: "For example, there is good evidence that not all auditory input is processed in the same way. Nonsense sounds — words without meaning — are processed independently from conventional, meaningful words. Thus, it is thought that there are separate pathways for sounds, the *medium* of language, and for meaning, the *content of language*" (Kandel, 1995b, p. 644).

From a wider perspective then, the human brain can be viewed as processing signs in terms of both form and substance. For the human mind, there appears to be a "language" beyond just what is "spoken" or "written." Exploring and defining this sphere of human interaction is, after all, what modern semiotics has as its goal. The linguistic anthropologist Thomas A. Sebeok comments, "The most distinctive trait of humans is that only they, throughout terrestrial life, have two separate, although, of course, thoroughly commingled, repertoires of signs at their disposal: the nonverbal — demonstrably derived from their mammalian (especially primate) ancestry — and a uniquely human verbal overlay" 1991b, p. 14). This dualistic tapestry of symbols through which we live our lives structures in an important sense our worldview. "Language is a two-edged sword — it can serve reality or hide it" says philosopher and journalist William Segal (Applebaum, 1995, p. 7). Humans communicate with each other through both nonverbal and linguistic signs. With the iconic environments engendered through the pervasive use of computer graphical interfaces, both verbal and nonverbal spheres of human communication are being extended dramatically. That is why *semiotics*, the science of signs, is becoming more and more an appropriate orientation to the study of human political cognition.

Knowledge is Stories

The *cognitive sciences*, a new hybrid discipline, is turning scientific inquiry inward to examine the processes of the human mind itself. A gathering of cognitive scientists might include: anthropologists comparing cultures across higher animal species; computer scientists specializing in artificial intelligence; geneticists tracking hereditary links to cognition; neuroanatomists researching the structural basis of behavior; philosophers inquiring into the nature of thinking; physicists using magnetic waves and positron emissions to map internal mental activities; medical researchers exploring the influence of hormones and other chemicals on the mental state; social scientists attempting to explain the meaning behind group behavior; business analysts seeking to enhance the effectiveness of decision-making; linguists studying the role of language in the acquisition of knowledge; and of course psychologists of various specialties investigating the nature of mind in general. Cognitive scientists are now grappling with the some of the most basic and most fascinating of all human questions. "Cognitive scientists have all but preempted from philosophers the profoundly interesting question of how our impressions of the world are related to reality" (Hunt, 1982, p. 31).

The computer has ushered in the most powerful metaphor for the human mind in modern times. Cognitive scientists have sought to explain the nature of intelligence by comparing and contrasting human capabilities with these remarkable data-processing creations. Hunt explains:

> Information-processing has been the "guiding metaphor" (as Gordon Bower puts it) of cognitive science for the past ten years, and to many people in the field it offers a deeply satisfying view of the human intellect. It also meets head-on difficult philosophic questions that behaviorism sought to avoid. Not that it answers them all; it simply makes some of them irrelevant — a phenomenon that Thomas S. Kuhn, the noted philosopher of science, says is typical of revolutionary theories. One such question is: How can we ever know that the world inside the mind is a faithful representation of the one outside? It's irrelevant because it now seems clear that what is inside cannot be identical to with what is outside; it is a selection and transformation into neural impulses, a *processed* version, of what is outside. Yet since the mind uses these materials to decide what to do, and since most of its decisions, when carried out, do in fact produce the predicted results, it is clear that there is a reliable correspondence between the symbols in our heads and the realities outside. (1982, p. 80)

The reality is, that most of the capabilities of the human mind far outstrip the performances of even the most powerful computers. Computers can do amazing things, but as anyone who has much experience with them will tell, computers in the most important ways are exceedingly stupid. Brownlee summarizes: "Far from being an orderly, computer-like machine that methodically calculates step by step, the brain is now seen as working more like a beehive, its swarm of interconnected neurons sending signals back and forth at lightning speed" (1998, p. 50). The current information-processing paradigm is helpful, but not perfect. Humans do not think like computers. Humans are not adept and do not enjoy laboriously spending their time solving problems requiring extensive and repetitive computations. Humans, however, do enjoy thinking. Humans do possess an undeniable quality called intelligence. What then is the nature of intelligence? Is it knowledge — is it wisdom? What do we mean by these terms? How can we capture the essence of intelligence?

Many psychologists offer the concept of intelligence quotient (IQ) as a practical means to delineate relative intelligence. Actual descriptions of intelligence, however, are described in what only can be called the most cryptic of terms — for example, *g* is a common reference for "general intelligence" in the behavioral sciences. There are many labels but very few good definitions. The dictionaries often define intelligence in ways that suggest links between perception and learning followed by further links between learning and application. Most often, intelligence is measured by a person's ability to perform tasks, solve problems, and react appropriately to new situations. Public administrators perform tasks, solve problems, and must react appropriately to new situations. Public administrators must then possess a threshold level of what is called intelligence — however defined. How do you measure this intelligence? Cognitive researcher Roger Schank offers an emerging view:

> Traditionally, intelligence tests are problem-solving tests, and the most difficult questions on College Board exams and other standardized tests involve solving a problem one has never encountered before or attempting one that appears commonplace but may have an unusual twist. But why do we imagine that intelligence is best gauged by problem-solving ability? Why not by an analytical ability about problems for which there is no clear solution, such as the kind of people-oriented problems that we encounter every day? (1990, p. 2)

Public administrators deal with problems that are generally people-oriented because government is labor intensive and the administrative mission is usually related to the resolution of people-oriented problems. The problems facing public administrators are, as Rittel and Webber note, no longer the comparatively easy problems of building roads and sewers, but rather "wicked" problems which "have no definitive formulation and hence no agreed-upon criteria to tell when a solution has been found" (in Harmon & Mayer, 1986, p. 9). As psychologist Richard Farson relates:

> Most people, especially those who inhabit the lower levels of organizations, think of themselves as problem solvers, and to a great extent they are. They size up a situation, break it down into its component parts, and then address each component one at a time. As they go up the ladder and become executives, however, they deal increasingly with *predicaments*, not problems. The best executives soon discover that purely analytic thinking is inadequate. Predicaments require interpretive thinking. Dealing with a predicament

> demands the ability to put a larger frame around a situation, to understand it in its many contexts, to appreciate its deeper and often paradoxical causes and consequences. (1996, p. 43, emphasis added)

Traditionally, the public service has been characterized across its base by a wide range of administrative and professional specialties. As one moves up the hierarchical ladder, narrow perspectives are no longer adequate (Agor, 1996, p. 18). To manage across specialties requires a comprehensive, generalist understanding of the nature of various types of work and how they interrelate to help achieve the organizational mission.

Lately, the character of work itself is changing at almost all levels, not just management (Carnevale & Carnevale, 1993, p. 8). As administrative theorist David Carnevale notes, "Modern work is rapidly becoming knowledge work, what some have termed 'smart work.' It does not hold its shape for long. It is constantly changing" (1995, p. 175). We see an increasing need for a high degree of specialization but for shorter time periods. In other words, an employee who already may have mastered one set of skills is likely to be asked within a short time to literally change jobs and master another set of skills. This process is driven by the streamlining occurring throughout most organizations. It is particularly acute in the public sector. As the National Performance Review calls it, public administrators are being asked to "do more with less."

Empowerment and democratization of the work place is not just the discovery or rediscovery of sound management technique, but also the result of organizational inability to economically sustain a large supervisory contingent. Middle management is increasingly attacked in this era of government retrenchment as an unnecessary layer in organizations. "For all the talk of sharpening organizational efficiency, it has been budget crises that have driven most government flattening efforts" (Walters, 1996, March, p. 21). Flattening bureaucracy has become the catch phrase for government. It is a mantra which resonates on both managerial and populist levels.

In addition, public organizations (like their private counterparts) exist in a much more turbulent environment than ever before. External demands force our workers to be more flexible. They must have a skilled, but still generalist, orientation in order to anticipate and resolve the new challenges which face them every day. The modern work environment demands "employees with initiative, judgment, communications skills, a broad understanding of society and the ability to think critically and work cooperatively" (Carnevale, 1998). Advancements in technology also complicate the process. The ability to adapt quickly to make the best use of available technologies is paramount to success in today's organization. How do we select such a worker for the modern environment? "As positions become more sophisticated, so must civil service selection techniques" (Pynes & Bartels, 1996, p. 125). Increasingly, what were once considered very exotic types of selection instruments are now being offered as the most practical means to effectively place good people in public sector positions.

These types of assessment strategies tap into a fundamentally different set of skills than the ability to negotiate the conventional logic inherent in multiple choice examinations. Leaderless groups, role-playing exercises, critical incident responses, computer simulations, and in-basket exercises are examples of the types of selection instruments which are increasingly used in spite of their high development and implementation costs. Schank describes the difference in assessment alternatives:

> When it comes to thinking about the intelligence of people we use two standard methods. Either we try to assess people's intelligence by making them take a multiple-choice test involving a lot of mathematics as well as verbal and spatial reasoning skills, or else we simply make a guess by talking with them and observing them over a period of time in a variety of activities. The first method is the one that schools use, and the second method is the one that individuals who do not have a professional interest in the assessment of intelligence use. Most people are happy to assess the intelligence of others by talking to them and listening to what they say back. (1990, pp. ix-x)

How are these unconventional selection procedures different from multiple choice tests? In each, they interactively place applicants within the context of a *story*. They tap into the more natural method of assessment as described by Schank above. The story is designed to closely match the kinds of scenarios which a professional might be expected to face within their work setting. As the story line unfolds, each job candidate is assessed according to the responses they give and the behaviors they display.

In many cases, the applicants are asked to write their own stories. Participants in leaderless groups are perhaps the prime example. In a leaderless group, a small number of job candidates are placed in a situation together in order to evaluate their interpersonal skills and leadership qualities. Evaluators of such an exercise attempt to discern the fine line between assertiveness and aggressiveness as the participants act out and define their roles in an unscripted play. Role-playing is a similar exercise, except that the roles for at least some of the participants are more predefined.

In the other types of assessment procedures, the plot of the story is much more explicit. In the critical incident exercise, candidates are presented with a fully-developed story. A law enforcement candidate may be confronted by a hypothetical emergency situation to which he or she has been placed in command. An applicant for a human resources position may be presented with a full description of a discrimination case and be asked to respond appropriately within legal guidelines.

A typical in-basket exercise makes use of a collection of stories. The candidate is presented with a scenario such as, "It is your first day on the job as the new City Budget Director. You have come in one hour early to look through your in-basket. No one else in the office has arrived." The candidate is then asked to look through a lengthy series of memos, forms, etc., and prioritize his or her day's work. Each of the items tells a story or contributes to a larger, unfolding story through which candidates are evaluated on the appropriateness and timeliness of their responses.

Computer simulations are becoming more and more realistic, especially when much of the actual work is conducted through these electronic wonders. The applicant "lives" through the story in real time. The story progresses according to the responses given by the applicant. The course of action taken by the candidate can be scored according to a continuum of projected outcomes.

These creative methods of assessment repudiate in a fundamental sense the limited assumptions of intelligence inherent in multiple-choice tests. These methods do not hold sacred the principle of logical problem-solving as an isolated skill essential for work in the modern organization. This disillusionment with traditional views of working intelligence occurs even as our drive for technological capacity becomes more acute. It occurs even when our dependence on knowledge grows exponentially. These assessment methodologies violate conventional standards of objectivity by relying on the subjective judgements of their developers, their evaluators, and their subjects. To understand the emergence of this new paradigm, we must first contrast it with the longstanding Western notion of intelligence.

Aristotle, through his conceptualization of the *syllogism*, outlined a theoretical understanding of human intelligence founded on logic. Within this dominant paradigm, a knowledgeable person is one that has great command in using the rules of inference contained with a coherent logical system. The "purest" form of logic is deductive reasoning through which an argument is considered *valid* when a train of true premises inevitably and irrefutably leads to the conclusion presented. The classic example of the deductive form of argument is usually presented in the following manner:

> All humans are mortals.
> Socrates is human.
> Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

The foundational assumption within deductive reasoning is that categories are discrete constructs. An object either belongs to a class of objects, or it does not. The conventional view of knowledge supports the belief that if a sufficient number of facts are known about a particular case, correct placement in the proper category is certain. Taxonomy has been the cornerstone of Western civilization. This understanding of logic-based knowledge has been encouraged within the Western tradition by the powerful successes of the scientific enterprise. Farson observes, "Our great achievements in science, law, government, and in every intellectual pursuit are dependent upon our development as rational, logical thinkers" (p. 21).

However, the realization is growing that categories are *not* discrete. That is, a natural object may only *partially* belong to a given set (Zadeh, 1965). Formal logic exemplified in its ideal form, deductive reasoning, is turned on its head when applied to the natural world. "The only subsets of the universe that are not fuzzy are the constructs of classical mathematics. All other sets — sets of particles, cells, tissues, people, ideas, galaxies — in principle contain elements to different degrees" (Treadwell, 1995, p. 91). Discrete categorization is really a series of manufactured bifurcations imposed upon reality. The great linguistic philosopher Kenneth Burke illustrates with an excellent analogy: "To look for negatives in nature would be as absurd as though you were to go out hunting for the square root of minus-one. The negative is a function peculiar to symbol systems, quite as the square root of minus-one is an implication of a certain mathematical symbol system" (Burke, 1966, p. 9). The implication is that the use of deductive reasoning has limited value outside the artificial universe described by mathematicians. And yet, as Marshall observes, "Research in public management is characterized by a search for positive knowledge through deductive theoretical models" (1998, p. 274).

The utility of formal logic then is its ability to correct for human irrationality. In an important sense, deductive reasoning is useful mostly as a metaphor for the natural world — a way to model reality. "An inductive argument, on the other hand, involves the claim, not that its premisses give conclusive grounds for the truth of its conclusion, but only that they provide *some* support for it" (Copi, 1982). Inductive reasoning has always been acknowledged as *legitimate*, but since its conclusions offer no clear-cut certainties, its practical value has been questioned. Apparently, the use of fuzzy sets and inductive reasoning more closely approximate the process of natural human intelligence. This form of reasoning recognizes the gray areas which seem to exist in almost all human endeavors and understandings. It is an understandable by-product of evolution. Let's illustrate with a case.

Assume a hypothetical example of a human being living long before the rise of civilization. This early human witnesses a snake biting another person. When that other person subsequently dies, the proximity of the two events may suggest in the primitive's mind a *correlation*. The primitive infers that the snake was *the* cause of death. The primitive may make the further inference that *all* snakes are deadly, or at least that all snakes should be avoided pending further information. Is the primitive human correct given the facts as presented? The primitive's conclusions *are* based on observations. But as statisticians are quick to tell us, correlation is not causality. The bite of the snake may be merely *coincidental* to death. The snake's bite may have even been a causal agent, but there may also be other unknown factors which contributed cumulatively to the person's demise. Then what has the primitive human *learned*? Until further experience tells otherwise, he or she has learned to avoid *all* snakes. Such an inductive strategy is based on an overgeneralization, perhaps even a faulty premise. However, the drive for survival is satisfied because the primitive has chosen the safest path for self-preservation. In other words, instead of waiting for more data, this early human prematurely jumps to the conclusion that all snakes are poisonous and acts accordingly. Otherwise, the primitive may disregard what was just witnessed in anticipation of receiving more information. What are the probable outcomes based on each of these two possible decisions? First, if the primitive mistakenly jumps to the conclusion that all snakes are poisonous then he or she may inadvertently avoid coming into contact with *non*-poisonous snakes. On the other hand, if he or she ignores what was witnessed, then the vulnerability to a snake's deadly defenses is greatly increased. The primitive human's survival is not affected by meeting non-poisonous snakes, but survival surely does depend upon avoiding poisonous snakes. Thus, in terms of self-preservation in a world of incomplete information, the primitive human's conclusions and actions are justifiable and biologically efficient. Risk- averse behavior, although certainly irrational in many of those situations in which all the facts are known, is the most compatible strategy for the propagation of the species — because, rarely are all the facts known. Only a severe mischaracterization of the scientific enterprise would dismiss the power of inductive reasoning. As the renowned theoretical physicist Stephen W. Hawking observes about scientific theory: "Any ... theory is always provisional, in the sense that it is only a hypothesis: you can never prove it. No matter how many times the results of experiments agree with some theory, you can never be sure that the next time the result will not contradict the theory" (1988, p. 10). Despite surface appeals to the power of deductive logic, science is itself an enterprise closely aligned with the practice of inductive reasoning.

Similarly in the modern world, *economic* survival may be more dependent upon inductive reasoning than deductive logic. As discussed previously, new demands for a much richer, more complete array of assessment tools for the modern worker is evidence that conventional logic is often inadequate. The measurement of knowledge and intelligence requires the recognition that human reasoning is based on something beyond problem-solving skills. Cognitive scientist Morton Hunt summarizes:

> For many centuries, philosophers and others who have studied the human mind have believed that reasoning takes place according to the laws governing logic. Or rather, that it should, but regrettably fails to do so. Ideal reasoning, they have held, is *deductive*: one starts with statements that are self-evidently true or taken to be true and, by means of logical processes, sees what other true statements can be derived from them. When we violate the principles of logic, or when we reason *inductively* — moving from particular examples to a generalization that goes beyond them — we often fall into error or reach invalid conclusions. Such is the tradition that runs unbroken from Aristotle to Piaget. But the findings of cognitive science run counter to it: logical reasoning is not our usual — or natural — practice, and the technically invalid kinds of reasoning we generally employ work rather well in most of the everyday situations in which one might suppose rigorous deductive thinking was essential. (1982, p. 121)

Without the parameters of formal logic, what then is knowledge? What enables us to communicate? What enables us to create and produce? Brockway answers, "Neither science nor philosophy are able to solve our perennial epistemological problems and give us the certainty that we seek, and so we tell *stories*" (1993, p. 16, emphasis added). If the use of stories is the common denominator for the types of selection instruments which prevail in the modern work environment, are we justified in asserting that knowledge is in fact, stories? "First of all, we know the brain is an information processing system that may well record and store data and experiences in a holographic (complex contextual) pattern (Pribram, 1971)" (Agor, 1966, p. 15).

Second, "linguists use the ability to narrate as a measure of advanced language competence" (Miller, 1990, 1995, p. 66). But is the aptitude for listening and telling stories the same thing as *intelligence?* Schank makes just such a claim based on his research. He has been exploring the human mind in the quest to create artificial intelligence. Schank explains:

> The understanding problem is simply that humans are not really set up to understand logic. People tell stories because they know that others like to hear stories. The reason that people like to hear stories, however, is not transparent to them. People need a context to help them relate what they have heard to what they already know. We understand events in terms of events we have already understood. When a decision-making heuristic, or rule of thumb, is presented to us without a context, we cannot decide the validity of the rule we have heard, nor do we know where to store this rule in our memories. Thus, what we are presented is both difficult to evaluate and difficult to remember, making it virtually useless. People who fail to couch what they have to say in memorable stories will have their rules fall on deaf ears despite their best intentions and despite the best intentions of their listeners ... What makes us intelligent is our ability to find out what we know when we need to know it. What we actually know is all the stories, experiences, "facts," little epithets, points of view, and so on that we have gathered over the years. (1990)

Logic dissects the objects under its study. Logic offers precision of understanding at an elemental level. The soundness of logical argument rests upon the soundness of its component inferences. Each link in the logical chain can be analyzed individually to measure the validity of its conclusions. Logic, however, is very atypical when compared to usual ways of human understanding. Unlike logic, natural thinking is much more apt to compress and consolidate incoming data. Kandel explains:

> Much of the sensory information received by the peripheral receptors in our body must eventually be filtered out and eliminated within the brain, much

> as we disregard the ground of an image when we focus on the figure .... selective attention both filters out some features and sharpens our perception of others. In this winner-take-all strategy, some stimuli stand out in consciousness while others recede into dim awareness. (1995a, pp. 403-404)

"Nothing seems more natural and universal to human beings than telling stories" (Miller, 1990, 1995, p. 66). Stories serve as useful means to sort and store through a barrage of environmental information. "Stories situate people, provide them with a context, and construct the realities in and through which they live" (Kling, 1997, p. 161). Brockway states:

> We tell stories; we cannot avoid it. Much of our storytelling is unintentional; some of it is deliberate and contrived. It is a way of thinking which is at the opposite pole from critical thinking. The analytic thinker takes things apart to see how they are put together. The mythic thinker puts the parts together. He or she is a holistic thinker. Mythic thinking is connected, structured, and linear. Stories always have a beginning, middle, and end. Mythic thinking narrates, integrates, and makes whole; it does not fracture experience into fragments. (1993, p. 7)

The human brain processes information in a variety of ways, but it appears better suited for capturing information presented in the form of a story. McConkie and Boss elaborate:

> With regard to the human memory, stories have a demonstrably more powerful effect than simply citing statistics or even than citing statistics and explaining the statistics with a clarifying story. Stories probably have more influence on individual conduct than philosophy, sales talk, or policy statements. Martin and Powers (1979), testing the effectiveness of an advertisement for a winery, randomly assigned subjects to three groups. One group was shown statistical tables concerning the winemaking process, one was shown statistical tables and told a story, and the third was told the story only. The group shown only the statistical tables subsequently showed less commitment to the advertised brand while that group told only the story showed the most commitment. The story's power over the individual

> probably rests on its facilitation of recall, its appeal to intuition, and its generation of belief. Stories create vivid mental images that stimulate and facilitate memory. Memory research has demonstrated that concrete words, sentences, and paragraphs of "connected discourse" are recalled more accurately than are most abstract versions of the same phenomena. (1994, p. 378)

To be human is to be part of a story. We are part of a grand story — what Hegel might term the unfolding of the Spirit (1807/1977). Human cooperation is dependent upon the sharing of stories. The foundation of language as the quintessential human sharing of symbolic forms has its roots in the exchange of stories. As Heidegger remarks, "Language has its essential being in the telling" (1968, p. 205). The dynamic nature of a large, heterogenous democracy embodied by American political culture is channeled by the commonality of the stories told by its citizenry. These stories are circulated among different levels and segments of society. "Just as narrative is central to people in their everyday private lives, so it is to the public affairs of the state," writes Schram and Neisser, "For instance, just as there are 'folktales' that lend coherence to the lives of 'common folk,' 'policy tales' do the same for policy elites" (1997, p. 1). Reich postulates the importance of storytelling:

> As good American pragmatists, wary of grand themes, we prefer the ellipses of metaphor. To the extent that we reflect upon these deeper premises at all, we do so through the stories we tell one another about our lives together ... these tales embody our public philosophy. They constitute a set of orienting ideas less rigid and encompassing than an ideology but also less ephemeral than the "public mood." The stories interpret and explain reality and teach what is expected of us in light of that reality. They situate us, allowing us to

> understand where we are in an otherwise incomprehensible sea of facts and events. In so doing, these stories give meaning and coherence to what would otherwise seem random phenomena. (1987, p. 7)

What we call the *self* is also defined by the personal narratives we create about our own individual lives. Thurman Arnold observes, "Every individual, for reasons lying deep in the mystery of personality, constructs for himself a succession of little dramas in which he is the principal character" (1962, p. xiii). Psychologist Dan P. McAdams describes what he terms "the narrating mind":

> Human beings are storytellers by nature. In many guises, as folktale, legend, myth, epic, history, motion picture and television program, the story appears in every known human culture. The story is a natural package for organizing many different kinds of information. Storytelling appears to be a fundamental way of expressing ourselves and our world to others. (1993, p. 27)

To postulate a human cognitive structure based on storytelling runs counter to much of the hopeful theories of the social sciences which attempt to view human systems through rational models. Economics, political science, and other social sciences are still suffering from the vestiges of physics envy. The attempt to emulate the amazing progress of the hard sciences through the vehicle of logical positivism has disillusioned many researchers in the social sciences. Waldo portrays the discipline's behavioralist experience:

> Political science has become too narrowly defined, too "professional," too much identified with the established order. Political scientists, personally and collectively, should be more concerned with "values," with issues of justice, freedom, and equality, with political activity. In a period of stress, turmoil, and gross inequities, it is irresponsible to carry on "as usual" in

> academic detachment. At minimum, political scientists need to be concerned with issues of public policy and political reform; perhaps they should become engaged with issues of radical sociopolitical reconstruction. Driven by the ambition to become a genuine science, political science has constricted and crippled itself philosophically and methodologically. The fact-value distinction has encourage an undesirable foreshortening of vision and moral insensitivity. Emphasis on methodology borrowed from the natural sciences has resulted in much research that is trivial—"elegant," perhaps, but inconsequential, even for its ostensible purpose of helping to create a science of politics. (1975, p. 114)

We now speak of a *post*-behavioralist revolution. In that setting, the analysis of stories promises to be a productive research method. Comparative linguist J. Hillis Miller postulates,

> Seen from this structuralist or semiotic perspective, narrative would be a process of ordering or reordering, recounting, telling again what has already happened or is taken to have already happened. this recounting takes place according to definite rules analogous to those rules by which we form sentences. This means that the secrets of storytelling are ascertainable by empirical or scientific investigation. This makes narrative theory part of "the human sciences." Hence, Propp's use of a term from biology as well as from linguistics: "morphology." The process of storytelling in a given culture or within a given genre at a particular place and time will be bound by certain unwritten but identifiable laws, so .... we need the "same" stories over and over, then, as one of the most powerful, perhaps *the* most powerful, of ways to assert the basic ideology of culture. (1990, 1995, pp. 71-72)

Particularly valuable for the purposes of this dissertation, is the semiotic analysis of stories within the culture of public administrators in the American political system.

Stories in the Public Administration Community

Public and business administration, as formal research disciplines, have always been relatively more accommodating to qualitative, ethnographic research — perhaps, because these disciplines still retain strong intimate relationships with practitioners. Public administration has served as "the crucial link between the abstract study of politics and the process of improving the way the political system" works (Kettl, 1993, p. 409). "Those who must practice in the real world cannot wait for science," explains political scientist David L. Weimer, "They must act on the basis of some model of the world" (1992, p. 243). Stories provide a means for public administrators to model the world. "Each story conveys a very different view of reality and represents a special way of seeing," states Schön and Rein, "From a problematic situation that is vague, ambiguous, and indeterminate (or rich and complex, depending on one's frame of mind), each story selects and names different features and relations that become the 'things' of the story—what the story is about" (1994, p. 26). Storytelling has been an integral part of the public administration process. Schram and Neisser discuss the role of storytelling in the public sector:

> Tales of the state range from rumors, gossip, and folktales to the use of stereotypes and icons, to the implied stories buried in the seemingly neutral analytical models of "political science," "economics," and "sociology" .... The term "public policy" already masks its own subject matter, making it a matter of policy (within the discipline, if not the state) that public policy is assumed to be some sort of entity that does not need to be interrogated for its own narrativity. Yet what are public policies but stories narrating our relations (between citizens, between the citizen and the state, between states,

> etc.) in politically selective ways? Whether the stories are about foreign enemies in a brave new world order, global environmental change, postindustrialism, illegal immigration, welfare dependency, or the state of race relations, the politics of public policy-making is played out in terms of stories that mediate how public problems are comprehended. (1997, p. 2)

For disciplines such as law, business and public administration, the case study has been a primary teaching tool for linking theory with practice. "The case-study method was developed to approximate the way people derive their information and make decisions in life" explain political scientists Meyer and Brown, "Case study is essentially self-learning through simulated experience" (1989, p. 7). Bureaucratic theorist Ralph Hummel notes that the public administration community strongly values the case study even though it often fails to meet the validity standards of conventional science (Hummel, 1991, p. 32). Disch states:

> The belief that philosophy can and should be separated from politics is fostered, in part, by the style of philosophical writing ... Principles that appear timeless and universal when couched in abstract arguments really began as particular experiences, so no matter how abstract our theories may sound or how consistent our arguments may appear, there are incidents and stories behind them which, at least for ourselves, contain as in a nutshell the full meaning of whatever we have to say. Storytelling both situates our theories in the experiences from which they came and engages an audience in a different kind of critical thinking than an argument does. A story can represent a dilemma as contingent and unprecedented and position its audience to think from within that dilemma. It invites the kind of situated critical thinking that is necessary when we are called upon, in Arendt's words, to think "without banisters." (1993, p. 669)

Questions of replicability and generalizability are always at the forefront. According to positivist tenets, these questions are never fully answered through stories. And still, practitioners find remarkable utility in case studies. The evidence for the effectiveness of case studies has found support in the professional literature:

> In a survey of two hundred training directors on the effectiveness of nine different instructional methods for various training objectives, the case-study method had the best overall score. The other eight methods listed in the order of effectiveness were conference discussions, role playing, sensitivity training, business games, programmed instruction, films, television lectures, and lectures with questions. The training objectives rated were knowledge acquisition, changing attitudes, problem solving, interpersonal skills, participant acceptance, and knowledge retention. (Meyer & Brown, 1989, p. 27)

According to the storytelling thesis, case studies are valuable because they meet the cognitive learning requirements for a public administrator. Each case study, is in fact, an in-depth story.

Public administration's professional literature is replete with case studies. Each one tells the story of a particular individual, team, department, agency, or jurisdiction attempting to overcome adversity of one form or another. In mythic language, the stories are of *heroes* (Bellavita, 1991; Hubbel, 1990, 1991; Terry, 1991, 1997). "Those about whom we write are reinventing government," declare reinvention gurus Osborne and Gaebler, making the mythic connection explicit, "They are the heroes of this story" (1992, p. xvii). Bolman and Deal explain the role of stories within the organizational setting:

> Stories are often viewed as a source of entertainment rather than of truth or wisdom. Yet stories can also be used to convey information, morals, values, or myths vividly and convincingly (Mitroff and Kilmann, 1975). Many stories in organizations center on heroes and heroines. In Congress, for example, the legends of Senator Phillip Hart, Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, and Lewis Dascher live on through stories. Hart is remembered as

> the conscience of the Senate, Jordan as a politician who resigned at the height of her popularity, Dasher as the parliamentarian whose mastery of the rules of protocol made him "the image of Congress" (Weatherford, 1985). Stories ... play an important, unappreciated role in modern organizations. Stories perpetuate values and update the historical exploits of heroes and heroines. (1991, pp. 256-257)

The stories are about communities taking action and facing challenges. Regular readers of *Governing* and similar professional magazines for example, often find stories directly relevant to their own professional concerns. They find satisfaction in reading these stories and discovering how familiar they are to their own. They gain insights into their own situations by understanding how similarly situated professionals solve similar problems. Translating that information helps public administrators to make *other's* successes *their* successes.

The example of music may help illustrate the process. Musicologists have often described the enjoyment of music as the juxtaposition of the familiar and the unexpected (Desain & Honing, 1992; Hodges, 1996; Kasha & Hirschhorn, 1979, pp. 22-32; Nöth, 1990, p. 433). That is, music has certain cultural conventions that allow listeners to have a feel for which direction the melody is headed. Pleasurable listening is derived as the music follows along the predicted path, but the deviations are what really excite and inspire. So it is with human storytelling. We find comfort in listening to a familiar story. But our pulse quickens with a twist of the plot. The unexpected turns in a storyline are what make a particular story memorable and interesting. Maximum learning occurs when exposure to the unknown parallels a repeat of the familiar. "Semiosis is attached to a continuum of signs so that the characteristic semiotic approach can be described as a conclusion from something already known to something still unknown" (Eschbach, 1986, p. 279). Analogies are thus powerful tools for explanation because familiarity provides the frame for understanding.

In the semiotic sense, a story is a sign — perhaps the most basic sign for human communication and understanding. "To be stories at all they must be series of events: but it must be understood that this series — the *plot*, as we call it — is only really a net whereby to catch something else," explains author and literary critic C.S. Lewis, "The real theme may be, and perhaps usually is, something that has no sequence in it, something other than a process and more like a state or quality" (1966/1982, p. 17). Beyond the bare-bones structure of protagonists and conflicts, stories are also effective carriers of values. "Organization stories are almost always told with a specific purpose, though they frequently reveal much more than the storyteller originally intended," notes organizational theorists Mark L. McConkie and R. Wayne Boss, "Most frequently they are designed to reveal particular organizational values" (1994, p. 377).

We humans find it very difficult to refrain from storytelling in any aspect of our thinking. Our lives become narratives that we create (McAdams, 1993). In the quest to move beyond our human nature and approach the divine, some ascetic religions spend much of their time attempting to move beyond the storytelling paradigm. For example, semiotician John T. Kirby describes Zen as "the attempt *not* to make narratives" (Kirby, 1996). As Douglas R. Hofstadter explains, "A major part of Zen is the fight against reliance on words. To combat the use of words, one of the best devices is the kōan, where words are so deeply abused that one's mind is practically left reeling" (1979, p. 251). Stories remain an essential part of our being. Through stories we derive meaning. For humans, stories are the building blocks of knowledge. Shared stories are the building blocks of culture.

The process of sharing stories within the political universe has not altogether escaped the notice of academic researchers although the various collegiate specialties often use different terminology. For example, within the policy sciences, policy analysts often make use of a technique called *scenario writing* (Patton & Sawicki, 1993, pp. 313-315). As policy scientist David L. Weimer points out, "A simple question underlies scenario writing: Is it possible to tell a plausible story of how the adoption of a policy will lead to desired outcomes?" (1993, p. 118). Among policy analysis techniques, scenario writing is part of a wider group of methodologies sometimes labeled, *forward mapping* (Weimer, 1993) or *intuitive forecasting* (Patton & Sawicki, 1993, pp. 273-275). These various approaches to research build into the process something akin to storytelling in that disparate facts and observations are brought together and synthesized in a way that makes some sense. Patton asserts, "Political factors, like raw numbers, need to be analyzed, interpreted, and presented in a meaningful way to the users of the analysis. The scenario is one such method" (1993, p. 315). Stories also are important for the entire policy process. "In policy debate, policy stories and the frames they contain serve the rhetorical functions of persuasion, justification, and symbolic display," explain Schön and Rein, "In policy practice, on the other hand, policy stories influence the shaping of laws, regulations, allocation decisions, institutional mechanisms, sanctions, incentives, procedures, and patterns of behavior that determine what policies actually mean in action" (1994, p. 32).

For some political researchers, story gathering and telling *is* the research process. For example, Richard Fenno's pioneering work on participant observation illustrates the importance of stories for the research process. He references what he terms "observation, context, and sequence" as the basis for his preferred style of research (1990, p. 113-128). These elements are also essential for storytelling. Consistent with the semiotic mission to find patterns of meaning, Fenno differentiates his analysis from those of journalists because, as he says, journalists "are more interested in episodes than regularities" (1990 p. 127). "Stories suggest how complex *the* story of any large legislative decision must be, and how many different decision contexts and decision sequences are involved," Fenno says to describe his work, "They further suggest how much research room yet remains for the microscopic, observation-based analyses of the governing activity of legislative politicians" (1990, p. 127).

Within other areas of political science, especially in studies of voter behavior, a different terminology is used for discussing what are essentially stories that voters use to make decisions. The preferred term for this concept is *schema theory*. As communications specialist Doris Graber describes, "In a nutshell, a schema is a cognitive structure of organized knowledge about situations and individuals that has been abstracted from prior experiences. It is used for processing new information and retrieving stored information" (1988, p. 28). Schank's research suggests that the paradigmatic example of schema is the story.

Sociologists and other organizational theorists have similar explanatory approaches. Organizational psychologist, Edgar H. Schein explains:

> Sociologists have a concept called "the definition of the situation" by which they mean that human beings are always operating in some kind of situation the meaning of which is defined by the collective perceptions of, assumptions about, and expectations one has for that situation. We never operate in a social vacuum. We are always moving from one situation to another, and how we react, what our motives will be, will depend largely on how we define or structure that situation. When we enter new situations — as when we take a new job or join a new organization — the process of *socialization* can be defined partly as being taught or learning how to define or think about a given subset of that situation — what to do in the presence of the boss, how hard to work after hours, and so forth. If we are to understand what a person is doing in a given situation and why, we must seek to understand the person's definition of the situation. (1980, p. 41)

In relation to the sociological perspective, Schank's theory makes clear that a person defines their situation according to the experiential stories already mentally stored through one's own experiences. A relevant story mentally recalled for purposes of associating with a new situation helps provide "definition" and "structure" (as Schank uses the terms), to a person's experience of that new situation. "Stories describe events in a way that listeners can easily remember," Bolman and Deal explain, "They summarize vividly, delete distracting details, and present, clear, simple messages. They become organizational fairy tales that serve several roles" (1991, p.257). "To steer their work group in the right direction," explains Hummel, "managers talk to each other and their subordinates; the story and story-telling emerge as the prime means of orienting oneself" (1991, p. 36). Political theorist Lisa J. Disch draws the parallel between stories and theory:

> A well-crafted story shares with the most elegant theories the ability to bring a version of the world to light that so transforms the way people see that it seems never to have been otherwise. Under certain conditions, a story can be a more powerful critical force than a theoretical analysis. In a society where the abstraction of social theory and social science sometimes masks real conflicts, a skillful narrative can bring to light the assumptions buried in apparently neutral arguments and challenge them. Storytelling invites critical engagement between a reader and a text and, more important, among the various readers of a work that the impersonal, authoritative social science "voice from nowhere" cannot. (1993, p. 665)

A story can be told through playing music, drawing pictures, taking photographs, filming movies, or writing words. But a story is not just a collection of sounds or images. A story is more than the sum of its parts. "In short the structure of the story, because it is congruent with the structural elements of the world," explains Hummel, "inspires a trust in being able to move back and forth between one's own experienced world and the world represented by story-tellers" (1991, p. 37). A similar activity occurs within the confluence of individual citizens to the larger society. "Stories, some more controversial than others, as well as narrative practices in general, play a pervasive role not only in popular culture but also in politics and public policy making," explain Schram and Neisser, "So much so, that at times the narratives prevalent in one realm become indistinguishable from those in another realm .... politics is often about the same stories that influence other spheres of life" (1997, p. 1). Cognitive psychologist Howard Gardner describes the role of stories within the realm of leadership:

> Whether direct or indirect, leaders fashion stories—principally stories of identity. It is important that a leader be a good storyteller, but equally crucial that the leader embody that story in his or her life. When a leader tells stories to experts, the stories can be quite sophisticated; but when the leader is dealing with a diverse, heterogenous group, the story must be sufficiently elemental to be understood by the untutored, or "unschooled,"mind .... The formidable challenge confronting the visionary leader is to offer a story, and an embodiment, that builds on the most credible of past syntheses, revisits them in the light of present concerns, leaves open a place for future events, and allows individual contributions by the persons in the group. (1995, pp. ix, 56)

As previously described, Schank has developed a model of human intelligence based on the mutual exchange of stories (1997/1990). Others, both academicians and practitioners, have noted how important language and storytelling are to members of the public administration community in particular. Hummel, for example, asserts that the stories managers tell are as valid as science, but should be evaluated by much different criteria (Hummel, 1991). Mary Timney Bailey argues against what she perceives to be a bias against the case study as a form of legitimate scientific research. Countering critics of the case study, Bailey cites specific examples to show that case studies have been an essential component of theory building in public administration:

> Public administration theory could not have developed as it has without the theory building derived from case studies. The field has been enriched by important case studies such as Philip Selznick's (1949) study of the Tennessee Valley Authority, Herbert Kaufman's (1960) study of forest rangers, Graham Allison's (1971) analysis of the Cuban missile crisis, and Daniel Mazmanian and Jeanne Nienaber's (1979) study of the Corps of Engineers. Despite their long-term value to the field, these studies would fail the scientific tests established by positivist social science. To underscore the point, White noted that even Dwight Waldo's (1948) classic *The Administrative State*, which was his doctoral dissertation, would not meet "Cleary and McCurdy's criteria of causality, testability, and validity" (White, 1986a, p. 22). More recent examples of the use of cases for theory building include Karen Hult and Charles Walcott's (1990) analysis of the space shuttle Challenger disaster to develop a theory of governance networks and institutional design, and John Burke's (1986) use of the case of Environment Protection Agency whistleblower Hugh Kaufman, among others, for his theory of bureaucratic responsibility. (1992, p. 52)

White states that storytelling "is an equal if not more powerful way for practitioners to acquire and use knowledge in administration" and further, "This also means that other cultural sciences that treat their subject matters as texts have the potential to inform administrative research and practice" (1992, p. 86). In a companion article, Dvora Yanow argues, "Organizational metaphors are not merely decorations or unclear thought, but are cognitively grounded and cannot be replaced without changing the way people think about and understand the nature and mission of their organization" (1992, p. 89). Public policy theorist Robert D. Behn shows that physicists, whose discipline represents in the minds of most the archetype of the hard sciences, routinely use metaphors as a way to model reality. He points out, "Underlying physics is a set of concepts that are accepted as reality: force, gravity, energy, field, inertia, electron spin, quarks, and neutrinos" (Behn, 1992). But these concepts are really only abstractions which serve in similar fashion as do metaphors for administrative theory and practice. Behn argues that for public administration theorists to be truly effective they must understand the metaphors of managers. Behn comments:

> Yet, if social scientists are to really envy the physicists, we ought to envy their approach to their science. Pauli did not run a regression to find the neutrino. Zweig and Gell-Mann did not conduct a random experiment to discover the quark. Rather, in attempting to solve a very important problem, they used their imaginations to invent something that solved the problem. Moreover, other physicists accept their invention because it provides a useful answer to a troubling problem and is consistent with the existing evidence. (1992, p. 417)

Science philosopher Carl Hempel agrees: "The transition from data to theory requires creative imagination" (1966). Hoover relates:

> The mind, in its many ways of knowing is never so clever or so mysterious as in the exercise of *imagination*. If there is any sense in which people can leap over tall obstacles at a single bound, it is in the flight of the mind. But it is one thing to imagine a possible proposition about reality, and it is quite another to start imagining evidence. Science is really a matter of figuring out relationships between things we know something about. To propose a relationship is a creative and imaginative act, however much systematic preparation may lie in the background. To test a proposition against reality involves a different order of imagination—mainly the ability to find in the bits and pieces of information elicited from reality that item essential to

> testing the credibility of a particular idea. It is in the realm of discovery that science becomes a direct partner of imagination. The history of natural science is filled with examples, from the realization that the earth revolves around the sun, and not vice versa, to the discovery that matter is made up of tiny atoms. Each of these discoveries were made by bold and imaginative people who were not afraid to challenge a whole structure of customary belief .... to be truly imaginative is something like trying to escape gravity—the initial move is the hardest. While the social sciences have as yet few discoveries to compare with the feats of natural science, the application of science to social relations is a much more recent and vastly more complicated undertaking. (1988, p. 9-10)

Like other areas of popular culture, many of the stories circulated within the public administration community are creations of fertile imagination. In a classic essay, Dwight Waldo advised fellow administrative theorists to follow closely how public administration is portrayed in literature (1956). "As Peter Brooks has observed, if man is the tool-using animal, *homo faber*, he is also inveterately the symbol-using animal, *homo significans*, the sense-making animal— and, as an essential part of the latter, the fiction-making animal" (Miller, 1990, 1995, p. 68). Fiction is an important part of the human experience and its influence is often translated into political action. McCurdy makes the case that literary works and other forms of fiction have administrative implications. He argues:

> Fiction (and other works of imagination) affect what public managers do and how they do it. Fiction appears to shape the policies that public servants carry out and the way in which they conduct their duties. It probably influences the choice of administrative methods. It does this by entering the public consciousness or popular culture and becoming part of the cognitive base for making decisions about public policy and administration. (McCurdy, 1995, p. 499)

Humorous stories, as told in the workplace and in the works of creative literature, also influence the behavior of public administrators according to Dean L. Yarwood (1995). Stories derived from the metaphor of *theater* are also suggested as sources with administrative implication (Morgan, 1986; Terry, 1997). And stories from citizens can also influence public administrators, both directly and indirectly. Herzog and Claunch report:

> Public administrators receive stories from a variety of sources: other public administrators, elected officials, subordinates in their organizations and in other organizations, and citizens. By listening to stories, administrators can improve services, interactions with citizens, and the operation of their agencies. Public administrators can even become more responsive as they classify, react, and take action according to the stories that they hear. Hummel defines a story as "a report about an event, a situation, a little world, as seen through the eyes of the story-teller who reports about his relations with an object or objects in that world (1991, 37). Stories are a form of knowledge through which public administrators can expand their worlds and modify their definitions of reality. (1997, p. 374)

Within the work setting, the significance of mastering storytelling is just being recognized in the field of executive development. Organizational consultants Gail T. Fairhurst and Robert A. Sarr recommend storytelling and complex metaphors as management tools designed to frame meaning in the work place (1996). Business consultants, Gerard I. Nierenberg and Henry H. Calero posit a form of communication they term "meta-talk" which seeks to make more explicit the many kinds of verbal cues (often clichés) which permeate language in the business setting and interfere with effective communication (1973, 1981, p. 122-125). Suggestive of the role that a Zen kōan plays, Nierenberg and Calero also state that sometimes meta-talk is manipulated purposefully to obscure true meaning and provide political cover. They give the following example:

> Bureaucratic meta-talk has been with us for a long time. The object seems to be to create an impenetrable thicket of words that no one can find fault with because no one can understand them. An example of this was an order issued by the Public Administration Bureau during World War II: "Such preparations shall be made as will completely obscure all Federal Buildings and nonfederal buildings occupied by the Federal Government during an air-raid for any period of time from visibility by reason of internal or external illumination." President Franklin D. Roosevelt saw beyond this bureaucratic obscurantism and directed, "Tell them that in a building where they have to keep work going, to put something across the windows." (1973, 1981, p. 141)

As this example illustrates, public administrators tend to be amateur symbol manipulators when compared to their more sophisticated and successful political masters.

Symbolic politics has taken center stage in the modern era. We are surrounded, in the news and on the airwaves, by political commentary pointing to the hypocrisies of the opposing side. We view our political leaders engaging in acts of symbolicity. We are postmodern consumers of images designed to attract our attention, to influence our behavior, and perhaps it is not an exaggeration to say, to control our thoughts. At one level, we are aware of the schemes of advertisers and political handlers. Yet, we are also susceptible to their seductive practices. We know and understand negative campaigning (Ansoloabehere & Iyengar, 1995; Hale, 1994; Sabato 1991, 1993, p. 141). We are aware of the strategy of spin control (Cook, 1998; Maltese, 1994; Kurtz, 1997, 1998; Simon, 1998). But the successful influences of such tactics are evident almost every time we view political outcomes in the aggregate. Even political sophisticates are not totally immune to the ideological creation and manipulation of symbols (Weaver, 1980). Political scientist Michael Parenti comments, "The most insidious forms of ideology are those that are not identified as ideology but are seen as the natural order of things. They do not emerge spontaneously and full-blown, but are disseminated through the dominant institutions of society, serving as instruments of social control" (1994, p. vii). Anxiety about the trustworthiness of our political institutions now seems as normal as the air that we breathe. But power in the political system still flows to those participants who tell the best stories. The most persuasive stories, oft told, rise to the level of myth.

Myths are important, because as Brockway explains, they "legitimate religious and social values" (1993, p. 4). What are myths? Myths are stories, cloaked in symbolism, representing the deepest held values of culture. Myths connect individuals to the underlying social currents of humanity. Brockway states, "Myths are usually interpretative on a grand scale" (1993, p. 10). Myths carry the collective wisdom of people over time. Each civilization requires mythology to bind together the human diversity within its domain. "Every mythology has to do with the wisdom of life as related to a specific culture at a specific time," states Joseph Campbell. "It integrates the individual into his society ... it's a harmonizing force" (Campbell, Moyer, and Flowers, 1988, p. 55). Myths derive their power from the social ethos that gives them birth. The political world is continuously defined by myth. Political powerplay represents the struggle to dominate the realm of myth in the public arena. Edelman says:

> The important and the difficult task for political analysts is to identify the consequences of subtle symbolism, for it is the foundation of political power and of political illusion. It induces the great mass of people in every land and in every era to live much of their lives bemused by a mythical past, preparing for a mythical future, creating mythical heroes and devils, and sacrificing their wholeness as individuals to support inequalities in wealth and power that impoverish even those who have the most of them. (1977, p. 155)

The line between myth and reality may be difficult for our limited human minds to fully discern. It is worth the effort however, to critically evaluate the stories that we tell and that we listen to, for stories are the constituent elements of myth. And as history shows, myths are often the most powerful forces driving significant social movements (e.g. nationalism and religious fervor).

Chapter 4.

Stories in the National Performance Review

A primary means used within the National Performance Review, in almost all of its various forms of presentation, is to emphasize and communicate essential points through *stories*. "'Stories' are discrete narrative focused on describing or explaining a particular phenomenon, such as apartheid or welfare dependency," explain Schram and Neisser, "Stories can be called 'narrative practices' or even 'representational practices' but so can other forms of textual representation including literary tropes, stereotypes, or even popular icons" (1997, p. 4). The National Performance Review began through stories. It began with one basic story and has expanded its use of stories from that point forward. The main story which has inspired this most recent bureaucratic reform effort was fist told in Osborne and Gaebler's bestselling book, *Reinventing Government* (1992). In short, the main story which serves as the driving force behind the National Performance Review is told like this:

> We last "reinvented" our governments during the early decades of the twentieth century, roughly from 1900 through 1940. We did so, during the Progressive Era and the New Deal, to cope with the emergence of a new industrial economy, which created vast new problems and vast new opportunities in American life. Today, the world of government is once again in great flux. The emergence of a postindustrial, knowledge-based, global economy has undermined old realities throughout the world, creating wonderful opportunities and frightening problems. Governments large and small, American and foreign, federal, state, and local, have begun to respond. (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992, p. xvi)

The theme which emerges immediately is that of *change*. This first story sets up and places current reform efforts within the context of change.

Washington Post reporter David Von Drehle writes about how Bob Stone, the National Performance Review's first project director, deliberately uses stories:

> Bob Stone is a born-again evangelist of the gospel of reinvented government. He once was lost but now he is found .... Like any good evangelist, Stone's gift is for telling stories that lead to the faith. Some come from his own experience. Perhaps some are apocryphal. There is the story of 23 signatures required to buy a desktop computer. The story of multiple forms to be approved before buying a grade of paper that wouldn't jam the copier. The story of the electric drill.
>
> "There was a regulation that said military personnel could not be used to fix up any building except the ones they lived in," Stone said, "This barred them from improving their workplaces. Along with this came a list of tools they were authorized to borrow. And it said 'No power tools.'
>
> "So I asked, 'Why no power tools?'
>
> And I was told, 'They might hurt themselves.'"
>
> Stone pauses for the irony to sink in .... He never tires of telling his stories, never assumes people have heard them before. When he first met with Gore to discuss a position in the performance review, Stone toted his heavy steam trap along. Stone's steam trap story appears on page 10 of "Reinventing Government." Gore is a big exponent of the book. But taking nothing for granted, Stone told him the story anyway:
>
> A steam trap costs $100; when it leaks, it loses $50 worth of steam in a week, he said. To replace one, military installations had to wait months for a bidding process that might save 10 bucks per trap. "I want government employees buying steam traps at Hechingers," he said.
>
> Turned out the story was new to the vice president. Perhaps he skimmed over that part of the book. Stone was smart to tell it, because Gore commandeered Stone's battered steam trap and made it a centerpiece of his speeches on government reform. (1993, p. A21:1)

What can be gained through the use of stories? Stories help human beings empathize with fellow human beings. "All stories invite us to become engaged with the reality they represent" (Hummel, 1991, p. 38). Stories give public administrators and other political participants a "feel" for reality. As Hummel explains, "The major alternate means of acquiring knowledge that managers use is story-telling, in written form: the case study and descriptive narratives" (1991, p. 32). "Stories are important because people don't think theoretically—at least most people don't," observes Bob Stone, "There are some who have very logical and mathematical minds, but most of us need to hook things we learn to life—to have some idea of what some process is—what's it feel like ... what's it smell like?" (personal communication, July 14, 1998). A story is by its nature designed to evoke certain responses among its listeners. "Stories carry emotion and people learn from emotion. My story of the steam traps, the engineer wanted to save money, but the government wouldn't let him, the system wouldn't let him," explains Bob Stone. "It's infinitely more powerful than saying, 'Sometimes the procurement office is motivated by a bunch of different parameters than the office that actually needs something'" (personal communication, July 14, 1998).

"Stories are used to convey the meaning of the organization to outsiders and thereby gain their confidence and support" (Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. 258). Stories help make complex issues more clear. Elaine Kamarck, the first Director of the National Performance Review, is a former journalist and understands the power of a good story. Kamarck relates the importance of telling stories for both the federal employees and the public as a whole to the reinvention initiative:

> In short stories were incredibly important to the effort for two reasons: one,

> they were the best chance of conveying to the nearly 2 million federal workers the kinds of things we wanted them to do. One good story about cutting red tape and the savings it engendered was worth millions of memos written in bureaucratese.
>
> Second, the stories were a way of trying to communicate the effort to the public. Early on we conducted some focus groups. When we told people that we had cut (at the time) 200,000 people from the federal payroll the public was skeptical. When we told them that we had closed 2,000 obsolete agricultural extension offices in suburbs and cities—they were very enthusiastic. Again, given size and complexity of the federal government most average Americans don't know how big the government is—nor do they know how big it should be. So smaller, bite-sized stories were much more effective. (personal communication, July 10, 1998)

Stories can emphasize values already shared or begin the long process of cultivating new values. Stories can serve as a means to persuade. Through its stories, the National Performance Review capitalizes on the undercurrent of American mythology and attempts to establish new myths in order to legitimize its recommendations. The strategy is a deliberate attempt to reach out to audiences, both inside and outside of government, that usually have a substantial degree of cynicism and skepticism about the message. Stories appear to have the property of being able to by-pass many of the rational (and irrational) defenses that cautious listeners mentally put in place. In the reinvention literature, including the National Performance Review, a point will be made and a story will be told to prove it. This anecdotal evidence does not meet scholarly requirements for evidence—nevertheless, the power to persuade is significant. For those who require more data-driven evidence, the National Performance Review provides that as well. In a recent interview, NPR's Deputy

Director John Kamensky expresses his view of the relationship between data and stories:

> Bob Stone is the one to talk with about stories. I'm one to say, "Let's use some data"—they call me the "Commander-in-Chief of Lists." There's been some tension between the use of stories and the use of data. But it's been a productive tension. I've learned a lot about the power of stories. But we also present enough data to reach out to opinion makers and show when there is an overwhelming trend. For most people, without the stories, it's lifeless. In the latest report, *Businesslike Government*, we had the entire report as all stories and the statistical stuff, the data, and the recommendations—all of that was on our website. At first, we had integrated them in the same volume. But for the people who care about the "facts," they don't mind it being on the web site. In the first term, the effort was largely on getting lots of stories, examples of success—travel reform and other changes which were targeted at operations. The second-term reform examples are of entire reinvented agencies—what we call "high impact agencies." We're working with the leadership to comprehensively change operations. (personal communication, July 13, 1998).

Many of the stories in the National Performance Review appeal to a recurring theme of modern times — a theme which has taken on mythological stature in modern culture. That recurring theme is simply this: something in the machine model of organization is inherently damaging to humans. Bureaucratic structures and processes, while promising to implement the values we hold so dear, at the same time appear to sow the seeds of humanity's eventual demise. This theme is recognized throughout much of popular and professional culture. We see this theme in literature (see for example, Orwell's *1984*; Huxley's *Brave New World);* cartoons (see the comic strip, *Dilbert*); tv (see NBC's sitcom, *Working*); film (see Lang's *Metropolis*; Chaplin's *Modern Times*; Tracy and Hepburn's *Desk Set*; Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove*;

Gilliam's *Brazil*); political philosophy (see the works of Marx, Weber, Arendt, and Hummel); and finally we see this theme played out in the arena of administrative reform.

The theme does not always have to rise to the level of totalitarianism or sudden annihilation to effectively tap into deeply-held cultural stories. For example, the infamous tax collector from the tales of Robin Hood makes an encore performance in the stories citizens tell to Congress about the inhumanity of the modern Internal Revenue Service (see Associated Press, 1998; Johnston, 1998; Senate Committee on Finance, 1997; Zakaria, 1997). However, even here, the stories can take on overtones of totalitarianism. Some of these stories tap into the more modern myths engendered by the world's nightmare experience with Nazism. A Fort Worth, Texas oilman testified before Congress and told a horror story of incredible abuse by the IRS. David Jackson of *The Dallas Morning News* reports:

> A Fort Worth oil executive testified Wednesday that 64 Internal Revenue Service agents — twice the number of his employees — "stormed" his office in 1994 "like an army landing on an enemy beachfront." W.A. "Tex" Moncrief Jr. told the Senate Finance Committee: "My employees heard the agents shout, 'IRS! This business is under criminal investigation! Remove your hands from the keyboards and back away from the computers. And remember, we are armed!" Mr. Moncrief, whose family settled with the IRS in 1996 for $23 million, was one of three business people at the hearing who complained about the agency's criminal investigation division. Senators echoed complaints that the aggressive tactics reminded them of treatment normally reserved for violent criminals. "Such Gestapolike actions are uncalled for," said Sen. Frank Murkowski. (Jackson, 1998, p. 1)

Richard Gardner, a tax preparer working in Tulsa, Oklahoma, relayed a similar story.

His business was raided by close to two dozen Internal Revenue Service agents and other law enforcement officers, all carrying weapons. They seized his records and equipment which eventually led to "a 33-month investigation and a 23-count indictment against him for allegedly falsifying clients' tax returns and hiding personal assets when he had declared bankruptcy before the raid" and it finally ended with all charges being dropped (Casteel, 1998). A third businessman, a restaurant owner, also testified. His story is summarized in a recent article in *U.S. News & World Report*:

> For those who believe that the Internal Revenue Service has become a rogue agency full of jackbooted thugs who terrorize innocent taxpayers, John Colaprete is the latest martyr. Two weeks ago, Colaprete electrified a Senate committee with testimony about how armed agents from the IRS's Criminal Investigation Division raided his Virginia Beach home and the restaurant he owns, the Jewish Mother. The agents, said Colaprete, ripped the hinges off the door of his home, pulled his manager from the shower at gunpoint, impounded his financial records, business machines, personal items and even his dogs—only to return his belongings four months later with the notification the he wasn't going to be charged with anything. (Glastris, Garrett, Vest, & Witkin, 1998, p. 22)

As a result of these kinds of stories, new legislation has been passed in an effort to protect taxpayers. Likewise, the mission of the National Performance Review has been refocused to target "high impact" agencies such as the IRS. One piece of the National Performance Review's promotional literature explains the new mission and rationale:

> Vice-President Gore's goal is to restore Americans' trust in government. This will require the complete transformation of how agencies work in order to get results Americans care about. This next step in the National Performance Review will be the hardest — to create customer-oriented,

> results-driven agencies where the public will see the difference. Over the next three years, NPR will foster the reinvention of entire agencies, starting with those that have the most interaction with the public and business, such as the Internal Revenue Service. (National Performance Review, 1998)

As seen in the example of IRS reform, stories represent a medium through which political power flows. Furthermore, this flow is not always in the same direction. This give and take in the political communication process at least provides some hope for the long term health of the democratic process. Since elected leaders and appointed administrators are themselves human (despite all the symbolic trappings of political power and bureaucratic governance), they too are susceptible to the persuasive power of stories, even those that come from citizens (Herzog & Claunch, 1997). However, stories can also distort relevant information necessary for making rational policy-making decisions. In terms of the overwhelming number of IRS cases processed each year, these so-called "horror" stories represent a microscopic fraction of the total picture. These stories can certainly provide vivid illustrations of the degree to which taxpayer abuse is possible, but the small number of these stories cannot give political decisionmakers a true understanding of the magnitude of the problem. As bureaucratic theorist Charles T. Goodsell points out:

> Notice, however, that the bureaucratic horror story is usually short. Often not many details of the case are included, and those that are given stress the citizen's anguish or the incident's adverse effects. Certainly any extenuating circumstances or the government's side of the story are not covered. Journalists are perfectly aware that what arouses reader interest is the maligned citizen and the horrific outcome, not restrictions faced by bureaucrats in terms of rules with which they must live and workloads with

> which they must cope .... Another point on bureaucratic horror stories has to do with what social scientists would call a sampling problem. The cases appearing in print are selected for attention and not because they are representative. This is so despite the implication often given that repeated occurrence is precisely why these stories are published so often. (One story begins, "Brace yourself. It's more bureaucratic madness.") Actually, a random selection of cases would yield routine and thereby uninteresting subject matter; nothing could be less newsworthy than the smoothly processed eligibility claim or by-the-book police arrest. Moreover, a selection of instances of unusual government efficiency would violate the media's desire to appear independent by being skeptical. (1985, p. 4)

As part of the National Performance Review's new mission, it has partnered with the Department of Treasury to form a Customer Service Task Force which recently issued the report, *Reinventing Service at the IRS: Report of the Customer Service Task Force* (1998). This report highlights many of the recent reform measures implemented to provide better customer service to taxpayers. Still, the Internal Revenue Service appears to be one of the stickiest public relations problems remaining in the pantheon of administrative entities addressed by the National Performance Review. Under the National Performance Review's original mandate for government departments to survey their customers, IRS officials were surprised to find a near universal anxiety surrounding their agency. For example, "The Internal Revenue Service had assumed that what people wanted most was to get their tax booklet in the mail as soon as possible after New Year's Eve. But what the customers said they wanted most was little or no contact with the IRS" (National Performance Review, 1996, September, p. 30). With the Senate Finance Committee holding IRS oversight hearings beginning in the Fall of 1997 and again currently underway, the political process has appeared to have usurped the executive branch's own efforts for reform. Congressional efforts in this area has culminated in passage of new legislation to protect citizens against abuse by the IRS.

Given the opportunity for comparison offered by the National Performance Review as well as the linguistic nature and multimedia formats through which its values are communicated, a *semiotic* approach to analyzing this significant reform effort appears to be particularly applicable. In this approach, the linguistic unit of analysis called the *story* represents a fundamental sign in the semiotic sense. A storyteller, with careful intent, structures the story as a closed sign whose beginning foretells its ending. "At the level of story, ... by its narrative logic the literary text implies its own end from its very beginning. The end is present in embryo from the very beginning of the literary text. The 'oppositional dyads' of action strive toward their logical solution at the end of a narrative" (Nöth, 1990, p. 352). Marvin Minsky, the cofounder of the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory at MIT, observes:

> The storyteller must work to fix the focus of the listener's mind .... Most stories start with just enough to set the scene. Then they introduce some characters, with hints about their principal concerns. Next the storyteller gives some clues about some "main event" or problem to be solved. From that point on, the listener has a general idea of what comes next: there will be more development of the problem; then it will be resolved, somehow; and then the story will end, perhaps by giving some practical or moral advice. In any case, those magic story-starting words arouse, in knowing listeners' minds, great hosts of expectation-frames to help the listeners anticipate which terminals to fill. (1985, 1986, p. 265)

Even a story's title can serve as function of foreshadowing. In these ways, a story provides the overall structure in which to glean meaning from an otherwise unrelated group of sentences, just as sentences provide the structure in which to glean meaning from an otherwise unrelated set of words. The overall objective of semiotics is to make the meaning of signs, such as words, explicit. Not only can each individual sign signify meaning, but groupings of signs usually indicate an even higher level of meaning. As eminent physicist Roger Penrose states, "Understanding has as much to do with patterns as with individual words" (1989, p. 19). In this dissertation, both sentences and stories represent signs which are used to analyze the National Performance Review at two very different semiotic levels. This emphasis on the importance of stories is very much inspired by the recent attention given to storytelling in the public administration literature (Bailey, 1992; Behn, 1992; Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996; Hummel, 1991; McCurdy, 1995; Mitroff & Kilmann, 1975; Schmidt, 1993; Terry, 1997; White, 1992; Yarwood, 1995). At the microlevel, the stories in the National Performance Review are presented in order to motivate and encourage public managers to change their practice. At the macrolevel, the stories in the National Performance Review present a range of values intended to drive bureaucratic reform in a political world. At both levels, the purpose is to *persuade*. The psychologist Roger Brown defines *persuasion* as "symbol-manipulation designed to produce action in others" (1958, p. 299). If the National Performance Review exists as an exercise for persuasion, what are the motivational messages embedded in its stories? What do these stories reveal in terms of the values which are driving the all-encompassing reinvention of government? Are these values related to the values which have traditionally concerned scholars and practitioners of public administration—productivity, effectiveness, and political responsiveness? Do these stories speak to the tension which exists, at least theoretically, of a bureaucracy within a democracy? Do these stories exhibit the same shift in values away from traditional bureaucratic machine values to the more human-oriented values (e.g. teamwork and customer sensitivity) as evidenced in more recent business and public administration literature? The empirical and interpretive nature of the semiotic approach perhaps can yield answers to some of these questions. Semiotics can do so by providing the means to question the veracity of political statements against motivating values. Eggers and O'Leary illustrate through a political deconstruction of an apparently simple presidential assertion:

> "This performance review is not about politics," said President Clinton.
>
> This is a pipe dream, a dangerous myth that all the public sector needs is a better theory of management. Public management is embedded in politics, and politics permeates public management. Even the National Performance Review itself was steeped in politics. According to David Osborne, the chief author of the NPR report, the tast force had suggested eliminating the helium reserve and a number of other programs. "But each time it sent a list of program and subsidy eliminations over to [White House advisor] George Stephanopoulos and his team, the list came back in tatters. Too radical. Too dangerous. Too offensive to Congressman So-and-So," admitted Osborne. (1995, p. 33)

The National Performance Review is undeniably all about politics—such a statement should not have such a negative connotation if what we are dealing with is simply the authoritative allocation of values through the democratic process.

The National Performance Review literature is replete with stories—anecdotes, little epithets, metaphors, quotations, and other symbols evocative of stories commonly shared in American political culture. The National Performance Review may not itself be the wellspring of modern myths, but it does spend a great deal of time dealing with pre-existing American mythology. It does so through a powerful set of stories designed to market its values to public administrators and political elites. These stories are drawn from a variety of sources. Kelly Paisley, the Press Secretary for the National Performance Review explains that in terms of gathering stories, "Several staff members and one lead staff member will work on their assigned project. They often go out to agencies and solicit stories. A lot of federal managers, the ones that are 'doing something'—we're already in touch with. Our people will go out or interview them by phone" (personal communication, July 10, 1998).

In a rather dramatic turn from previous reform efforts, the National Performance Review self-consciously taps into American popular culture. "The debate within and over NPR has been cast in symbols that resonate in postmodern hyperspace," Charles Fox comments, "NPR's 'works better,' 'costs less,' must surely be a take-off on Miller Light's 'taste's great,' 'less filling.'" (1996, p. 259). William Safire explains the origins of some of the more emotive words in the title of the National Performance Review's initial report:

> "From Red Tape to Results" was the selling line above the report of the National Performance Review, signed by Vice President Al Gore. *Red tape* was popularized by Thomas Carlyle in 1850, describing himself as "little other than a redtape Talking-machine, and unhappy Bag of Parliamentary Eloquence." A decade earlier, Washington Irving had derided a politician with "His brain was little better than red tape and parchment"; both references were to the red ribbon used to bind official documents and court briefs. (*Results*, from the Latin for "to leap back," entered English in 1432, filling the need for a word to express the effects of an action.) (1993, p. 16)

Safire also describes Al Gore's reaction to the article in which the above quote was taken: "Al Gore takes these criticisms in good humor; when he asked what I thought of his reforms and I replied that a linguistic analysis would be forthcoming, he gave a little moan" (1993, p. 18).

The National Performance Review even tailors its approach down to the street-level public servant. While initiating the National Performance Review effort, Vice-President Al Gore held several forums in which he conversed directly with public administrators from all levels of federal government. Many of these exchanges are recounted in National Performance Review reports. For example, Phil Archuleta, a material handler for the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego had the privilege of introducing Al Gore at a reinvention conference. This basically symbolic act was reported in the NPR newsletter with a quote from Archuleta: "When a regular frontline worker stands here introducing the Vice President at a meeting in Washington, you know things have changed in government" (National Partnership for Reinventing Government, 1998, p. 1). "Empowering the frontline employees is absolutely crucial. And it has definitely been one of our goals" reports NPR staffer Kelly Paisley (personal communication, July 14, 1998).

A theme that emerges early in the National Performance Review literature is that of the lone bureaucrat fighting against senseless regulations without sufficient resources to do the job properly. Another vividly conspicuous theme is the success that eventually comes from innovation and change.

Apparently, these stories struck such a responsive chord that they were actually formalized in the National Performance Review's annual report which is posted on the World Wide Web. The National Performance Review implemented one of the earliest websites and in terms of graphic style and content quality, it remains a leader. As of May 1, 1998, these tales of highly productive public administrators and programs inspired by the principles of the National Performance Review still appear on a World Wide Web page in a section titled "Success Stories" (the web page can be found at the Internet address: http://www.npr.gov/library/papers/bkgrd/sstoc.html). The immediacy of the intertextuality of the web-based National Performance Review is astounding. It is a process that directly involves the reader. "As readers move through a web or network of texts, they continually shift the center—and hence the focus or organizing principle—of their investigation and experience," comments critical theorist George P. Landow, "Hypertext, in other words, provides an infinitely re-centerable system whose provisional point of focus depends upon the reader, who becomes a truly active reader" (1992, p. 11). In the National Performance Review for example, each of the stories are web-linked to their originating agencies and cover a wide variety of topics. A couple of examples of these heroic stories are recounted below. The first story is taken from the Department of Energy and is typical of what you will find not only on the web, but also in written reports and other media issued by the National Performance Review:

> When Troy Logan, an auditing staff member at one of the Department of Energy (DOE) facilities in Oak Ridge, submitted an idea for saving money by returning used gas cylinders to vendors, he never dreamed that his suggestion would ultimately lead to a company-wide roundup of cylinders that saved $285,000 a year. Like the idea a maintenance team offered for changing door locks more economically, his suggestion got action through an endeavor known as the Columbia initiative. (National Performance Review, 1997)

This story also references another story (about the maintenance team) with the common link of "the Columbia initiative." The actual story goes into much more detail than is presented here. In addition to the numerous web links, individual stories often will list contact names along with e-mail addresses, regular postal addresses, fax numbers, and telephone numbers. A different example, given below, is from the Environmental Protection Agency:

> Dr. Denice Shaw, Technical Coordinator for EPA's Environmental

> Monitoring and Assessment Program (EMAP) in the Office of Research and Development (ORD), has saved the government $30 million over the past year by initiating and coordinating an agreement in which five government programs are working together to collect, process, and share satellite date for environmental monitoring. This is a noteworthy example of how government cooperation and common sense, spurred by one person's creative thinking and initiative, can accomplish work at significantly less cost to the taxpayer. (National Performance Review, 1997)

Both of these stories are good illustrations of the kinds of values that the National Performance Review is promoting: innovation, change, initiative, creative thinking, cost savings, and teamwork. Not only do these stories serve as inspiration for other public administrators, they also are good political salesmanship. Taxpayers reading through these stories online would hopefully appreciate the many efforts that are made on their behalf — many explicitly so, as in the last example.

Having a track record to draw upon, the newest NPR incarnation, the National Partnership for Reinventing Government, is continuing to tout a series of successes in the arena of customer service. It represents an effort to demythologize the perceived inadequacies of government bureaucracy. As Bolman and Deal note, "Myths can be stubbornly resistant to change and can prevent an organization from adapting when conditions have changed dramatically" (1991, p. 256). In its web site, "Celebrating the 5th Anniversary of Reinventing Government," the presentation follows a set pattern: (1) specific accomplishment; (2) customer story; and (3) outline of goals and objectives for improvement. Below are a couple of examples of this stylistic approach to storytelling embedded in the language of public administration:

> Results We're Celebrating: The Social Security Administration (SSA) is the best in the business at delivering service over the phone, and they do it 70 million times a year. In a 1995 independent survey, Dalbar Financial Services ranked SSA over companies like Disney and LL Bean in courtesy, responsiveness and knowledge ...
>
> The Customer: Jane Barton of Mesa, Arizona, is a widow with three daughters. Eight years ago, when her husband died, SSA's service was what you might expect from government — busy signals, long waits, and bureaucrats, But what a difference when Jane called SSA last month! A cheerful courteous, SSA operator, Bonnie Szczawinski, answered all of Jane's questions quickly, and then answered questions Jane wouldn't have thought to ask. Jane has worked as an insurance adjuster and knows how hard it is to deliver good service to distraught customers. She says SSA is doing it right.
>
> The Commitment: Jane Barton might be satisfied, but SSA isn't.
>
> - By September 2000, when you call Social Security's 1-800 number, you'll get through on your first try at least 90% of the time. And once you get through, you will receive courteous and accurate service.
>
> - By September 2000, SSA will take claims for retirement and survivors benefits over the phone in a single transaction (first point of contact) if you have all the information needed. You will not have to go into an SSA office or wait for a future telephone appointment. (National Performance Review, 1997)

Following the same pattern is the next passage which reveals an obvious intertextual relationship with the original NPR report, *From Red Tape to Results: Creating a Government That Works Better and Costs Less*:

> Results We're Celebrating: Workers safety is the best in U.S. history thanks, in no small measure, to a new spirit of partnership between OSHA, business owners, and workers. Started in Maine, now in nine states, and soon nation-wide, these new partnerships are eliminating thousands of workplace hazards before people get hurt. In North and South Dakota, for example, injury rates have already dropped 50%.

The Customer: Jeff Davis, president of Wisconsin Box Company in Wausau, Wisconsin, says the new partnership *works better and costs less* than the old adversarial approach. In 1994, when OSHA was just looking for violations, 72 Wisconsin Box workers were injured on the job. But in the new partnership, with the company and the workers active participants in the safety program, no one has lost a day to injury in three years. Starting the program cost money but it has more than paid for itself in lower insurance premiums and higher productivity.

The Commitment:

- By September 2000, reduce injury/illness rates 20% in at least 50,000 of the most hazardous workplaces that OSHA works with.
- To do this, OSHA is taking its innovative industry/employee partnership approach nationwide. It's called the Cooperative Compliance Program (CCP). We're on our way. 12,000 high-risk businesses have been offered the opportunity to work in partnership. (National Performance Review, 1997, emphasis added)

A metamorphosis has occurred within the National Performance Review organization. It is newly focused on accomplishment, rather than problems. This change is most likely the result of political calculation to capitalize on the successful reform efforts made under the National Performance Review umbrella.

Parallel to this transformation is a re-orientation of the organization itself. Several months before the 1996 presidential election when the outcome of the campaign was still far from certain, some staff members at the National Performance Review were consciously formulating potential strategies in order to continue reform efforts under the NPR banner in the eventuality of a change in administration (C.D. Barnes, personal communication, 1996). The recent name change to the National Partnership for Reinventing Government may be a tactic for organizational survival as well—at least through the second term of the Clinton-Gore administration. As Kaufman has shown, government organizations engage in strong efforts to ensure organizational survival (1976). Apparently, the National Performance Review is no exception to this phenomenon. Staff members, understandably, would like to become less dependent upon a single presidential administration.

The National Performance Review has been most associated with Vice-President Al Gore. As of Summer 1998, Al Gore appears to be the leading Democratic front runner in the upcoming presidential race. The political role of the National Partnership for Reinventing Government will be interesting to watch as the presidential race unfolds. The NPR could easily become an effective political showcase for the Al Gore candidacy by highlighting the incredible success in revamping the entire administrative structure of the executive branch.

On the other hand, it remains to be seen, whether the National Partnership for Reinventing Government, might also try to distance itself from the political process in hopes of outliving the presidential campaign no matter what the outcome. However, when Kelly Paisley, the current Press Secretary for the NPR was asked whether the organization will survive a transition in presidential administration, she responds, "It's truly a Vice-Presidential initiative, so if Al Gore were re-elected, it might survive in some form, but otherwise no. The NPR is a group of career employees and so they would return to their agencies" (personal communication, July

10, 1998).

Stories in the National Performance Review Over Time

This study has focused on the lead report of the National Performance Review, *From Red Tape to Results: Creating a Government that Works Better and Costs Less* (1993). The rationale for focusing on the lead report is that it serves as a model for the subsequent reports and those issued by individual executive agencies. Furthermore, it set the tone and provided the blueprint for implementing the reinventing government movement at the federal level. As this dissertation has shown, stories served as an integral part of setting the stage for this ambitious administrative reform effort. An obvious question is: "Does the strategy of storytelling hold up over time?" The National Performance Review's existence over a fairly substantial time period allows that question to be addressed. In September 1996 after approximately three years of public existence, the National Performance Review, under the leadership of Vice-President Al Gore, issued its 1996 Annual Report, a provocative document called, *The Best Kept Secrets in Government*.

In that widely distributed document, the National Performance Review revealed four "secrets" pertaining to the federal government:

Secret One: **Common Sense Has Come to the Federal Government**

Secret Two: **Government is Serving People Better**

Secret Three: **Government is in Partnership With Business**

Secret Four: **Government is Partnering With Communities**

Each section which introduces these so-called secrets, opens with captivating stories about public administrators in action and the surprising experiences of citizens being served by executive agencies. Each of these stories reads like a novel. There are even stories within the stories. The reader can easily forget that the text is produced by government officials. These stories are not your typical "bureaucratese." Excerpted below are the four major stories which frame each of the "secrets" presented in the National Performance Review's *The Best Kept Secrets in Government* (see next page):

Secret One
Common Sense Has Come To the Federal Government

> "Whatcha got, Bootsie?"
>
> "Coke, looks like about 10 pounds, taped to his chest."
>
> Tommy exchanges high-fives with Bootsie, one of his undercover rovers, as she explains how she picked the unlikely looking drug mule from among the hundreds of incoming passengers on a flight from Colombia .... A couple more of his rovers quickly team up to check out the smuggler's records, book him, and look for any connections to other passengers or luggage. Within minutes, the troops are back out on the floor, working the next wave of passengers.
>
> Tommy Roland is doing something that any TV cop would envy—running one of the most successful drug-busting operations around. Tommy supervises the inspection team for the U.S. Customs Service at Miami International Airport. "I'm proud of the rovers," he says. "The stuff that they're doing now is defining where Customs is going. I'm thrilled to be a part of that. They use their intuition, their creativity, their imagination on the job. It's really beautiful to watch them. I feel like the coach of some awesome basketball team."
>
> But Tommy says it was not always this much fun. "In the olden days, the whole philosophy of what a Customs inspector was supposed to do and how he was supposed to do it was completely different. First of all, we all wore our uniforms, so we were easy for the smugglers to spot." Today, Tommy is working in jeans and sneakers, and wearing an earring. "We stood in our little enclosures waiting for passengers to come to us with their bags. We didn't know anything about them until we saw the whites of their eyes. We just stood there in our uniforms waiting. A tough way to win a drug war.
>
> "We were looking for needles in haystacks—looking for that nervous passenger, just doing 'behavior analysis.' Everyone who walked off a plane was a suspect. Every suitcase was suspicious. We were unfocused and wasted a lot of time. And at the end of the day, we had dug through a lot of underwear and socks, but hadn't found much dope. What we were exceptionally good at was infuriating the legitimate travelers—hundreds of thousands of honest, decent American citizens and foreign tourists and business executives each year." Passengers sometimes waited in line for over three hours. Occasionally, a fist fight would break out.
>
> Today, cocaine seizures are up by 50 percent. Heroin seizures up by 21 percent. Passengers seldom wait more than a few minutes. This is reinvention. (1996, pp. 9-10)

This passage is just the beginning. As the first part of a larger story, these paragraphs have set the stage that something is about to change. By speaking about the "olden days" the reader understands that business is no longer conducted as usual. In terms of narrative analysis, this "flashback" to previous times represents the initial attempt to foreshadow the story's overall function as an explanation for change. The statistics on increased seizures of illicit drugs is evidence that the change has taken place. But how did it happen? Semiotically speaking, how will this story as a sign be closed? The story continues ...

> Tommy says it all started with flowers. "We used to handle cargo the same way we handled passengers—just stabbing in the dark. We knew dope was coming into the country in boxes of flowers. So we probed flower boxes. We used these big metal flower probes and poked away from midnight 'til 8:00 a.m. This was an all night thing, night in and night out. Thirty thousand boxes of flowers came into the airport each night, and we would probe each one once or twice. That's a lot of probe holes. I totally hated Mother's Day and Valentine's Day. Finally, we realized that this was a really stupid way to look for dope—and the flower shippers didn't much like it either. So we sent our own inspectors to South America to look at every single aspect of the whole process.

The setting is established that the old way of handling the business did not exhibit sensitivity toward customers. In fact, the imagery provided is of "stabbing" customers.

The legacy of TQM and systems analysis is also evident here in this reinvention exercise when the inspectors are called upon "to look at every single aspect of the whole process." This represents the classic "process reengineering" component of the reinvention management theory. The following passage illustrates the systems analytical approach in practice:

> "We went to the flower farms to see where the flowers were grown. We looked at how the flowers got trucked from the farm to the market, and then to the airport to see how they were staged to get on the plane—who put them on the plane, who hired the people who put them on the plane—and the same on the other end—who took them off the plane and who hired these folks. Looking at the entire process, we saw just how vulnerable a shipment of flowers is all along the way. That's when it hit home. If we were gonna make a dent in the dope, we couldn't do it alone—we had to be partners with the airlines.
>
> "Now the airlines have their own people checking the flowers. Instead of Customs inspectors probing flower boxes here, the boxes are x-rayed before they get on the planes. The airlines have contract security people watching the x-rays. And we video the watchers as a counter-deterrent. They're not our own people so we still check them, but they are our allies, not our enemies. If we had started this earlier, I probably would have saved my shoulder. All that bending over probing flowers wrecked my shoulder."
>
> Partnership with the airlines and shippers has turned out to be the key to success, but according to Tommy, it did not come easy. "Tell the airlines our secrets and have them work together with us to find drugs? Unimaginable. Consider the Immigration Service an ally? No way. Ask the skycaps for their suggestions? Never. Back then everything was a secret and everyone was the enemy. 'If I told you, I'd have to kill you.' That was more like it. Basically, we didn't trust anybody.
>
> "It wasn't just that we didn't trust the folks outside the system. We didn't trust the folks inside the system that much more. A perfect example was all the stupid paper work we had to fill out. An hour or two before the end of every single shift, we would have to come into the office and fill out a shift report. It seemed like we spent more time writing these reports detailing every single thing we did during the day than we spent looking for dope. It was a real big waste of time and money. And it made me feel like I couldn't be trusted. I really hated that. But things have really changed in the last few years. We got rid of a lot of wasted motion. The guys that work for me don't fill these out anymore. They're paid to look for dope, not to fill out forms."

The story here begins hitting the theme of government and business being in partnership. The crucial value in the struggle to forge a new relationship between the public and private sectors is *trust*. Even more, intergovernmental cooperation is shown to be dependent upon a level of trust. Interestingly, the value of trust is linked here also with the activity of filling out paperwork—so-called red tape. The implication is that internal control mechanisms such as documenting work performed is perceived by the frontline workers as evidence that they are not trusted. The distrust also has implications for efficiency and productivity. Focusing on the real work (i.e. "They're paid to look for dope, not fill out forms") gets "rid of a lot of a lot of wasted motion." The story also illustrates what some researchers have postulated recently about the power of soliciting suggestions to foster trust among frontline employees (Carnevale & Sharp, 1993, p. 84). In the above passage, asking "the skycaps for their suggestions" is a a major assault against the culture of secrecy which surrounds the old work practices.

Another theme important to the National Performance Review effort is worker safety (Kelly Paisley, personal communication, July 10, 1998). This story depicts process reengineering activities as having positive spillover effects which show a commitment to worker welfare. The example given is that if the reinvention effort would have been initiated at an earlier time, then the worker narrating this portion of the story would have saved his shoulder. In the next passage, this National Performance Review story tackles how organizational structures and arrangements symbolize the value of trust and affect productivity:

"I remember lots of hassles I'd have to go through just to do my job. For example, when you're looking through cargo, you might need to drill through a box to see what's inside. But if I wanted to drill, I had to go to a senior inspector who would go to a supervisor who would go to the chief's office where the one drill we had was locked up. Like I wasn't responsible enough to be given the tools to do my job or the authority to make decisions by myself. Now, when inspectors come on board, we give them their own drills. Makes sense to me.

"Even the way the agency was structured sent a loud and clear message about trust. There were just so many layers of bureaucracy to deal with. We used to have regional offices. They were like speed bumps. The guys there had been away from the field so long that you always had to slow down and explain the real world to them. Getting rid of the regions was like a miracle."

What Tommy attributes to a miracle was really the work of a team of employees that Customs Commissioner George Weise chartered to reinvent the U.S. Customs Service. They cut the size of the Washington headquarters by a third, and they eliminated all seven regions and 43 district offices. "In my book, George Weise gets an awful lot of credit," Tommy says. "Not just for cutting out some layers of management, but for really having faith in us down here—trusting us to figure out how to do the job better. It takes some leadership to turn an organization around the way Customs has. He should be proud.")

The importance of the value of trust is once again emphasized, but here it takes the form of an attack on the classic, bureaucratized chain of command. Presumably, the multiple layers of management have evolved to ensure accountability, but according to this story, it also resonates among the frontline workers as a symbol of distrust. Furthermore, this apparent mechanism of distrust actually interferes with the work to be done. Getting rid of the layers of bureaucracy promotes the value of productivity. To further promote the value of productivity, the following passage introduces the application of technology:

Part of the turn-around came from employing modern tools and techniques.

"They assigned me to start looking through the computerized cargo manifests and analyzing information from the airlines," Tommy explains. "This was the first time I had to work with computers looking for dope, and they kinda had to drag me to it kicking and screaming. But in about six weeks, I seized 3,000 pounds of coke using manifest review techniques and targeting.

"Once we realized the power of targeting freight with computer analysis, we wanted to get into pre-analysis of passengers, too. It made sense. If we could get passenger lists when the planes took off, we could start working hours before the plane arrived. We got the majority of the airlines to cooperate. They want to get the dope off their planes. They certainly don't want us seizing their multimillion-dollar 747s. Now, we screen their passenger lists and we know who we're looking for—we go right up to the plane and start working. We don't just stand there in our uniforms waiting for the drugs to come to us. We go out and find it. I hate to use a Washington term, but I guess you'd say we're proactive.")

The value of customer service is here wrapped up with a series of other values including technological progress, efficiency, teamwork, and strong law enforcement. Working smarter is possible through the intelligent use of new computer applications. Along with the cooperation of the airline industry, these law enforcement officers better target illicit drug activities while minimizing the impact to the traveling public. However, such proactive investigation of citizens, no matter how noble the cause, might still raise eyebrows concerning the potential for the proverbial "Big Brother." Implicit within the above passage is that the state holds, in reserve, a power of Orwellian proportions as revealed in the government's potential to seize "multimillion dollar 747s." Once again, trust plays a subtle, but significant role—the potential for abuse of power exists, but these public servants channel their energies to effectively dampen drug traffic and promote customer service. Ironically, the lack of obtrusive enforcement measures calls into some citizens' minds whether the bureaucrats are doing their jobs at all as the next passage shows:

> The changes at Miami International Airport are tangible. "These partnerships are changing the whole environment here. There's an energy at this airport that I've never felt in my 22 years here," says Amaury Zuriarrain, deputy director of the Metro-Dade Aviation Department, which runs the airport. "The passengers are noticing the improvements, too."
>
> "It's kind of funny," Tommy adds. "Life is a lot easier for most passengers. They don't have to wait in lines for hours and be treated like suspected criminals. But you know what? Some passengers have written to us that we're not doing our job because the process is so easy for them now. They shouldn't be fooled by that. Just because they don't see me doesn't mean I'm not watching them."
>
> Tommy is dead serious about keeping drugs out of South Florida. "This is where I live. This is where I'm raising my family. And I continually ask myself, 'Is it good to have dope in the schools?' Hell, my kids are in those schools. I don't want dope in my schools. I don't just go to school for Career Day. I go on field trips with these kids. They come to my home. I know every kid's name in my son's fifth grade class: This is my idea of family values.
>
> "It may sound funny, but this experience here at work really has had an effect on my family life. Before, if one of my kids did something wrong, my wife and I would automatically decide how to handle the situation. After all, we're the parents. We're the 'managers' in our family. But we've started to look at things a little differently. We're sharing the decision-making with the boys—asking for their input. They're involved in the decision-making process."
>
> Tommy Roland is a new style "manager" at home and on the job, and it is not just the jeans, sneakers, and earring. He works with energy, creativity, and teamwork, and he produces results. He sums it up simply: "I'm not a bureaucrat. I've got a job to do."
>
> That's obviously the kind of attitude we want in all federal workers. We always have. And most young workers have that attitude when they first sign up. But the government's various systems—procurement, management, and personnel—can sap the energy, creativity, and enthusiasm out of the people who work for the government. Luckily for us, lots of workers all over government are like Tommy. They stick with it anyway because they want so much to do something that really matters—to do something good for the American people.

Overall, this story is an excellent vehicle for reinforcing the themes of the National Performance Review. The extensive use of quotes by a real public manager gives an air of both credibility and realism. This story is about changing the way people work. and the power of technological application to further that change. It's about empowering public employees to work together across bureaucratic boundaries. It's about cooperation between government and business. It's about values: increasing productivity, promoting change and more fundamentally— it's about catching the bad guys, keeping drugs off the street, and not hassling innocent citizens in the process. The story even has a tie-in to family values through at least two different levels: (1) keeping drugs out of the schools, and (2) serving as a role model for participatory-style parenting.

In the next story, customer service is emphasized (see next page):

Secret Two
Government is Serving People Better

> ***"I stumbled from the office dazed and confused, completely disoriented by what had just happened."***
>
> — Elizabeth Childs, describing her feelings after having contact with the federal government
>
> Beth Childs lives in the shadow of the government — literally. Her neat, cozy, second-story apartment opens onto a porch overlooking a federal office building in Sacramento. They are separated only by a hedge of white flowering oleander, the kind found in the median strips of the California freeways. Beth has lived there for eight years with her husband Bill, a drug and alcohol counselor in a nearby high school, and Sydney, her junior high-aged daughter. Sydney has recently taken up playing the flute, following in the footsteps of her self-taught mother.
>
> "The government is a rude neighbor," Beth complains mildly. "They get out here sometimes on Sunday mornings around 7:00 making all kinds of noise with leaf blowers and garbage trucks. But I guess they might feel the same way about us, considering Fred." Fred is their gray cat —they also have a calico. "Fred's learned how to open the federal building's electronic doors, and he goes into the cafeteria kitchen. The health inspector caught him in there once. Caused quite a stir." Beth's smile shows that Fred is making up for the Sunday morning noise. Being the government's neighbor is not what made her feel "dazed and confused, completely disoriented" as she wrote in a recent letter. That came from one of the times she visited a government office, when she needed something only the government could supply.

The opening quote for this story serves as a multi-purpose literary device. First, it captures the reader's attention. Second, it serves as a means to tie all of the sub-elements of this story together. And third, it sets the stage for a major thematic turnabout which is occurring not only within this story, but within the overall National Performance Review effort. In addition, the reader is introduced to Beth Childs and provides a general description of her orientation to the federal government—a description which includes her cantankerous cat, Fred. In the passage, below, more characters are introduced and a more significant storyline begins:

"My twin sister, Tami, just adopted a Russian baby while she and her husband were living in Belgium. The baby's named Amy, and she's absolutely beautiful. Tami had to fill out lots of forms in Russian, Flemish, and French. At the last minute, Tami realized she needed a form in English from INS — the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. It's just a one-page form — a single piece of green paper. I offered to pick the form up at the INS office."

The INS office is in a nondescript concrete and smoked glass building on J Street, one of the main drags in Sacramento. Its address is the only thing printed on the facade of the building, 7-Eleven. But it is no convenience store.

"There was a sign on the wall that said the capacity was 250, but there had to be 500 people in there. I finally figured out I was supposed to take a number. But there were different windows, and there were different numbers and a different number dispenser for each window. One was for forms, but I wasn't sure which one I needed so I took a number for the 'information' window. There was a sign on the window that said, 'Now Serving 143.' My ticket was number 327 and it said right on the ticket there would be a 72-minute wait. So I went out and had some lunch and bought a book. When I got back almost an hour later, the 'Now Serving' sign said 145 — I had only advanced by two.

"I decided to skip the 'information' window and took a numbered ticket from the forms' window dispenser. It was number 79 and the ticket said I would only have a two-minute wait. Three and a half hours later, I was getting near the window. The reason it was so slow was that clerk kept getting interrupted with questions from people who were dropping appointment forms in a box right by his window. I was impressed by the number of different languages he spoke, and he seemed rude in every one of them. Finally, the clerk had called number 75, so a couple others and I moved up close to the window. Then the lighted sign over the window changed from number 75 to 320! They had switched from 'forms' to 'information.' When we protested, the clerk snapped that he had to do what his supervisor told him, and that he would switch back to forms in 40 minutes.

"With that, he called out number 320, but no one showed. After a second call and no answer, he went to 321 and a young woman stepped up to the window. Well, an elderly woman with 320 had been struggling through the crowd and finally made it. In broken English, she tried to explain that she couldn't get to the window in time. The clerk reprimanded the old woman and refused to help her until she had turned around and apologized to woman number 321. He was really on a power trip.

"I was so mad that I went to a pay-phone in the back of the waiting room to call someone in charge. I got put on hold. I was on hold long enough that the window switched back to dispensing forms. So I hung up and got back in line. When I got to the counter, the clerk said 'Well now, that wasn't so bad, was it?' I had waited a total of five hours. All that time, I could see the forms on the shelf behind the clerk. Why did I have to go through that? He wouldn't even give me two copies of the form in case Tami made a mistake. To get another copy, I would have had to come back another day and wait in line again."

The above passage recounts an archetype of the bureaucratic horror story reminiscent of many people's experiences waiting to get driver's licenses, or to clear up some bureaucratic snafu. This story, of course, is a little more extreme than what most people have personally witnessed, but it possesses enough elements common to many people's own worst bureaucratic encounters that it resonates on a very familiar level. When discussing such experiences, people often forget that they have had similar experiences with business; and, they also often forget the positive experiences they have had dealing with bureaucracy. The National Performance Review uses the above passage as a jumping point to contrast the old bureaucratic ways with the improvements made under the Clinton-Gore administration. The story continues:

> Beth's bad experience at the INS office happened less than a year ago, but even then INS recognized they had problems and was doing something about it. Throughout the country, the agency is beginning to put customers first. For example, they have a new easy way to get forms. Customers can dial 1-800-870-3676 and ask for what they need. In a week or so, the forms come in the mail.
>
> But that's not all. INS has designated two offices—one in Detroit and one in El Paso—as "reinvention labs," where the workers can try out their own new ideas to improve customer service in ways that all INS offices will be using soon. And elsewhere throughout the country, INS's new attitude is

> catching on. Seven districts are undergoing intensive customer relations training and are running a series of customer focus groups. Incidentally, that same El Paso office recently processed more than 14,000 applications for citizenship within a two-month period; over 10,000 aspirants became new citizens in the El Paso District alone between July 3 and August 30, 1996! (1996, pp. 23-25)

But this story is not over. In the best literary tradition of the short story, the authors of this National Performance Review report are about to reveal a classic "twist" in the plot. The stage was already set with the opening quote which will now be used again in a surprising way to drive the point home that the National Performance Review is an effort with a record of accomplishments:

> Beth Childs' experience with INS wasn't what left her "dazed and confused, completely disoriented by what had just happened." It was a more recent and more unusual encounter with government that dazed Beth—this one on February 22, 1996. Beth Childs gave her daughter an extra hug as she left for school that day. This time Beth was ready for the long, unpleasant journey ahead. She had made all the plans others make when they go out of town on business for an indefinite stay. Her best friend had agreed to pick up Sydney after school. Not knowing when she would return, Beth wore comfortable, casual clothes and packed her cross-stitching.
>
> To prepare herself psychologically, she closed her eyes and tried to concentrate. She lowered her expectations. She did not expect things to run smoothly or efficiently. Prepared for the humiliation and frustration she had experienced before, Beth drove away to face the government again—this time, the Social Security Administration.
>
> When Beth entered the Social Security office on Fulton Avenue in Sacramento that day, she was shocked. She expected an office filled with long lines of people with screaming children. She wondered if she had gone to the wrong building. The place was quiet. The clerks were smiling. As Beth remembers it, "A strange vortex opened up at the Social Security office and bureaucracy was suspended. I was in shock. I was totally blown away by the service I received. Everybody was just so nice. They almost offered to carry my bags. I felt like they were fanning me with feathers while I filled out this form." Beth was so moved by her experience that she wrote the following letter:

> Sir/Madam:
> I had cause to visit your office on February 22, 1996 .... I was greeted by an efficient, friendly, helpful staff in a timely manner and was able to complete my business in one visit. I then stumbled from the office dazed and confused, completely disoriented by what had just happened. I wandered the parking lot for a while before regaining my composure and returning home to relay my experience to family and friends. They were spellbound. Thank you for giving us all a new perspective of government agencies and their employees. (1996, p. 25)

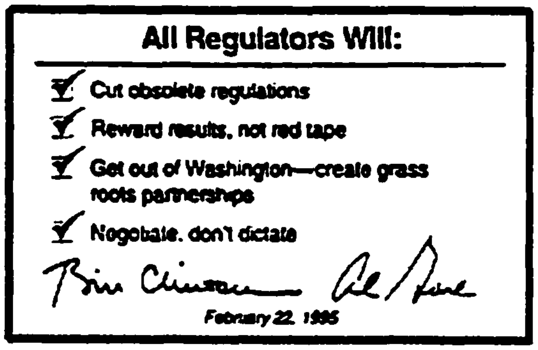
And this story is still not over, because as Schank (1990) discusses about stories in relation to cognitive processes, a story's effectiveness can be evaluated by its ability to reminds listeners (or readers) about related stories. Here, the National Performance Review reminds itself of a related story:

> Beth is not the only one who has a new perspective on government. Something similar happened when Beth's twin sister, Tami, brought newly adopted Amy home to the United States this past July. "We got into Logan Airport in Boston at 5:30 in the evening," Tami explains. "Amy was still on European time—almost midnight—so she was a bit cranky. When we got to the Immigration counter, we showed the man Amy's Russian passport and her application for citizenship you know, to get her green card. He told us that the photo on her application was too small. I thought, 'oh boy, here we go.' But he was so upbeat and friendly. He had a camera in his office, he took Amy's picture, and gave us the right size. Then he noticed that our address on the application was a post office box—we'd been living overseas. He said we'd need a street address to get Amy's green card in the mail. I couldn't remember my parents' ZIP code in Maine, so he asked me their phone number, picked up his phone, and called them. He let me chat a minute to let them know we were safe and sound, got the ZIP code, and sent us merrily on our way. As we left, he called out: 'Your tax dollars at work.'"
>
> They certainly are your dollars, and that certainly is how government should work. Thanks to strong leadership from President Clinton and the hard work of federal employees who have been wanting a chance to do this all along, government is beginning to serve the people better.

The political "punch" line of this story is that President Clinton has allowed federal workers to fix bureaucracy's problems.

The National Performance Review also attempts to use stories within stories, as the one above, in order to speak to deep underlying values. The next story uses that same story-within-a-story concept. Drawing upon an American imagery of toughness and cooperation in the face of common adversity, the following story opens with a description of a "golden era" in government-business partnerships. Even military symbols are used as in the case of the USS Constitution. The implication that there will be a return to the values held sacred in a bygone era of American history is used as another foreshadowing strategy. It begins with a commitment for a new regulatory mission. To underscore the importance, the commitment is signed by both President Bill Clinton and Vice-President Al Gore (see next page):

Secret Three
Government is in Partnership With Business



> The relationship goes way back. In the early 1800s, the U.S. government drew on the resources of Saint Simons Island off the southern coast of Georgia—its tough live oaks made the sides of the frigate USS Constitution withstand cannonballs like iron. Almost a hundred and fifty years after Saint Simons made "Old Ironsides" famous, a group of island entrepreneurs turned the tables and drew on the resources of the U.S. military—they leased large freezers from the local Navy base that was closing and became SeaPak, the nation's first commercial producer of breaded shrimp. Today, half the nation's retail frozen breaded shrimp, millions of pounds of breaded fish filets, onion rings, French toast sticks and cheese sticks come from Rich-SeaPak, whose corporate offices are still on Saint Simons Island. The long relationship with the government has had its ups and downs.

As this story begins, it relays the corporate mythology for the Rich-SeaPak company. At the same time, the story sets the relationship between the SeaPak and government in context. This relationship with its "ups and downs" builds up expectations within the reader for a description of a longstanding and eventful relationship:

> "The seafood industry traditionally had very adversarial dealings with the FDA" (Food and Drug Administration), says Ray Jones, SeaPak's corporate director of quality assurance and regulatory affairs. "In the early days, it was all small, independent producers—basically fishermen—who didn't want anything to do with the government. It was a matter of getting away with whatever you could. So when bigger companies like SeaPak started to be formed, the residue of that adversarial relationship was still

around.

The above passage explains the reasons behind the current culture within the fishing industry's adversarial relationship with government. The adversarial relationship is carried on to more modern times:

> "When I came here nine years ago, our lawyers were telling us, 'Don't talk to them, don't give them anything.' We could do that legally. The law says that we have to let FDA come into the plant and go anywhere they want. But, we don't have to give them our production records or consumer complaints or let them take pictures. So we didn't.
>
> "One of the things the food industry has always feared is giving FDA access to customer complaints. Most customers give us good, legitimate feedback on what they think about our product, but there are some complaints that we get that may not be legitimate—such as where a customer alleges they found something in a package of shrimp or fish. We were afraid that FDA might misinterpret or overreact to the complaints, so we chose not to let FDA see them. They would come in, ask for the customer complaint file or some other records, we'd refuse, and things would go downhill from there.
>
> "The thing FDA did that hurt us the most was taking samples of our product. They would take the samples and send them off for analysis. Sometimes it could take weeks to get the results back. We were not required to hold the product off the market until the testing was finished, but we almost always did. So sometimes we might have to hold two or three days production until we got the results back. Even if we were sure the product was in compliance, we did not want to risk the possibility that FDA might find a problem and then we would have to recall the product if we had already shipped it. So we would hold the product and wait.
>
> "Keep in mind that, all this time, SeaPak was running a clean operation. We're very careful about the wholesomeness of our product. Not just when the FDA shows up, but all the time. The only thing that was coming between us and them was a bad attitude. Ours, at least as much as theirs.

On the company side, the values promoted here are customer service ("most customers give us good, legitimate feedback") and product quality ("SeaPak was running a clean operation ... very careful about the wholesomeness of our product").

But the story also reveals a profound distrust of government. The distrust was further exacerbated by a lack of timeliness on the part of government officials providing inspection results back to the plant. The lack of timeliness became a severe strain on SeaPak's operations. Clearly, costs are associated with the adversarial relationship. Even from the company perspective, the FDA would not be able to adequately perform their job without cooperation from SeaPak. On the other side, SeaPak was suspending operations in anticipation of the possibility that its production line would not live up to FDA requirements. The situation had deterioriated to the point that change became desireable:

> "In 1992, I sat down with our CEO, Frank Holas, and looked at our latest inspection report. We agreed it was ridiculous. We had set high standards of quality for ourselves—that's what our customers demanded. We exceeded the regulatory requirements as we understood them. So why were we always at odds with the FDA? We were as ethical or more ethical than anybody else we knew in the business. FDA should have had us up on a pedestal as an example. But it was the pits.

Promoting the values of quality, customer service, and high ethical standards is contrasted here with the extreme lack of trust between the FDA and the business it regulates.

The time had come for someone to reach out and attempt to forge a new relationship. Interestingly, in this story, the catalyst for change comes from the company, but it finds a receptive welcome from the Clinton-Gore administration in their effort to create government-business partnerships:

"At any rate, we got tired of the old adversarial relationship at just about the same time Clinton and Gore started pushing the agencies to try partnership. It all worked together in parallel. We called the FDA and said we'd like to talk. So we went up to Atlanta (FDA's regional office) and all the players were there—including our local inspector from Savannah. We asked them what we had to do to change things. They said, 'How about knocking off all these refusals when we ask for files and records.' We said we would if they would work with us to solve any minor violations they might find. We wouldn't expect them to ignore real safety issues—we didn't think we had any of those anyway—but we didn't want them to punish us for minor paperwork problems we could quickly fix, or force us to recall a product due to an obviously phony customer complaint."

"Well, no more than 30 days after we got back from Atlanta, they came to inspect us. I guess they wondered if we were for real. We let them see everything they asked to see. Our lawyer almost had a heart attack. The key to this whole approach is one-to-one relationships. I told their inspector 'Look, my job is on the line here. We got to have trust on both sides.' We came out of that with the best inspection report we ever had. And they've been back three times to inspect us since and it keeps getting better."

Once again, taking risks to build a relationship based on trust has rewards for both sides. The government has increased its inspection schedule, while the industry enjoys excellent inspection reports. A question that comes to mind is whether this story is describing how a new relationship has been forged between business and government, or from a darker side, have the inspectors been co-opted by the industry they regulate? Is an adversarial relationship a necessary precondition for regulators to distance themselves from the industry under their jurisdiction? Probably not, and this story is a reminder of how cooperative efforts can generate success, but it does call into questions of accountability that the National Performance Review often tends to gloss over. The success of this newly-forged relationship is exemplified by mutual problem-solving as the next passage illustrates:

All the time SeaPak was changing its combative attitude, FDA was changing, too. FDA's field investigators traditionally have been rewarded for detecting violations and levying fines. But FDA has begun to emphasize public safety over disciplinary action. This reorientation encourages more open communication between FDA and industry. For example, FDA recently inspected a food-canning operation and found a malfunction in the sealing equipment, a serious problem that could have led to a botulism outbreak. Instead of launching a lengthy, formal enforcement action, FDA inspectors quickly recommended to the cannery owners that they destroy all cans in the lot and repair the sealing equipment. They agreed and the problem was resolved immediately. This on-the-spot teamwork saved the agency and the company thousands of dollars and immediately protected consumers from dangerous products. That's the way of the future for FDA.)

Organizational theorists James G. March and Herbert A. Simon have described a concept they call "goal displacement" in which bureaucracies sometimes confuse means with ends (1958, 38). Goal displacement occurs when bureaucrats forget the real goal, in this case public safety, in favor of less optimal goals such as in this case, the detection of rule violations. The example in the above passage reveals how the reinvention movement deals with the problem of goal displacement. It handles this problem by using a systems analytical approach to step back and gain perspective on what the real objectives are for any area of governance and administration.

The following passage describes how SeaPak has instituted a program of total quality management. The inclusion of this segment of the story is perhaps to offer a model of quality improvement for the federal sector:

What does Ray Jones at SeaPak see in the future? One word: "HACCP." Ray's not clearing a fish bone. He's talking about the Administration's new scientific way to insure the safety of our food.

"It means 'Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point,' and basically, it's the same method the Japanese used to beat the pants off our auto industry in the seventies and eighties. You build in quality all along the line—don't wait til the end and just spot check the product. It's a much better way to ensure food safety. In simple terms for the seafood industry, it means making sure cooked fish stays hot enough long enough that no germs could possibly still be alive—and for raw fish, that it stays cold enough until you're ready to cook it, so that no germs can grow. The FDA will be looking at our production control records to make sure we get things hot enough, or keep things cold enough. They'll check the product randomly to verify the other checks. But the quality's built in. We think it's great. In fact, I'm training to become a certified HACCP instructor so I can teach our suppliers and even our competitors the new techniques."

> Ray explains why SeaPak welcomes a new regulation that gives FDA access to production records. "We think it will improve the consumer's confidence in seafood. Seafood's taken a bad rap because of things like raw oysters. But shrimp and breaded fish filets are the safest foods you'll ever eat. This new scientific inspection will boost confidence. Five years ago, we would have been worried about letting more government in the door. But we're not afraid of that anymore. We trust each other. We have the same goal—top quality food for our customers. We're partners."

This story hits upon the same values which drive the reinvention government movement generally: customer service, quality assurance, business-government partnerships, and while at the same time speaking to concerns about public safety. This story is also about trust, a troublesome value for government organizations with regulatory missions. Government's relationship with business is important, but more important is government's relationship to the community at large. In *The Best Kept Secrets in Government*, the National Performance Review makes its case for improving those agencies with direct impact on human lives (see next page):

Secret Four
Government is Partnering With Communities

> **"And there's something else we can do together. We can reinvent government. We can switch from red tape to results. We can put the days of almighty, holier-than-thou, mister-know-it-all Washington behind us. We can become partners."**
> - Vice President Al Gore, Remarks to U.S. Conference of Mayors, Austin, Texas, July 23, 1995

> "Clinton and Gore are trying to change this huge bureaucracy. It's like climbing a three-mile-high mountain, and they've made it to mile post one. Nobody's ever gotten to the one-mile post before. But there's still a long way to go." So says a big city leader with a national reputation for straight talk—a successful city government reinventor, Philadelphia's mayor, Ed Rendell.

Gore connects the newest National Performance Review efforts with the original mission as outlined in the initial report—switching "from red tape to results." In the true spirit of devolution, the National Performance Review is showcasing a remarkable relationship that it has developed with local communities. "While reinventing government tends to glaze over eyes in Washington," reports Washington Post staff writer Stephen Barr, "the project has the appeal of currying favor with local officials around the country" (1998, March 3, p. A15).

Another part of the National Performance Review's original mission was to change the culture of government. The Philadelphia Mayor compares this effort to climbing a mountain—basically saying that the effort has come a long way but has not neared completion. Staff at the National Performance Review agree. Asked about whether the National Partnership for Reinventing Government has succeeded in changing the culture of government, NPR Press Secretary, Kelly Paisley responds, "It's a work in progress. It's really difficult. Have we moved it along?—Yes. Are we there yet?—No" (personal communication, July 10, 1998). Rendell continues:

> "Most of our dealings with the federal government are with HUD" (Housing and Urban Development), Rendell explains. "HUD would get an A+ from me, across the board. Henry Cisneros is a great Secretary of HUD—he's the embodiment of the Administration's policy to cut regulations and red tape, and to give local government the maximum amount of flexibility to use money most effectively."

Rendell appears to be editorializing Henry Cisneros to hero status. In this context, the definition of a hero is simply giving municipalities money with no strings attached. Rendell explains how the reinvention flexibility works:

> "Empowerment Zones are an example," says Rendell. Philadelphia and neighboring Camden, New Jersey, share one of 105 new flexible federal grants to revitalize both urban and rural communities. These communities were chosen from over 500 applicants, based on the strength of their strategic plans and community partnerships.
>
> Grants of up to $100 million, along with tax breaks to attract new businesses, go to "Empowerment Zones" in six big cities and three rural areas; two more cities received grants of over $100 million without tax incentives. There are smaller grants and tax breaks for 94 other areas (64 urban, 30 rural) called "Enterprise Communities." All told, Washington is providing more than $1.5 billion in flexible grants and more than $2.5 billion in tax incentives. The communities also receive special assistance in removing red tape and regulatory barriers that prevent the innovative uses of federal funds.
>
> Deciding how to revitalize the community and get the most for their money was a grass-roots effort. To qualify, the community residents themselves, with help from city and county governments and local businesses, drew up plans to solve what they, not Washington, saw as their biggest problems. Most communities that got grants need more businesses, more jobs, and better low-cost housing, and they plan to stimulate all of that not with handouts, but with low-cost loans so the money will be replenished.
>
> Rendell continues: "The Empowerment Zone really lets the people in the communities take control and be responsible for the outcome. But that was kind of easy for HUD to implement without lots of red tape, because the law itself had the right spirit. I'm more impressed with things like HUD's

housing regulations. They've gotten rid of some of the most onerous, inflexible requirements on cities, like the 'one-for-one' rule on public housing. That rule said that if we tore down an abandoned high rise that had 580 units, we had to construct 580 new units, even though there hadn't been anybody living in there for five years. It was the same thing with single units. You can go to some blocks in Philadelphia where everybody's done a great job with their houses—put money into rehabilitating their houses—and right in the middle of the block there are two HUD scattered housing units that are terrible—places for drug dealing, places where kids got into trouble, a big negative on the neighborhood. But in the past, we couldn't demolish them without plans to build two new ones. So they'd sit there without ever being demolished or rehabilitated, doing nobody any good. HUD's shown the common sense to eliminate that rule. So we've brought down a number of high-rises and scattered units." Philadelphia is not the only city that has been able to get rid of those high-rise nightmares. In the past few years, 30,000 units have been razed, more than in the previous 12 years. And President Clinton recently set a goal to tear down another 70,000 in the next four years—a total of 100,000 urban eyesores gone.

In this story, the communitarian focus is on the elimination of abandoned, urban high-rises along with "scattered housing units" regulated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. It represents a sea change in the management of urban housing since Lyndon Johnson inaugurated the Great Society programs. A decade or two ago, talk of such activities would have been dismissed in many Democratic Party circles as extremist conservative ideology. But with a Democratic administration, the razing of "100,000 urban eyesores" becomes a means to support the values of local control, cutting red tape, and reducing criminal activities such as drug dealing and, by implication, gang violence ("places where kids got into trouble"). The effort in these areas are indicative of the new Democratic leadership movement's struggle to find and hold the middle ground between conservative and liberal political orientations.

The federal government does not abandon the central cities and neighborhoods, it simply moves to a new paradigm based on federal-local teamwork and cooperation. Trust surfaces again as an important value here, as the federal government allows local administrators and politicians much more discretion in how federal monies are spent. In order to defend the enormous clearing out of urban structures which may still be habitable, the story makes clear that ...

> Tearing down houses is not the ultimate goal. HUD has also created National Partners in Homeownership, comprising 58 national organizations representing lenders, real estate professionals, home builders, nonprofit housing providers, and federal, state, and local governments. The goal is to achieve an all-time high rate of homeownership—67 percent of all American households by the end of the year 2000, creating up to eight million additional homeowners. The partners are making headway. By the spring of 1996, the national homeownership rate was 65.1 percent, up from 64.2 percent at the end of 1994 (an increase of more than 1.5 million households). This is the highest rate since 1981, and the sharpest year-to-year increase in over three decades.
>
> "HUD's made a wonderful change," according to Mayor Rendell. "And it's the same story on money for economic development. They've given us all kinds of flexibility to use that money most effectively. It's a night and day difference from the old way. They've done an excellent job. They haven't gotten rid of all the regs and all the burdens, but they've gotten rid of a tremendous share of them."
>
> What about getting rid of all of them? Would the mayor welcome the kind of complete freedom some in Congress advocate in the form of block grants? "It's not freedom, it's baloney," says Rendell. "First of all, freedom from federal rules would have to be passed along to us by the state. And the state government is, if anything, less sympathetic to the cities than the feds are. So we'd never see all that freedom.
>
> "But the main thing is that even if we got freedom from rules and red tape, we could only operate maybe 10 or 15 percent cheaper. They're talking about 25 percent cuts. You might be able to be just as effective if you had freedom and 10 percent less money. But no way are you going to be effective with 25 percent less. No way."

Away from "urban eyesores" the above passage changes pace and boasts of achievements and goals in the true objective of ensuring affordable housing. The next passage switches to another topic of great local concern, the activities initiated by the federal government to protect the environment:

> Rendell moved on to discuss the Environmental Protection Agency. "Under prior administrations, EPA was the single worst bureaucracy, promulgating regulations that avoided risks of one-in-a-trillion and had huge price tags to local governments. They've gone from that absurd starting point to . . . fair. For example, there's a scrap dealer here who handles old refrigerators. An EPA regulation says that you have to put a red tag on them certifying the safe disposal of freon. He employs a ton of people in jobs that pay $20 an hour, and they were about to fine him more than a million dollars, which would put him completely out of business, because he didn't have the tags right. We argued it with them at the local level, the regional level, even the Washington level. I think we got it worked out, but they were going to put our guy out of business."
>
> "But on the plus side, EPA's Brownfields effort makes a lot of sense," Rendell says. The Brownfields program is EPA's new way of getting abandoned industrial sites cleaned up and put back into the economy. The first success was in Cleveland, Ohio, at a 20-acre eyesore owned by Sunarhauserman, Inc. It had been sitting in Superfund limbo land for years, with prospective buyers and developers afraid to touch it, not so much because of the actual pollution but because the clean-up liability was unlimited. Now it is being cleaned up and houses four new businesses that contribute 180 new jobs and $1 million to the local tax base. One of the latest Brownfields projects is right inside Philadelphia's American Street Empowerment Zone. EPA has agreed that the site of a small, abandoned gasoline tank farm can be sealed, paved over, and developed by businesses that are attracted by the Empowerment Zone's tax incentives and low-cost loans.
>
> Here is a recent example from the West coast: The creosote-soaked site of the Wyckoff Company's wood treatment plant on Seattle's waterfront is about to become a world-class port facility for American President Lines. If EPA had not become a partner, the 1,000 jobs that are coming would have gone south—literally—and the land would have lain there oozing poison into the harbor while the lawyers wrangled in court for years. But EPA and the Port of Seattle worked out a common-sense deal that is good for everybody.
>
> "Look, there's clearly plenty of work to do yet—two more miles of

> mountain to climb," says Rendell, going back to his original metaphor. "But things are sure headed in the right direction."

Flexibility, common sense, trust, partnership, customer service, cutting red tape, and helping the community — these values are the common threads which link the stories in the National Performance Review.

The strong tradition of storytelling is continued in the latest Annual Report issued by the National Performance Review, *Business-Like Government: Lessons Learned from America's <u>Best</u> Companies* (1997). In this latest major report, under the editorial guidance of Bob Stone, stories are used as a primary means to showcase and highlight the commission's accomplishments. A major feature in this report are the "Tales of Reinvention," a series of stories with snappy titles like "The Loan Arranger," "Employee Powered," "Beating Computer Swords into Corporate Shares," "From Trails to Sales," and "Miami Virtue." The following story titled, "A Uniformly Good Idea" is exemplary of the kinds of stories in this report:

> A common-sense suggestion from a front-line employee is saving $220,000 annually for a Marine Corps supply operation. Phil Archuleta, an employee at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, noticed that the Depot was issuing a lot of extra-large size uniforms to new, overweight recruits. But Marine Corps boot camp has a way of making people lose weight. Within a few weeks, practically all the recruits dropped down enough to exchange the XL's for a smaller size. Regulations prohibited the Marines from reissuing the barely used XL uniforms — because, of course, they had already been issued once. The Marines had to give away perfectly good uniforms — some never worn at all — to government surplus stores. Archuleta suggested that the Marines could wash the uniforms and then reissue them to incoming overweight recruits. His common-sense idea saved the depot $89,000 in the first five months and $220,000 over a year. (1997)

The simple power of this kind of story is that it plows fertile ground for other public employees to model their own strategies for generating cost-saving suggestions. The National Performance Review thus taps into the power of frontline workers who best know their own jobs. After reading through a series of these kinds of stories, there may also be what advertisers call the "bandwagon" effect. "On the home front, governments often need models of production for others to emulate" (Severin & Tankard, 1992, p. 104). Showcasing these kinds of stories are a form of public recognition unto themselves.

The Tales From the Reinvention Zone are supplemented by stories of another form called Reinvention Zone Interviews. The following interview, titled "To Beat Wal-Mart" represents the kind of story usually presented in this fashion:

> Consider the case of Brigadier General Kenneth Privratsky, Commander of Defense Distribution Region East (DDRE), who entered The Reinvention Zone to discover the secrets of Delta Air Lines, Caterpillar, IBM, and Wal-Mart.
>
> Q: DDRE does what?
> A: DDRE distributes everything from battle tanks to toothpaste for our customers — most of the U.S. military forces.
>
> Q: How big is your operation?
> A: I have 8,000 employees in 13 depots who fulfill 15 million orders per year.
>
> Q: Why did you go to the private sector for help?
> A: I knew our customer service was much slower than the private sector's. So I sent teams to visit our civilian counterparts—aviation depots went to Delta Air Lines, the heavy equipment depot went to Caterpillar, et cetera. My staff went to IBM, Wal-Mart, Eddie Bauer, and Spiegel.

Q: How did the companies react?
A: Everybody was eager to share their ideas.

Q: What did you learn?
A: We learned four things. First, ask your customers what they want, and give it to them. Second, raise standards—our orders took four days; the private sector took one. Third, cut management—our supervisor-employee ratio was 1:10; theirs was 1:20. Finally, cross-train staff to meet changing demands.

Q: What surprised you most?
A: Companies' performance standards for the individual worker were simply much higher. Now we aim higher.

Q: How much has DDRE changed since you saw Wal-Mart?
A: Pretty much everything changed. Routine orders now take us a day instead of four. We've reached a 1:15 supervisor-employee ratio. We review our workload daily and adjust for the next day. Before, incredibly, we did it only once a month.

Q: What's the bottom line?
A: Our performance is better in every category — we saved more than $28 million. That money goes directly to improving military readiness.

Q: What's your next goal?
A: To beat Wal-Mart. (1997)

Vice-President Al Gore, as a true politician, of course makes use of stories in his speeches and writings. In a speech which was subsequently converted into an article for the *Public Administration Review*, Gore uses the following story to illustrate a point about the National Performance Review's relation to previous managerial thought:

> I remember at a meeting last November, a big man got up to speak. He was a line worker at Corning Glass, named Dick Allen. In the old days, he told me, when something went wrong with his machine, two engineers would come onto the factory floor and look into it. He knew they were engineers

> for two reasons. First, they wore ties. And second, they never talked to him. A lot of times he knew what was wrong. "I can remember," he said, "going home nearly every evening—or morning, depending on what shift I was on—and describing to my wife all the things that were wrong with Corning and all of my brilliant ideas of how to fix it. But I had no way at the factory to deliver those ideas." Well, the culture of the times dictated that he keep his thoughts to himself and let the "men with ties" work it out.
>
> Then Corning changed its philosophy. Now the engineers still come onto the factory floor. But the very first thing they do is ask Dick Allen what's wrong. They've found out that if anyone knows, it's likely to be him. And of course the engineers are right. But, this requires an entirely new model of leadership that is based on the notion that workers can make major, positive contributions to improving the understanding of the workplace and the understanding of how to enhance productivity. (1994, p. 318)

Obviously, the National Performance Review continues to use stories as a means to captivate the attention of public administrators, political leaders, and interested citizens. In fact, in these newer National Performance Review publications, stories are no longer treated as sidebars to the main text. They often *are* the main text. The use of stories is a deliberate and conscious strategy that has followed the National Performance Review through the evolution into its second phase. Barr describes the challenge for the transition:

> Elaine C. Kamarck, who served as Gore's first-term reinvention policy chief, said the second-term question is what kind of story line Gore can create for phase two of the reinvention. "The big story has to be in a kind of renewal in public faith in government," she said. "And the only way you're going to get that is improving the pieces that Americans interact with. Then you have another powerful accomplishment to go to the people with."
>
> In its recast version, Gore's reinvention task force will move away from critiquing the performance of federal agencies and what is broken inside the bureaucracy and, instead, try to broaden its agenda. (1998, p. A15)

This style of emphasizing points through stories, of course, borrows heavily from the managerial excellence and reinventing government literature (see for example: Covey, 1989, 1990; Osborne & Gaebler, 1993; Osborne & Plastrik, 1997; Peters, 1987; Peters & Austin, 1985; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Pinkerton, 1995; Zemke & Schaaf, 1990). Possibly, the increased use of stories is due to the success of initial efforts. If so, this provides some evidence of the great utility of stories when public administrators and other practitioners are the intended audience.

In addition, political instincts may also be at play since many members of the public, especially political elites and opinion leaders, routinely observe the workings and outcomes of the programs and program changes sponsored by the National Performance Review. There is some frustration at the National Performance Review about the lack of positive press coverage. "We're on top of the things that are broken in government" comments NPR Press Secretary Kelly Paisley, "A lot of this is not getting out because we're a *good* news story. A lot of the stuff we do is not very sexy but it's important. We've done some amazing things with welfare to work, worker safety, IRS customer service reform. It's not always very interesting, but we're making it better." In fact, the Ford Foundation and Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government have honored the IRS for its innovative "TeleFile program, which allows eligible taxpayers to file their returns by telephone" (Barr, 1998, March 3, p. A15). The reorientation of the National Performance Review in its most current incarnation, the National Partnership for Reinventing Government, to tackle administrative reform of the Internal Revenue Service is evidence of the power of stories to serve as important catalysts for organizational change in the public sector. As has been shown, stories are an important part of the current administrative reform effort. The reinvention government movement as a whole, and the National Performance Review during both of its "phases" have relied heavily on storytelling to make its points and bring about the desired change. With stories and other symbolic activities playing such an important function in the current bureaucratic and political environments, semiotics should prove to be an interesting and productive point of departure for research in this area.

Chapter 5.

Methodology—The Semiotic Approach

What cultural mechanisms are at play that make "reinventing government" and the Gore Report such an integral part of contemporary discussion within the public administration community? This study employs the semiotic approach in an attempt to answer this question. The intended target of this study is the closely held set of values that comprise the contemporary political movement for bureaucratic reform. This semiotic study is an effort to critically evaluate from multiple perspectives the National Performance Review, a finite but important political and administrative effort.

Charles Peirce initially proposed the most comprehensive theory of semiotics (1934-1936). In his conception, which has served as the basis for the American school of semiotic thought, he outlined a *triadic* theory of the sign. The elements of the triad are the *representatum*, or the sign itself, an *object*, that which is referenced by the sign, and the *interpretant*. The interpretant is more than an interpreter. Peirce describes the interpretant as the appropriate effect resulting from an exposure to a sign. It can be thought of as a mental image or feeling one experiences after encountering a sign. As such, the interpretant can itself become the representatum or sign for a further triad. Thus, the process can go on ad infinitum — a very frustrating implication for science in search of an absolute truth. However, the semiotic process does mirror thought itself in that just as one thought can (and often does) lead to another thought, one sign can (and often does) lead to another sign.

This research model goes beyond the boundaries of conventional method. "Of necessity," Semiotic theorist Richard L. Lanigan states, "the approach of semiotic phenomenology is geared to the creative expression and definition of the human condition" (1984, p. 3). However, semiotics aspires to be a *science* of signs. It is the attempt to come to terms with the signs surrounding social and political meaning. As David Sless states, "Semiotics is above all else a point of view, a vantage point from which to survey our world" (1986, p. 1). Eco elaborates:

> Semiotics is concerned with everything which can be *taken* as a sign. A sign is everything which can be taken as significantly substituting for something else. This something else does not necessarily have to exist or to actually be somewhere at the moment in which a sign stands in for it. Thus *semiotics is in principle the discipline studying everything which can be used in order to lie*. If something cannot be used to tell a lie, conversely it cannot be used to tell the truth: it cannot in fact be used 'to tell' at all. I think that the definition of a 'theory of the lie' should be taken as a pretty comprehensive program for a general semiotics. (Eco, 1979, p. 7)

An implication from Eco's definition is that political semiotics has as one of its major goals, uncovering a truth which may be cloaked by symbols designed to deceive. "In politics," Fox notes, "symbols, often purposefully misleading, replace deliberation over policy" (1996, p. 257). The critical-theoretic aspect to semiotic study is intended specifically to discern such situations. Most political discourse is not delivered with any degree of sinister intentions that should justifiably be described as "lies." But, ideology has a way of distorting one's view of the political universe. So campaigning, spin control, and highly visible political efforts such as the National Performance Review can be expected to serve as typical strategies in political gamesmanship. "The rhetoric may come in the language of administrative efficiency—streamlining, reinvention, and reorganizing," states public administrationist W. Henry Lambright, "Behind the rhetoric are often political interests, with success and failure a function of the political skills of administrators" (1998, p. 259). Semiotician Karin Boklund-Lagopoulou discusses the link between semiotics and critical examination of ideology:

> Semiotics has a tradition in the analysis of ideology. From its renaissance in the Paris of the 1960s, some of the best semioticians have used their method for revealing the hidden ideologies—the 'mythologies', as Barthes called them—behind our habits of thought and action. Simultaneously, semiotics developed, and developed itself through, another kind of inquiry into ideology: the analysis of the ideological bases of the sciences (as for example, in the work of Michel Foucault or Francoise Choay). This is perhaps most evident in those fields where semiotics has become an essential part of theory and methodology, such as in anthropology, which recently has become intensely conscious of its own ideological assumptions ... The two tendencies, the analysis of the hidden ideologies of everyday life and the metalinguistic reflection on the theories and methodologies of science, are, I think, related: semioticians are both scientists and social beings, and they apply the tools of their discipline to both aspects of their life. (1983, p. 345)

Linguistic semiotician Paolo Valesio adds, "Links and connections must be made as clear as possible, not out of an abstract concern for exhaustiveness, but because linguistic analysis is the only way to demystify ideological constructions" (1981, p.

67). Semioticians Sonia Maasik and Jack Solomon state:

> In our society (especially in the aftermath of the Watergate scandal), "politics" has become something of a dirty word, and to "politicize" something seems somehow to contaminate it ... and the point of semiotics in general— is that all social behavior is political in the sense that it reflects some kind of personal or group interest. Such interests are encoded in what are called "ideologies," which are essentially world views that express the values and opinions of those who hold them. Politics, then, is just another name for the clash of ideologies that takes place in any complex society where the interests of all those who belong to it are constantly in competition with each other. But often the ideological interests that guide our social behavior remain concealed behind images that don't look political at all. (1994, pp. 5-6)

"Although there are many secondary characteristics that distinguish scientific reasoning from common sense, the primary one is this deliberate attempt to bring to the surface what common sense leaves permanently concealed" (Easton, 1951, p. 42). The challenge is to tackle relevant variables, like values, which are not easily amenable to rigorous scientific approaches. Can a semiotic research effort build upon previous research, operationalize relevant variables, and provide a conclusive sense of validity to its findings? "Behavioral semiotic," explains Clarke, is "an attempt to transform semiotic into an empirical science by proposing operational definitions of such traditional terms as 'meaning', 'denotation', and 'truth' which enable the process of sign interpretation to be investigated in terms of correlations between stimuli and responses as publicly observable events" (1987, p. 31). Semiotics does appear to offer a new research approach and a variety of new tools for exploring the political universe. As Murray Edelman explains in a new afterword to his classic treatise, *The*

Symbolic Uses of Politics:

> Politics is a spectacle, reported by the media and witnessed by parts of the public. It attracts attention because, as an ambiguous text, it becomes infused with meanings that reassure or threaten. The construction of diverse meanings for described political events shapes support for causes and legitimizes value allocations. The literature on the place of symbolism in politics explores the creation of meaning through political language and other actions. Its semiotic emphasis marked a break with the tradition of institutional classification and legal description that dominated the political science of the early decades of the twentieth century, and it makes a less obvious but more radical break with the behaviorism that emerged after World War II; for behaviorism is positivist in orientation for the most part, while the study of the construction of meaning must focus upon the interpretations of subjects more than the observation of objects. (1964/1985, p. 195)

Semiotics has grown in importance to the social sciences (Manning, 1987). Perhaps this is due to the disillusionment which has followed in the wake of behavioralism's disappointments. Semiotics also appears to be a fruitful way to analyze a society so richly based on the sharing of symbolic forms. Edelman states, "The grand, conspicuous symbols are potent only because thousands of subtle, unrecognized symbols embedded in everyday political language and gestures do the real work of evoking beliefs and perceptions" (1977, p. 154). Semiotics allows the researcher an avenue to explore the less obvious, but in the aggregate, more important signs and symbols which pervade human experience. "In general," linguist Yishai Tobin observes, "semiotics is usually defined as a general philosophical theory dealing with the production of signs and symbols as part of code systems which are used to communicate information" (1990, p. 6). He states further, "Semiotics includes visual and verbal ... (all signs or signals which are accessible to and can be perceived by all our senses) as they form code systems which systematically communicate information or messages in literally every field of human behaviour and enterprise" (Tobin, 1990, p. 6). In the political world, we are experiencing an explosive growth in the signification of political values. "We are living through revolutionary times and we only partly recognize that reality," declares public administrationist Donald C. Menzel, "These revolutionary forces—*computerization, the information explosion, privatization, globalization, and democratization*—must be recognized by the public management community for what they are, opportunities and challenges to craft a better life for ordinary persons without compromising one's ethical integrity" (1998, p. 6). These rapid changes are just the most obvious examples of the vast variety of avenues capable of carrying political meaning in the modern world.

Political philosopher Cassirer states, "In every linguistic 'sign' in every mythical or artistic 'image' a spiritual content, which intrinsically points beyond the whole sensory sphere, is translated into the form of the sensuous, into something visible, audible or tangible" (1953, p. 106). Consequently, semiotics is far-ranging in its ambitions for study and is not easily confined to disciplinary boundaries. "Equally evident," Therese Budniakiewicz observes, "is that semiotics as an interdisciplinary methodology does not, in most places, exist as a separate discipline, inside of established university department and traditional fields and this explains the fact, observed by Parret, that most Paris School semioticians have a 'dual competence': in semiotics and another field, be it linguistics, philosophy, literature, law, sociology, and so on (1989, p. xv)" (1992, p. 13). Like the policy sciences, semiotics aspires to be a metadiscipline. Paolo Fabbri and Paul Perron, in their foreword to Algirdas Julien Greimas's *The Social Sciences: A Semiotic View*, define semiotics as the "metalanguage of the human sciences" (1990, p. vi). Its approach allows crossover points from disciplines that would otherwise be insulated from each other. This dissertation, for example, uses semiotics to bridge political science and public administration, two very related disciplines, but ones not without friction.

Semiotics has positivist, interpretative, and critical-theoretical overtones in its assumptions and approaches. The plurality of the semiotic method provides both strength and finesse as a means to approach abstract human variables. Values, for example, are often veiled and concealed. Persistent effort may be required to peel away layers of obscurity in order to reveal true political motives. The goal of semiotic research is to "dig" into the signs much as the archaeologist brushes earth away from the artifacts of interest. Sebeok says, "Semiotics *is* something, something by means of which we can conjure reality from illusion by the use of signs" (1991a, p. 2). Sebeok also states "that semiotics' overriding mission is and will be 'to mediate between reality and illusion,' to penetrate to the illusion behind reality — these being complementary universes of signs — to decompose it, demystify it, and, in back of that, unveil yet another reality, of an intenser texture still" (1991a, p. 118). Values, for example, are rarely made explicit, and sometimes even when values are specifically articulated they may speak truth or mask less noble political motives. Semiotics is an attempt to interpret observable signs and follow up with true critical analysis. Sebeok explains:

> Semiotics is not about the "real" world at all, but about complementary or alternative actual models of it and ... about an infinite number of anthropologically conceivable possible worlds. Thus semiotics never reveals what the world is, but circumscribes what we can know about it; in other words, what a semiotic model depicts is not "reality" as such, but nature as unveiled by our method of questioning. It is the interplay between the "book of nature" and its human decipherer that is at issue. (1991b, p. 12)

Semiotics is at its core about the quest for truth. It is about understanding. It is about our place in a universe we don't yet quite understand. Semiotics is not so much about finding an answer as it is about asking the next question once an answer is received. David Sless explains, "Understanding is the dead spot in our struggle for meaning: it is the momentary pause, the stillness before incomprehension continues; it is the brief relief from the doubt that is the norm" (1986, p. v). Therefore, semiotics has deep implications for our understanding of the construction of reality. Sebeok notes, "In the age-old philosophical quest for reality, two alternative points of departure have been suggested: that the structure of being is reflected in semiotic structures, which thus constitute models, or maps, of reality; or that the reverse is the case, namely, that semiotic structures are independent variables so that reality becomes the dependent variable" (1991b, p. 12). In either case, the consequence for human understanding of the world would be indistinguishable. It illustrates one of the major problems nagging social science research, epitomized by the Hawthorne effect, that human perception can change behavior and ultimately change the reality that previously existed. Max Weber writes, "The fate of an epoch which has eaten of the tree of knowledge is that it must know that we cannot learn the *meaning* of the world from the results of its analysis, be it ever so perfect; it must rather be in a position to create this meaning itself" (1949, p. 57). It makes truth that much more elusive in the social sphere.

Semiotician Floyd Merrell states, "An attempt to establish the 'semiotic foundations' of a particular class of physical or mental objects conceived and perceived in texts entails a search for the means and mechanisms by which signs are processed from the most primitive level upward" (1982, p. vii). "In other words," Merrell relates, "the sensory world does not simply feed information from which the mind selects and derives abstractions; the mind possess a priori remarkable capabilities for abstraction that enable it to experience particulars from within a whole structural framework it has abstracted from its world" (1982, p. 2).

Semiotics is deliberately and overtly comparative in its approach. Deely defines the "*field* of 'semiotics,'" as "the development of attempts to isolate and pursue the implications of specifically signifying *aspects and elements* of phenomena, natural or socio-cultural, ... that are studied in their own right (as objects) by the range of traditional specialized pursuits (music, architecture, ethology, etc.) now becoming sensitized to the semiotic *dimension* that permeates all things once they enter into experience" (1982, p. xiv). Peter K. Manning, a phenomenologist who analyzes complex social systems, states, "Semiotics permits, indeed, requires *comparisons*. Semiotics is based on the central notions of opposition in context as the source of meaning...studies of single cases, or types, or groups, must involve implicit but perhaps unrecognized comparisons. Thus explicit comparison is urged" (1987, p. 46). As Lévi-Strauss relates,

> In anthropology as in linguistics, therefore, it is not comparison that supports generalization, but the other way around. If, as we believe to be the case, the unconscious activity of the mind consists in imposing forms upon content, and if these forms are fundamentally the same for all minds — ancient and modern, primitive and civilized (as the study of the symbolic function, expressed in language, so strikingly indicates) — it is necessary and sufficient to grasp the unconscious structure underlying each institution and custom, in order to obtain a principle of interpretation valid for other institutions and other customs, provided of course that the analysis is carried far enough. (1963, p. 21)

In order to establish a baseline for comparing value structures among various bureaucratic reform efforts, this dissertation applies semiotics to the fields of political science and public administration, specifically focusing on the National Performance Review. As David Sless acknowledges, "Semiotics is far too important an enterprise to be left to semioticians" (1986, p. v). The challenge is to analytically illuminate the mysteries of political persuasion contained in the sometimes obtuse language of politicians and public officials. Are the branches of politics manipulating values? Are values being *created*? In what ways do politicians communicate values to the administrative world? The National Performance Review can be seen as a major conduit for communicating values and it does so in a variety of ways, but most commonly it does so simply with words. "Words," according to bureaucracy theorist Ralph Hummel, "have political meaning; and using words—discourse—is a form of power. From this point of view, to change the value of a culture means to gain control of the meaning of the words in the political discourse" (1994, p. 76).

Has the National Performance Review engaged the administrative community in a political discourse in order to change its underlying culture and values? Harold Lasswell formulated the essential question: "Who says what in which channel to whom with what effect?" (Cobley & Jansz, 1997, p. 115). As theoretically important signifiers, have the stories within the National Performance Review been effective in communicating those values to the public administration community?

Outline of Research Steps and Methods

In order to answer the research question ("Are the stories within the National Performance Review effective vehicles for communicating its intended political and administrative values?"), the following research steps are undertaken (see next page):

Table 1. Steps in the Research Process

- **Step 1.** **Identify sample of practicing public administrators.**

  Purpose: Serves as panel of evaluators for story analysis.

- **Step 2.** **Administer Competing Values Leadership Instrument - Extended Version (Quinn, 1988, pp. 174-177) to sample of public administrators..**

  Purpose: Controls for professional values currently held by sample of public administrators.

- **Step 3.** **Conduct quantitative content analysis of the National Performance Review's lead report, *From Red Tape to Results.***

  Purpose: Identifies political/administrative values intended by report authors.

- **Step 4.** **Correlate independent results of two content analysts.**

  Purpose: Determines inter-rater reliability (high coefficient is necessary to assume validity).

- **Step 5.** **Set up correlation matrix of factors in content analysis.**

  Purpose: Determines if factors as defined and operationalized are unique and cleanly separated.

- **Step 6.** **Administer story analysis instrument to sample of public administrators.**

  Purpose: Measures the values communicated by the National Performance Review stories to public administrators.

- **Step 7.** **Correlate results of story analysis instrument and results of content analysis.**

  Purpose: Measures degree of success by the stories in communicating the overall values promoted by the National Performance Review.

- **Step 8.** **Conduct partial correlation between the story analysis and the content analysis controlling for the results of the Competing Values Leadership Instrument - Extended Version (Quinn, 1988, pp. 174-177).**

  Purpose: Partials out the potentially contaminating influence of the values previously held by the sample of public administrators when conducting the story analysis.

To identify the current professional values of the public administration community, Robert E. Quinn's Competing Values Leadership Instrument - Extended Version (1988, pp. 174-177) has been administered to a representative sample of public administrators. This same sample of public administrators subsequently responded to a story analysis survey using the major stories presented in the National Performance Review's initial report, *From Red Tape to Results: Creating a Government That Works Better and Costs Less*.

To discern and integrate the value dimensions of the National Performance Review overall, a quantitative content analysis of its initial, lead report has also been conducted. Modeled after the more objective Lasswell procedures (Lasswell & Leites, 1949), the semiotic method of content analysis employs well-accepted positivist methodologies as a means to provide order and structure to the subjective interpretations of meaning contained within the text of the National Performance Review (see also, Kaufmann & Broms, 1988). "Semiotic approaches to the study of ... communication help to make implicit knowledge explicit by analyzing the sign systems that are woven into the communication processes" (Wagner, 1992, p. 216). The results of these research methods will be compared with each other in an attempt to explore the interplay of political and administrative values and to test the effectiveness of stories as a medium of political value transmission.

Values in the Public Administration Community

Values are the endpoints which explain human behavior. Administrative values have political implications. Political values also have administrative implications. Administrative and organizational values represent a special class of values. These values, often based on prevailing management theory, are implicit within administrators' understandings of organizational processes and environmental interactions. These values, or managerial orientations, are imposed upon reality by administrators as a means to bring a sense of coherence to otherwise unrelated phenomenon. It represents a strategy for coping with chaos. Management theory, like a pair of old eyeglasses, may help to reveal our world but it can distort our vision as well. Organizational theorist Robert E. Quinn drives this point home in his impressive work, *Beyond Rational Management* (1988). He attempts to address the needs of both practitioners and academics. Based on a series of studies incorporating multidimensional scaling and factor analysis, Quinn claims that managers consciously or unconsciously adopt a set of values corresponding to particular administrative theories. These values may guide management well over a period of time, but as the organization matures and moves into different stages of transition, flexibility in perspective may be more fitting.

Quinn observes that managers often retreat into familiar modes of thinking, and as a result, create adversity. During the most difficult times, when the infusion of new ideas would most likely help alleviate problems, managers tend to hold even more closely to the ideas to which they were originally socialized—ideas that may have served them well in the past. In effect, managers are often *blinded* by their own values and become paralyzed; or worse, take their organizations down destructive paths. Quinn views people as inclined to over-invest in their own value systems and thus become blind to new possibilities.

Quinn follows with the deceptively simple question, "What is an effective manager?" (1988, p. xiii). He shows how difficult it is for social scientists to answer this question because they assume the answer is straightforward, logical, and uncomplicated. As Quinn explains, "The question itself assumes the possibility of a single, logical answer ... based on clear assumptions, mutually exclusive categories, and rational argument" (1988, p. xiv). Because of the chaotic, complex environment managers must work within, Quinn suggests that strict adherence to any set of management principles is by its very nature inadequate to achieve sustained high performance. Quinn builds his book on the premise that managers *can* learn to be more effective. But in order to do so, they must rise above their parochial viewpoints to see the world more fully in its complexity. The goal is to become a master of management who Quinn describes as one having "the capacity to create excellence" (1988, p. 2).

Quinn outlines the major orientations that together form a circular continuum he calls the Competing Values Model. It is a framework built upon the human relations-oriented open systems, rational goal, and internal process models. These orientations constitute the *frames* available for managers to employ in running their organizations. The frames are also bipolar in construct with the rational goal model in direct contrast to the human relations model. The two remaining orientations serve as blending bridges between the first two. Similar to Blake and Mouton's managerial grid (1964) and Hersey and Blanchard's model (1982, p. 152), Quinn argues that in order to survive, managers must develop capacities to function in each quadrant. Quinn seems to be part of a new cadre of observers pointing out the fallacies of simplistic managerial theories (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Farson, 1996; Kiel, 1994; Morgan, 1988; Schön & Rein, 1994; Vaill, 1989).

The most important contribution Quinn makes is the conceptual construction of the cognitive maps that organizational theorists and managers use when viewing their administrative world. The cognitive maps are anchored by eight points—each of which represent different constellations of values as evidenced by his research using factor analysis.

Sample of Public Administrators

To begin gaining insight into these values as relevant political and administrative variables, the Competing Values Leadership Instrument - Extended Version (Quinn, 1988, pp. 175-177) was administered to a sample of public administrators active in the Oklahoma City metropolitan area and surrounding region. Criteria for inclusion in the sample are that the respondent (1) works for a public agency, and (2) supervises other people or manages a program. Although this was not a random sample and was limited by geographic area, this researcher attempted to make the sample more representative by including public administrators from a wide variety of functional areas and jurisdictional levels (see Table 2, next page).

Table 2. Distribution of Sample by Jurisdictional Levels

Government Level	N=41	Examples of Job Titles
Federal	8	Area Director Chief Administrative Law Judge Regional Senior Liaison Officer U.S. Ambassador
State	14	Director of Assessment Justice, State Supreme Court Legislative Research Specialist Personnel Psychologist Quality Assurance Coordinator Senior Member Account Specialist Statistical Analysis Manager
Local	15	Administrative Specialist Budget Director Business Manager District Fire Chief Employment Manager Labor Relations Manager Management Specialist Plans Examiner
Education	4	Assistant Dean for Student Affairs Chair, Department

Names of potential respondents were gathered in several ways: (1) this researcher's own professional and administrative network in city and state government; (2) "cold calls" to federal agency offices; (3) use of the Federal Executive Board's regional directory (1997); and (4) attendance at area professional conferences and meetings. The public administrators included in this sample hold highly responsible positions and consequently for them, time is a very precious commodity. They were presented with two extensive research instruments, Quinn's Competing Values Instrument (1988, p. 174-176) and a Story Analysis Instrument (see Appendix II). Responding to both instruments poses a significant interruption to the public administrator's work schedules. Therefore, this researcher made personal appeals to each of the respondents for completion of the research instruments. Results from the Leadership Instrument yield a set of "mental maps" of the administrator's professional values.

Competing Values Leadership Instrument

As Quinn describes, the Competing Values Leadership Instrument is based on "a factor analysis, with an equimax rotation." (1988, p. 174). Factor analysis attempts to reduce a set of multiple values to a smaller set of underlying constructs called "factors." Kim & Mueller explain, "Factor analysis may be used as an expedient way of ascertaining the minimum number of hypothetical factors that can account for the observed covariation, and as a means of exploring the data for possible data reduction" (1978b, p. 9). "The distinguishing characteristic of the factor analytic approach is the assumption that observed covariation is due to some underlying common factors" (Kim & Mueller, 1978b, p. 22). A simplistic example would be the statisticians' old illustration of the crime rate correlating with sales of ice cream. Although social scientists could spend a great deal of time constructing elaborate theories of why criminal activities are encouraging ice cream consumption (or vice versa), a more parsimonious explanation is that the rates for both are correlated with a third factor—in this case, temperature. That is, as temperatures rise, so does the crime rate and so does the eating of ice cream. The only relationship these two rates share with each other is through a common third factor. "Although we normally do not attempt to factor analyze a bivariate relationship," explain Kim & Mueller, "one actually is applying the factor analytic model by considering the correlation between two observed variables to be a result of their sharing of common sources or factors, and not as a result of one being a direct cause of the other" (1978b, p. 22). "The next step in factor analysis involves finding simpler and more easily interpretable factors through rotations, while keeping the number of factors and communalities of each variable fixed" (Kim & Mueller, 1978a, p. 29). Factor *rotation* refers to the process of calibrating the data in order to make it more amenable to theoretical interpretation. Rotation involves a series of judgments concerning the meaning the data is presenting. "Properties of the factor solution are not inherent in the data structure; they are arbitrary impositions placed on data to make the solutions unique and definable in some sense" (Kim & Mueller, 1978a, p. 29). Equimax rotation is a specialized technique which acts as compromise between two other accepted factor analysis rotations, the quartermax and the varimax. Since the quartermax solution is often analytically simpler than the varimax and the varimax solution usually provides a better separation of factors, both criteria can be applied against the model with some appropriate weights, a process knows as the equimax rotation (Kim & Mueller, 1978a, p. 36).

Quinn's typology follows a seven (7) point scale, which is usually presented as a continuum from 1-7. Variations on Quinn's scale however, show the same range with different starting points on the real number sequence: from 0-6, or -3 though +3. For purposes of this research, the Competing Values Framework has been standardized to a 0-6 scale to accommodate interpretation of the story analysis to be presented later. Based on his research, Quinn recommends movement of professional and organizational values to a positive zone approximately in the mid-range of the scale (on a 0-6 scale, this would be from 2 to 4). Interpreted in the diagnostic vein, values reflected as either too high or too low on the scale possibly indicate that the organization should address dysfunctionalities or account for variations in organizational demands. Quinn is not suggesting that organizations should have a set value orientation—in fact, quite the opposite—organizations through their management should have an ability to emphasize or de-emphasize certain values contingent upon the current situation and environment. Thus balance among the eight values becomes important in the sense that it places the manager (and consequently an organization) in a position which allows the most flexibility for confronting changing environmental demands.

The competing values model is based upon data analyzed "using a technique called *multidimensional scaling*. This technique is a specialized form of factor analysis. "Multi-dimensional Scaling (MDS) is a class of data analysis techniques for representing data points as points in a multidimensional real-valued space," explains information statisticians Brian Bartell, Garrison W. Cottrell, and Richard K. Belew, "The objects are represented so that inter-point similarities in space match inter-object similarity information provided by the researcher" (1992, p. 1). Results of the multidimensional scaling analyses suggested that organizational theorists and researchers share an implicit theoretical framework, or cognitive map" (1988, p. 47).

The Competing Values Model allows profiling of the managerial and organizational value orientation of the Gore Report in a fashion amenable to comparative and longitudinal analysis. The value constructs of the Competing Values Model are aligned along four continua constituting eight opposing value schema (see Table 3, next page).

Table 3. Value Constructs of the Competing Values Model

1.	**Participation, Openness**	↔	**Productivity Accomplishment**
2.	**Commitment, Morale**	↔	**Direction, Goal Clarity**
3.	**Innovation, Adaptation**	↔	**Stability, Control**
4.	**External Support, Resource Acquisition**	↔	**Information Management**

Source: Quinn, Robert E. (1988). *Beyond Rational Management.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Quinn's model, based upon his more extensive research using multidimensional scaling (a technique related to factor analysis), generates eight factors roughly described as (1) commitment, (2) change, (3) growth, (4) productivity, (5) planning, (6) control, (7) standardization, and (8) participation. These descriptors, however, are merely labels for fairly broad factors covering a wide range of professional and managerial values. The Competing Values Framework is likewise rather broad and can be applied as a diagnostic tool for organizational intervention.

Quinn's main thesis is that at the personal and the organizational level, the guiding values should be in a rough equilibrium taking into account existing system and environmental dynamics. That is, there is an allowance and an expectation that managerial values as applied should be flexible and consistent with demands at hand, both internally and externally.

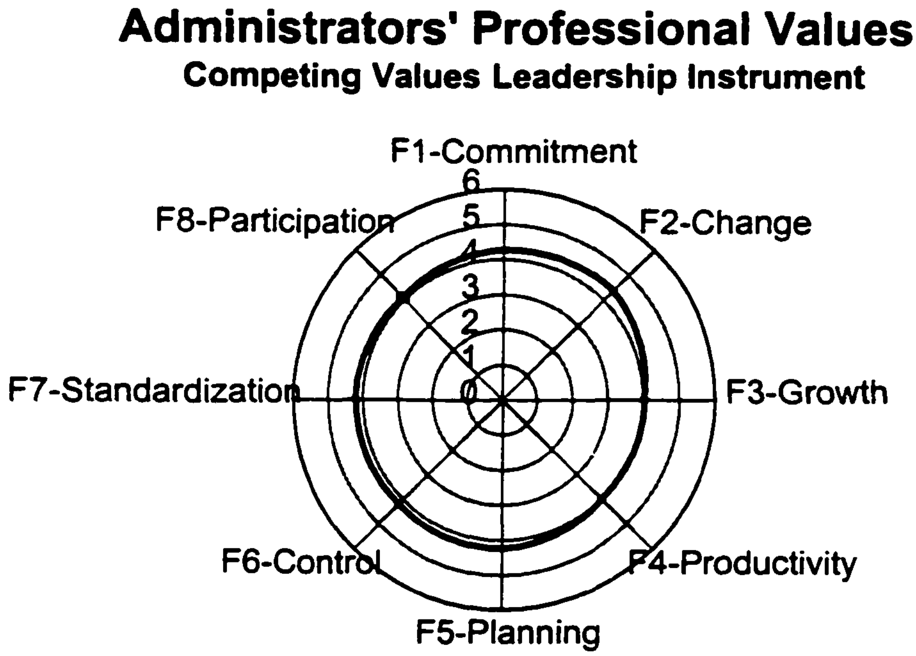
Results of Competing Values Leadership Instrument

Responses to the Competing Values Leadership instrument generated the following mean values based on the scale from 0-6 for each of the factors:

Factor 1 - Commitment	4.27
Factor 2 - Change	4.38
Factor 3 - Growth	4.00
Factor 4 - Productivity	3.99
Factor 5 - Planning/Goal Clarity	4.23
Factor 6 - Control	4.19
Factor 7 - Standardization	4.23
Factor 8 - Participation	4.09

Based on the *overall* results of their responses, this sample of public administrators yields a general mental map well in line with Quinn's expectations for healthy professional values (see Figure 1 next page).

Figure 1.



Note: Based on responses from 41 public administrators to Quinn's Competing Values Leadership Instrument - Extended Version (1988, pp. 175-176).

The public administrators' responses exhibit a value orientation at the upper bounds of the mid-range, but still well within the positive zone as recommended by Quinn. This almost perfectly circular pattern is probably more the result of sampling a large number of public administrators from a variety of organizations than indicative of any particular organization. Individual responses are much more variable than the aggregate suggests. In fact, an organization that would exhibit this arrangement of values would very closely conform to an ideal type as suggested by Quinn. The wide range of individual responses allows for meaningful correlations with the other value sets to be presented later in this dissertation.

The interesting characteristic of the competing values model is how well it illustrates the cognitive dissonance which arises in the minds of public administrators as they pursue conflicting goals. Quinn explains:

> This scheme is called the *competing values framework* because the criteria seem to initially carry a conflictual message. We want our organizations to be adaptable and flexible, but we also want them to be stable and controlled. We want growth, resource acquisition, and external support, but we also want tight information management and formal communication. We want an emphasis on the value of human resources, but we also want an emphasis on planning and goal setting. The model does not suggest that these oppositions cannot mutually exist in a real system. It suggests, rather, that these criteria, values, and assumptions are oppositions in our minds. We tend to think that they are very different from one another, and we sometimes assume them to be mutually exclusive. (1988, pp. 49-50)

This sample appears to be consistent with the results achieved over time by Quinn and his associates. The values are relatively balanced when compared to each other. The only difference worthy of note is the slight inflation of all the value indicators almost one full point above the center. This difference may be a consequence of including only public sector managers in this sample.

Quantitative Content Analysis of the "Gore Report"

The reports issued by the National Performance Review are composed of synthetic constructions of signs. The effort in its totality represents a deliberate manipulation of the symbols salient for political purposes — namely, (1) "creating a government that works better and costs less" and (2) putting the best public face on the effort. The first purpose is explicit; the second purpose is less so, but easily recognized by politically sophisticated observers.

Since the signs presented in the initial report, *From Red Tape to Results*, mostly form a narrative, content analysis is viewed as the logical choice for analytical technique. Content analysis has a long history in political scholarship and remains a common research methodology (see for example, Zaller, 1998). "Content analysis is now entrenched as a set of measurement techniques in nearly every area of political communication research" (Hoffstetter, 1981, p. 555). Content analysis has been a useful tool in political science research because of its ability to nicely balance qualitative and quantitative methodologies. "Thus content analysis methods combine what are usually thought to be antithetical modes of analysis" (Weber, 1990, p. 10). Furthermore, it has been fairly well accepted in logical positivist circles because of its ease of replication and lack of intrusive measures. These are nice features in a research methodology. They are however, not the sole reasons for employing content analysis in this dissertation. Through a semiotic perspective, content analysis is transformed into interpretive exercise. In the semiotic approach, the content analysis performed becomes the vehicle for entering into the overall discussion of values inherent in bureaucratic reform.

The beauty of the content analysis methodology is that the researcher does not contaminate the sample through intervention. At all times, the content analysis is based on empirical evidence amenable to statistical experimentation. Lévi-Strauss explains, "Language is a social phenomenon; and of all social phenomena, it is the one which manifests to the greatest degree two fundamental characteristics which make it susceptible of scientific study" (1963, p. 56). "We thus find in language," Lévi-Strauss continues, "a social phenomenon that manifest both independence of the observer and long statistical runs, which would seem to indicate that language is a phenomenon fully qualified to satisfy the demands of mathematicians" (1963, p. 57). For these reasons, content analysis represents a very acceptable mode of social scientific research.

Systematic Sample of Sentences for Content Analysis

Each sentence in the report can be presumed for purposes of this research to represent the minimum unit which cannot be divided without losing meaning. In the lexicon of semiotics, the sentence represents the "signifier." As semiotician Barthes notes, "Each reading unit — or lexia — corresponds approximately to a sentence, sometimes a little more, or a little less. The division into units can remain arbitrary, purely empirical, and without theoretical implications, if the signifier does not pose a problem in itself" (1985, p. 71). The sentences in the National Performance Review seem appropriate and adequate as value signifiers, especially since a further analysis will be conducted as part of this research at the narrative level of stories.

A copy of the National Performance Review's main report was downloaded in electronic file format via the Internet from the SunSITE gopher archives operated by the Office of Information Technology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. This version of the report serves as the foundational text for the content analysis performed in this dissertation. The first step in this content analysis is to define the boundaries of each sentence to be used as the signifier and unit of analysis. As Weber explains, "Sometimes long, complex sentences must be broken down into shorter thematic units or segments" (1990, p. 22). Delimiters for each analysis unit are identified by (1) periods; (2) exclamation marks; (3) colons and semi-colons for extremely long sentences; and (4) line separations as in paragraph headings. Using this methodology yields 4,652 available units of analysis ("sentences"). From this, a sample comprised of half the available units of analysis (n=2326) was drawn. As O'Sullivan and Rassel explain:

> *Systematic sampling* is a widely used alternative to simple random sampling ... and usually provides adequate results. It requires that one has a list of the population units. To construct a systematic sample one first divides the number of units in the sampling frame (*N*) by the number desired by the sample (*n*). The resulting number is called the *skip interval* (*k*) ... Having determined the skip interval, one then selects at random a starting point in the list and picks every *k*th unit for the sample .... It is important to go through the entire list that constitutes the sampling frame. If the units in the sampling frame are arranged so that cycles or regularly recurring arrangements are possible and if these cycles match the skip interval, the sample will be biased .... The available evidence indicates that periodicity problems are relatively rare in systematic samples ... In fact, if the sampling frame lists all of the population, a systematic sample may more accurately represent the population makeup than a simple random sample (1989, p. 112)

Based on a coin toss, the set of all even-numbered statements was selected to serve as the sample. Alternating statements allows sentences to be viewed in context and to capture a wider range of meaning. Thus the sample is effectively expanded by indirectly taking into account the remaining half of the text.

Coefficient of Imbalance

Using a three point scale for content analysis originally suggested by Lasswell (Lasswell & Leites, 1949), the value constructs are evaluated according to positive, neutral, and negative anchor points. Although the use of a three-point scale reduces the range and loses some of the presumed precision possible for a quantitative content analysis, it also minimizes the possibility for error. Content analytical theorists Irving L. Janis and Raymond Fadner have offered a useful methodological technique (1949) which is based on Laswell's original three-point scale. The following formulas for the coefficient of imbalance will be applied to each of the value dimensions resulting from use of the Competing Values Model:

$$C_f = \frac{f^2 - fu}{rt} \quad f > u$$

$$C_u = \frac{fu - u^2}{rt} \quad f < u$$

The coefficient of imbalance is formulated in such a way that if all the units of analysis are relevant *(r)* and are positive *(f)* it is equal to positive one (+1). Likewise, if all the units of analysis are relevant and negative *(u)* then the coefficient is equal to negative one (-1). As the ratio of positive units to total units *(t)* increases, the positive value of the coefficient increases. As the ratio of negative units to total units increases, the value of the coefficient decreases.

The unique characteristic of the coefficient of imbalance is how it accounts for neutral and non-relevant units of analysis. Neutral units of analysis act as standardized moderators on the strength of direction, pulling the value of the coefficient toward the anchor point centered at zero (0). Assuming purity of direction in the relevant units (i.e. all relevant units point in the same direction with no neutral units), the coefficient simply represents the ratio of directional units to the total number of units. Non-relevant units thus also act as a brake on the strength of direction. If all the units of analysis are neutral or non-relevant then the coefficient is equal to zero (0). "The coefficient, by definition, provides a single figure which shows the relationship between favorable and unfavorable material" which "can be used to make direct comparisons with other media" (Budd, Thorp, & Donohew, 1967, p. 56). In order to conform to Quinn's seven point scale (0-6), results are transformed using the following formula: $X_{new} = X_{old}(3)+3$.

Interrater Reliability of Content Analysis

The author of this report serves as one of the evaluators for the content analysis. The second evaluator is a public administrator currently working in state government who is also a graduate student just completing all requirements for a Master of Public Administration degree. The second evaluator also worked on staff at the National Performance Review while serving as a Vice-Presidential Intern at the White House. Evaluators worked independently using the same coding scheme.

This coding scheme entails the use of a comprehensive list of value indicator key words and concepts (see Appendix I). This list is derived from preliminary categorization of value descriptors contained in the National Performance Review as well as extensive borrowing of terms from Quinn's description of the eight factors. It serves as a benchmark model for the content analysis. "The reader views a sign and checks it against the model," explains semiotician Justin Everett, "The model may be used ... not only to account in some way for variations between individuals' readings, but also anomalies that occur frequently in shared readings as well" (1991, p. 60). The benchmarks in the coding scheme are most useful for identifying that a sentence has a particular value implication. However, the content analyst must still analyze the sentence in context to determine whether the text indicates a negative, neutral, or positive orientation to the value discussed. A few value indicators are listed within the coding scheme as typically representing negative connotations.

The reliability index is produced by having two coders work through the material independently. "To make valid inferences from the text, it is important that the classification procedure be reliable in the sense of being consistent," notes Weber, "Different people should code the same text in the same way" (1990, p. 12). In order to achieve an acceptable level of reliability in this study, value indicator key words as used in the National Performance Review are classified among Quinn's eight factors (see Appendix I).

Interrater reliability is established through the use of the following formula as presented by O'Sullivan and Rassell (1989, p. 87):

$$Reliability = \frac{A}{A+D} \times 100$$

where:
A = number of agreements (first evaluator records same as second evaluator)
D = number of disagreements (first evaluator records different than second evaluator)

Simply put, this formula yields the ratio between the number of agreements and the number of total decision points (agreements plus disagreements). For this study, the reliability index achieved is .88. This represents very strong agreement using the standard of "showing 80 percent agreement or more" (Frey, Botan, Friedman, & Kreps, 1991, p. 121). The agreement is especially high for a content analysis without mutually exclusive categories (i.e. more than one value can be relevant for the same unit of analysis). As William A. Treadwell notes, "Values do not have to be dichotomous, nor stored in mutually exclusive categories" (1995, p. 96).

Factors as Unique and Separate Constructs

If Quinn's factor model is appropriate and the content analysis is operationalized accurately, correlations among the data should be low or non-existent. This would be evidence of a clean separation among the eight factors. Exploratory analysis of the correlations among the eight factors as rated in the content analysis reveal several statistically significant but also relatively weak relationships (see Table 4, next page).

Table 4.

Correlation Matrix of Values in Content Analysis

	Change	Commitment	Control	Growth	Participation	Planning	Product
Change	1.00						
Commitment	.03	1.00					
Control	.01	.02	1.00				
Growth	-.03	**.10** $p < .05$	**.08** $p < .05$	1.00			
Participation	**.12** $p < .05$	**.11** $p < .05$	**.07** $p < .05$	.03	1.00		
Planning	**.09** $p < .05$	.03	**.09** $p < .05$	.01	**.09** $p < .05$	1.00	
Productivity	**.10** $p < .05$	**.13** $p < .05$	**.04** $p < .05$	**.04** $p < .05$	.04	**.09** $p < .05$	1.00
Standardization	**.10** $p < .05$	**.09** $p < .05$	**.19** $p < .05$	**.08** $p < .05$	**.13** $p < .05$	**.08** $p < .05$	**.13** $p < .05$

Note: Based on Content Analysis of the National Performance Review's initial report: *From Red Tape to Results: Creating a Government That Works Better and Costs Less* according to the 8 Factors in the Competing Values Framework developed by Quinn (1988).

The highest correlation is between the value factors, standardization and control. This can probably be best explained by the National Performance Review's preoccupation with "red tape," a concept which by definition has crossover implications for control mechanisms (part of the control value factor) and recordkeeping functions (part of the standardization value factor). Nevertheless, the data exhibit nothing surprising. The lack of substantively significant relationships appears to be supportive of the hypothesized separation of the value factors as defined and operationalized in this research.

Results of Content Analysis

Computation of the coefficient of imbalance for all eight factors is performed by placing the sum of the results for each factor from both raters together and distributing in a matrix according to the categories established by Janis and Fadner (1949) and Quinn's 8-Factor model (1988). Tabulation of the coefficient of imbalance is presented in Table 5 (see next page).

Table 5. Tabulation of the Coefficient of Imbalance*

	F1 Commit-ment	F2 Change	F3 Growth	F4 Produc-tivity	F5 Planning	F6 Control	F7 Standard ization	F8 Partici-pation
Total	4652	4652	4652	4652	4652	4652	4652	4652
Favorable	1107	1968	331	1468	621	350	668	482
Unfavorable	50	32	405	6	8	629	116	28
Neutral	275	151	328	147	125	337	161	65
Non-relevant	3220	2501	3588	3031	3898	3336	3707	4077
Coefficient	.18	.38	-.01	.28	.11	-.03	-.08	-.08
Rescaled	**3.53**	**4.14**	**2.98**	**3.85**	**3.33**	**2.91**	**3.25**	**3.25**

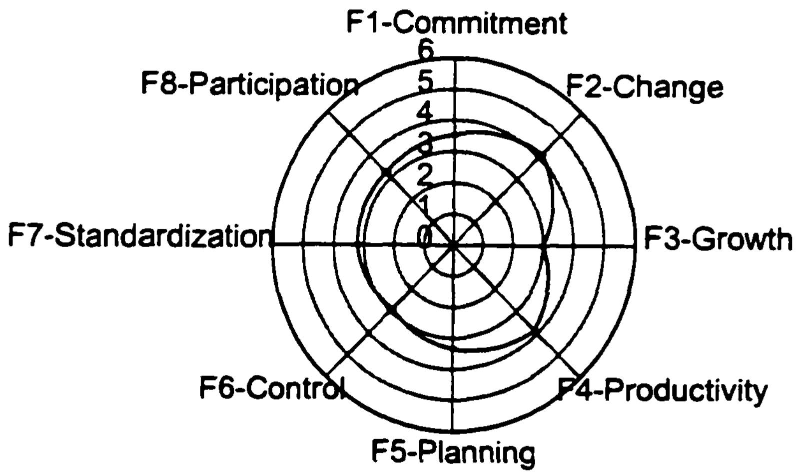
* Based on Content Analysis of the National Performance Review's *From Red Tape to Results: Creating a Government That Works Better & Costs Less* (1993). Rescaling based on the following formula: $X_{new} = X_{old}(3)+3$

In contrast to the aggregate results of the Competing Values Leadership Instrument, these results show a greater degree of variability. A picture of the value orientation of the National Performance Review begins to emerge. Looking at the table above, one can see that Factor 2 associated with the construct of change represents the value of most concern within the National Performance Review because it contains the least amount of non-relevant signifiers (=2501). Similarly, the factors associated with the values of productivity (Factor 4) and commitment (Factor 1) represent high degrees of relevant discussion within the text. All three of these factors are generally favorable in orientation suggesting that these areas are not a matter of great controversy or internal conflict. As evidenced by the parity between the favorable and unfavorable signifiers, the National Performance Review seems to be most "troubled" by the constructs associated with Factor 3 (Growth) and Factor 6 (Control). The value of growth, which is associated with acquisition of resources, may be a source of internal conflict within the National Performance Review because it represents friction between the values of "investing" in select programs while at the same time arguing for a halt in the overall growth of government including a downsizing of the personnel contingent. Surprisingly, given the association of the reinvention movement with the notion of partnerships and teamwork which are associated with Factor 8 (Participation), these values appear to be of little concern, at least within the text of the initial report.

These content analysis results generate the following profile of the National Performance Review's Competing Values Framework (see figure 2, next page).

Figure 2.

Values of National Performance Review



* Based on Content Analysis of the National Performance Review's *From Red Tape to Results: Creating a Government That Works Better & Costs Less* (1993).

The organizational profile above appears relatively balanced among the eight value factors. All of the value constructs center around the mid-range. The National Performance Review emphasized the value constructs labeled as change (Factor 2) and productivity (Factor 4).

In Quinn's model, Factor 4 is associated with the values of economy, effectiveness, and efficiency—the so-called Triple E values which have historically been of concern to administrative reformers (Goodsell, 1992, p. 247; Menzel, 1997, p. 224; Rosenbloom, 1983, 1992; Stillman, 1991; Wamsley & Dudley, 198, p. 339). The fact that the Triple E values are a main concern for the National Performance Review as well is not a surprise. Likewise, the National Performance Review's expression of change as a major value is consistent with the reinvention movement's attempt at wholesale organizational transformation. Change has been a consistent theme not only with this particular effort to reform bureaucracy, but represents a carryover value championed often during the original Clinton-Gore presidential campaign.

Analysis of Stories in the National Performance Review

The public administrators responding to the Competing Values Leadership Instrument were also asked to analyze a selection of stories from the National Performance Review. The sample of the stories in the National Performance Review are all of the stories in the lead report, *From Red Tape to Results*, highlighted as sidebars within the publication layout (i.e. all inset, gray-shaded boxed narratives which are not quotes or lists/n=11):

p. 4	*I'd Rather Have a Lobotomy Than Another Idea*
p. 21	*Catch-22*
p. 27	*"Ash Receivers, Tobacco (Desk Type)"*
p. 38	*How Much Do You Get for a 1983 Toyota?*
p. 54	*The Air Combat Command—Flying High With Incentives & Competition*
p. 56	*The "Government Look"*
p. 57	*Dialing for Dollars: How Competition Cut the Federal Phone Bill*
p. 70	*Roam on the Range*
p. 76	*Measuring Outcomes*
p.110	*The Productivity Bank: Paying Big Interest in Philadelphia*
p.115	*Money for Numbers*

The public administrators are asked to read each story (see Story Analysis Instrument in Appendix II) and then to select relevant value constructs from a group of 24 value descriptors. These descriptors are specifically identified by Quinn (1988, pp. 51-52, 70) and can be classified into one of the Competing Values Framework's eight factors (see Table 6 following page).

Table 6. Classification of Value Descriptors Among 8 Factors

F1 Commitment	Concern	Commitment	Morale
F2 Change	Insight	Innovation	Adaptation
F3 Growth	External Support	Resource Acquisition	Growth
F4 Productivity	Accomplishment	Productivity	Profit/Impact
F5 Planning	Goal Clarification	Direction	Decisiveness
F6 Control	Stability	Control	Continuity
F7 Standardization	Measurement	Information Management	Documentation
F8 Participation	Discussion	Participation	Openness

Source: Quinn, Robert E. (1988). *Beyond Rational Management: Mastering the Paradoxes and Competing Demands of High Performance.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

For example, the value construct *participation* is identified by the three value descriptors of *discussion, participation, and openness.* The respondents are asked (verbally and in the written instructions) to identify only those values which they believe the story *supports* or *promotes.* Each value selected by a respondent represents a score of "1" so that if a respondent selects all three value descriptors for a particular category then the total score for that value category will be three. If no value constructs for a particular category are identified the score for that value construct is zero. The results are then multiplied by two in order to generate scores corresponding to the seven-point scale (0-6) used as a standard for this study—see example below:

RAW:	**0 1 2 3**
NEW:	**0 1 2 3 4 5 6**

This transformation generates equivalent points on an expanded range.

Results of the Story Analysis

Responses to the Story Analysis Instrument generated the following mean values based on the scale from 0-6 for each of the factors:

Factor 1 - Commitment 3.55

Factor 2 - Change 5.20

Factor 3 - Growth 2.80

Factor 4 - Productivity 5.59

Factor 5 - Planning/Goal Clarity 3.17

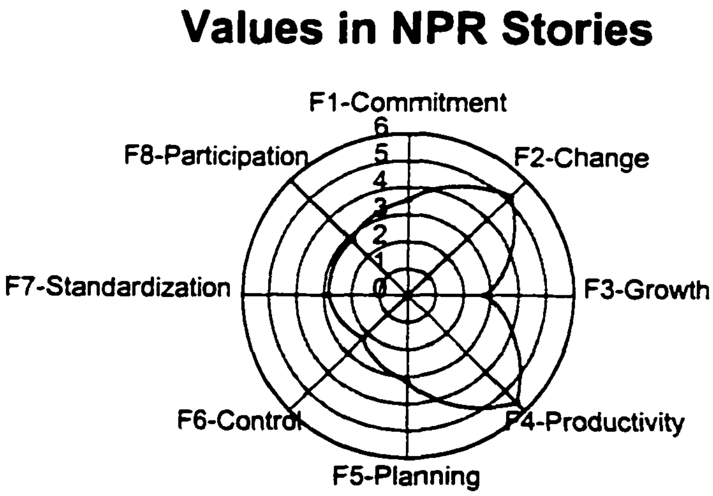
Factor 6 - Control 2.25

Factor 7 - Standardization 2.85

Factor 8 - Participation 2.87

The results yield a "mental map" of what the public administrators perceive to be as the set of professional values espoused by the National Performance Review through its stories (see Figure 3).

Figure 3.



Note: Based on responses from 41 public administrators to Story Analysis Instrument (see Appendix II).

The results of the story analysis as profiled using the competing values framework shows that the National Performance Review, through its stories, appears to be promoting a style of organization that is characterized by a severe imbalance of values. Most notable are the values of change and productivity which are shown to be well outside the positive zone as recommended by Quinn's research (1988). Likewise, the values of growth, control, standardization, and participation are barely in the positive zone. The only moderately placed value variables according to these findings are commitment and planning.

Although more pronounced, the results here complement the results of the content analysis. Pearson correlation between the content analysis and the story analysis is moderately strong at .51 ($p < .05$). This relationship shows that the public administrators are interpreting the stories in the National Performance Review consistent with the values of the report as a whole. In this light, these results suggest that the stories in the National Performance Review *are* effective at communicating the values intended by the authors of the report.

The difference between the results of the content analysis and the story analysis is one of degree not direction. The stories seem to be exaggerating the overall value orientation of the report. At first glance, this magnification might be explained by the professional values already held by the public administrators responding to the story analysis. However, the results do not support this explanation. The results of the Competing Values Leadership Instrument do not have a statistically significant relationship with either the results of the content analysis or the results of the story analysis. Correlations for both are near zero. A partial correlation confirms that the results of the Competing Values Leadership instrument explains little more than .01 of the variance of the correlation between the results of the content analysis and the results of the story analysis.

The research literature on storytelling might suggest a different view, however.

Since stories are known to be narrative vehicles which accentuate reality, the results may simply be suggesting that the authors of the National Performance Review, perhaps out of necessity and design, are overstating their case through stories. In order to begin building momentum for moving the bureaucracy in the direction of desired reform, stories are used as a means to amplify and clarify the reinvention message. Negative consequences of this strategy might occur if the values the stories promote are taken too literally. However, such a widespread reaction is unlikely given the incrementalist nature of American bureaucracy. Powerful stories that transmit clear values may be a requisite for motivating significant, real change in the public sector.

Chapter 6.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the results of this research, the stories in the National Performance Review *are* effective at communicating the values intended by the authors of the report. Even though the public administrators in this sample do not share the same values as do the authors of the National Performance Review, these public administrators interpreted the stories consistent with the overall value orientation of the Gore Report. If, as has been suggested, that stories are important vehicles for communicating values and information within the public administration community (Bailey, 1992; Behn, 1992; Bolman & Deal, 1991; Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996; Gardner, 1995; Hummel, 1991; McCurdy, 1995; Mitroff & Kilmann, 1975; Schmidt, 1993; White, 1992; Yarwood, 1995), the stories in the National Performance Review can be considered successful in communicating the values the authors believed so important for bureaucratic reform.

Within the wisdom of the new political proverb, "Only Nixon can go to China," this Democratic administration has used the National Performance Review as a platform to launch the most effective effort in American history for reducing the overall federal workforce. "It's not just a post-Cold War defense reduction; every department except Justice has become smaller," reports Al Gore, "The federal government workforce is now the smallest it has been in more than 30 years, going all the way back to the Kennedy Administration" (National Performance Review, 1996, p. 1; see also the breakdown of U.S. Office of Personnel Management statistics in Appendix III). These statistics have held steady on a downward decline. According to the most recent statistics available, the federal civilian workforce (excluding the U.S. postal system) has exhibited a total decline of 15.4% between January 1993 and April 1998 (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 1998). This shrinkage appears to be widespread with all but four departments (Justice, Commerce, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Panama Canal Commission) reporting fewer FTEs (full-time equivalents) between January 1993 and April 1998 (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 1998). What's even more impressive, is that these statistics are based on raw headcounts of full-time equivalent employees and not adjusted for increases in the nation's population. The National Performance Review, ironically, may have served as one of the most forceful weapons against the size of the federal bureaucracy by using the symbols of worker participation as political cover for trimming the overall federal civilian workforce (see Figure 4 next page).

Figure 4.

Source: U.S. Office of Personnel Management. (1998). *The Fact Book: Federal Civilian Work-force Statistics 1997 Edition*—Based on *SF 113-A Monthly Report of Federal Civilian Employment* (excludes U.S. postal system).

However, this downsizing "has not turned out as Gore planned. Although hundreds of thousands of jobs have been cut, there has been no dramatic decrease in the government's management layers. In fact, it appears the bureaucracy is becoming top heavy" (Barr, 1998, March 3, p. A15). Of course, this phenomenon might also be a condition of the times, as the most indispensable employees in the modern federal government are those with technical expertise who tend to occupy the higher civil service grades.

Unlike previous reform efforts, the National Performance Review does not advocate centralization of control under the president. In fact, based on the story analysis, the National Performance Review ranks the control factor as the least supported value. Associated with this factor construct are the values of command and control, accountability, and anti-corruption—the values which first motivated the progressive movement and subsequent bureaucratic reform efforts. These are the values which have historically made such an impact on bureaucratic structures. In contrast, the National Performance Review has been promoting the values of decentralization, flexibility, experimentation, and innovation—all of the latter of these values of which are associated with the change factor. This reflects an implicit systems theory approach which has been updated conceptually to address the reality of the modern organization's chaotic existence. With its overt downplaying of the control factor, the National Performance Review seems to be leaning heavily toward an open systems model. This approach is compatible with the "Thriving on Chaos" managerial paradigm (see Peters, 1987).

However, specific discussion of the open systems model in terms of its key characteristics such as teamwork, openness, and employee participation is very moderate in terms of the Story Analysis and Content Analysis results. The high number of non-relevant signifiers in the results of the content analysis for the openness factor (Factor 8-Participation, see Table 4 on previous page) suggest that the openness values are just *assumed*. Apparently, the National Performance Review has "bought in" to the open systems model and in so doing, does not even appear to try to convince its intended audience about the merits of the open systems design. In the universe of the National Performance Review, a turbulent political and administrative environment is a "given."

Has the National Performance Review succeeded in helping to resolve the tension of bureaucracy within a democracy? Even though the National Performance Review is recommending a value orientation fairly consistent (based on the content analysis) with what Quinn has recommended through his research (1988) for healthy organizational design, such an orientation may not in fact be consistent with democratic theory. After all, the framers were more concerned with the potential abuse of power than they were with administrative efficiency. All administrative reform initiatives have wrestled with this issue, and almost all of these have come down on the side of administrative efficiency. Usually the recommendations have been characterized as pushing for direct hierarchical control by the chief executive officer—the president of the United States. The bureaucracy may have been born in a Madisonian womb, but its historical development has tended more toward Hamilton's argument for a strong executive. The National Performance Review appears to be a significant exception to this trend. Instead of trying to move power to the president, the National Performance Review attempts to move power to the frontline federal employee. The heart of the question at hand is how to loosen control—unleashing the power that organizational behavior theory states resides in the knowledge and experience of the line worker—and yet still retain some form of accountability to the political process and to legal restraints. John Kamensky, the Deputy Director of the NPR explains:

> In the information age, there's a need to come up with new ways of handling accountability. This isn't something we have figured out yet ... the shift in technology is somehow driving the way our bureaucracies and large organizations change and adapt. What are the new rules of the game? One of these things is empowering employees, but you still have to ensure that there's tight central control. Do you allow prisons to use prisoners to make computer chips to sell to Britain? Probably not. The challenge is to clearly define outcomes, and hold to them tightly. How do you create shared accountability for outcomes? Fifty different agencies are in various ways responsible for drug control. You can have coordination, but how do you create shared accountability for the outcomes? In many cases, no one agency can do it. How you create that accountability is really quite puzzling. (personal communication, July 13, 1998)

The National Performance review has attempted to solve this dilemma by using the private sector as a model. Kamensky, for example, points to the example of Dee W. Hock as a model for future emulation. Chaos theorist M. Mitchell Waldrop reports on Hock's vision:

> Unlike most visionaries—or management consultants—Hock has put his ideas into practice. More than 25 years ago he oversaw the creation of a business that was organized according to the same principles of distributed power, diversity, and ingenuity that he advocates today. And that business has prospered—to put it mildly. Since 1970 it has grown by something like 10,000%. It continues to expand at roughly 20% per year. It now operates in some 200 countries worldwide. It serves roughly half a billion clients.

And this year, its annual sales volume is expected to pass $1 trillion.

This is one of Dee Hock's favorite tricks to play on an audience. "How many of you recognize this?" he asks, holding out his own Visa card. Every hand in the room goes up.

"Now," Hock says, "how many of you can tell me who owns it, where it's headquartered, how it's governed, or where to buy shares?"

Confused silence. No one has the slightest idea., because no one has ever thought about it. And that, says Hock, is exactly how it ought to be.

"The better an organization is, the less obvious it is," he says. "In Visa, we tried to create an invisible organization and keep it that way. It's the results, not the structure or management that should be apparent." Today the Visa organization that Hock founded is not only performing brilliantly, it is also almost mythic, one of only two examples that experts regularly cite to illustrate how the dynamic principles of chaos theory can be applied to business. (1996, p. 75).

How did Hock do it? Waldrop describes the history of Hock's journey in the chaotic world of the finance industry:

It all started back in the late 1960s, when the credit card industry was on the brink of disaster .... It was the chance Hock had been waiting for. Even then, he was a man who thought Big Thoughts ... he stubbornly refused to accept orthodox ideas; ... he'd already walked away from fast-track jobs at three separate financial companies, each time raging that the hierarchical, rule-following, control-everything organizations were stifling creativity and initiative at the grass roots—and in the process, making the company too rigid to respond to new challenges and opportunities .... He also had a deep conviction that if he ever got to create an organization, things would be different. He would try to conceive it based on biological concepts and metaphors. Now he had that chance. In June 1970, after nearly two years of brainstorming, planning, arguing, and consensus-building, control of the BankAmericard system passed to a new, independent entity called National BankAmericard, Inc. (later renamed Visa International). And its CEO was one Dee W. Hock.

The new organization was indeed different—a nonstock, for-profit membership corporation with ownership in the form of nontransferable rights of participation. Hock designed the organization according to his philosophy: highly decentralized and highly collaborative. Authority, initiative, decision making, wealth—everything possible is pushed out to the periphery of the organization, to the members. This design resulted from the need to reconcile a fundamental tension. On the one hand, the member financial institutions

> are fierce competitors: they—not Visa—issue the cards, which means they are constantly going after each other's customers. On the other hand, the members also have to cooperate with each other for the system to work, participating merchants must be able to take any Visa card issued by any bank, anywhere. That means that the banks abide by certain standards on issues such as card layout. Even more important, they participate in a common clearinghouse operation, the system that reconciles all the accounts and makes sure merchants get paid for each purchase, the transactions are cleared between banks, and customers get billed .... Visa has been called "a corporation whose product is coordination." Hock calls it "an enabling organization." ... "Visa has elements of Jeffersonian democracy, it has elements of the free market, of government franchising—almost every kind of organization you can think about" he says. "But it's none of them. Like the body, the brain, and the biosphere, it's largely self organizing." It also works. (1996, p. 75)

Kamensky has admitted that the National Performance Review has not found the answer to resolving the problem of accountability, but he believes the answer lies somewhere in the kinds of organizations, like Visa, which focus on outcomes and work through highly decentralized forms. Kamensky believes that the proper function of the political executive is to hold bureaucratic organizations accountable according to how specified outcomes are met. To that end, the National Partnership for Reinventing Government is now working on decentralization—both for itself and the agencies it serves. "Most initiatives have emphasized presidential control over budget, and standardization," acknowledges Kamensky, "We have now learned that decentralizing is a much stronger way of getting things done. You need to allow variation rather than standardization" (personal communication, July 13, 1998).

Early on, the National Performance Review seemed to exploit myths commonly held about bureaucracy. "Cutting red tape" is probably the premiere example, but certainly not the only one. Drawing upon stereotypes about government helped the National Performance Review make a call to action throughout the federal government. But over a period of time stretching across a full presidential term and then some, the National Performance Review's focus changed subtly and consistently and then began to build momentum. The Gore commission and the executive administration it serves lives in a political world, and it needs to defend its track record and highlight its successes. As a result, the stories begin to take on a different tone. First, the stories were mostly about problems. Now, the stories are mostly about solutions. The typical kind of story found in the latest National Performance Review efforts, is one of low expectations on the part of citizens being exceeded by the quick responsiveness and customer service of administrative agencies and the public servants who staff them. It represents a distinct and major change in the overall orientation of the National Performance Review. As Kamensky has revealed, the newest stories have expanded their literary scope. Instead of focusing on small examples of success, the newest stories are about entire agencies being transformed (Kamensky, personal communication, July 13, 1998). The focus on outcomes tends to confirm this dissertation's findings concerning the productivity factor.

The main values that the National Performance Review has promoted include change, efficiency effectiveness, economy, flexibility, change, political neutrality, productivity, and quality. It strives to work through an apolitical perspective and it's staffed by people who are mostly career bureaucrats. The work is accomplished and the recommendations are made with great sensibilities toward business and market mechanisms. As such, the National Performance Review fits into the managerial orientation of bureaucratic theory suggested by David H. Rosenbloom (1983). The process reengineering base of the reinvention movement has dual ties to systems theory as well as the old scientific management's preoccupation with efficiency in work processes. It's a refined emphasis on efficient processes with a healthy dose of human relations and a public relations gloss. The stories in the National Performance Review serve as a form of what Naisbitt calls "high-touch"; that is, it shows bureaucracy with a human face—real people working out real solutions to real problems.

The National Performance Review has undertaken a scattergun approach to administrative reform which has been at least somewhat cohesive due to the relatively accommodating reinvention label. Reinvention is a "big tent." The main criticism leveled at the National Performance Review has been its redefinition of the citizen as customer. This phraseology of course has been borrowed from TQM principles, and one can make a very strong case that the customer orientation cheapens the status of the citizenry. This is one more manifestation of the ever-present dilemma concerning the role of administration in a world of democratic politics. On the other hand, if the

National Performance Review has attempted to make political control less relevant, it has done so through an effort to provide better service to the citizens, even if they are referred to as "customers." The attempt is to provide better services at the point of contact. The National Performance Review attempts to do so by cutting out the "middle-man," in this case the politician. If the ideals of the reinvention movement are realized, the political representatives will no longer have to play the role of bureaucratic ombudsmen. The role of the professional legislator as liaison between constituents and the bureaucracy was never envisioned by the Constitutional Framers either.

The National Performance Review, although highly identified with Al Gore, has been fairly bipartisan in its approach. The plan for downsizing the number of federal civilian employees as well as recommendations for privatization and contracting out were acceptable trade-offs for Republican support for other elements of the reinvention plan. With the enactment of the Government Performance and Results Act, the National Performance Review has effectively been institutionalized. "Our goal now is to not have NPR be a separate free standing initiative, but rather a way of doing business," remarks Kamensky about the future of this reform effort, "The approach now is to embed this thing, and institutionalize it. I've looked at other countries, when they change their leadership, that's the end. The goal here is to bury this down in the bureaucracy so it can be self-sustaining" (personal communication, July 13, 1998). According to Kamensky, many of the strategies promoted by the National Performance Review such as the reinvention laboratories, the Hammer Awards, and the customer service standards, have been established in order "to really penetrate down deep into the bureaucracy" (personal communication, July 13, 1998). The aspirations of the National Performance Review is to help the reinvention principles survive the inevitable change in administration. "It's been coming a long way, but I can't say we've made it," states Kamensky, "Change experts say that if you have 30% of an organization thinking a new way, it's hard to change course" (personal communication, July 13, 1998). The reinvention evangelization continues and is evolving. At the very least it can be said that the National Performance Review does take bureaucracy seriously.

Suggestions for Further Research

A suggestion for further research in this area would be to conduct a survey of public administrators in the federal government to see their perspectives on the value orientation (based on Quinn's typology) of the federal bureaucracy itself. This could be compared to the story analysis of the National Performance Review to determine if the lead report is itself out of balance concerning its values, or as theorized in this dissertation, it is simply indicative of a strong attempt to pull an overly bureaucratized organization toward a more entrepreneurial direction.

The National Performance Review is much more than one report. In fact it is presented in a variety of media and its work now spans several years. With the coding scheme for the content analysis now well-developed, a longitudinal analysis should also be conducted to see if the values change over time. For example, the newest NPR stories would be major candidates for such a comparison. Changes in the emphasis of values would be very revealing. If the National Performance Review were to somehow survive a change of administration, unlike most previous reform efforts, any change in the value orientation would also be enlightening.

Comparisons with other similar reform efforts—past, present, and future—should be analyzed as well. Likely candidates include the state-centered Winter Commission (National Commission on the State and Local Public Service, 1993) and the Republican *Contract With America* (Gillespie & Schellhas, 1994).

Another important question is whether the National Performance Review (and its successor, the National Partnership for Reinventing Government) will ultimately benefit a future presidential candidate, namely Al Gore, in a successful run for the top job at the White House. Only time can tell, and there certainly would be many contaminating variables — but the question remains open.

Conclusion

Much of the public administration literature has been directed toward the question of how to make academic research usable for practitioners (Ballard & James, 1983; Hummel, 1995; Meier & Keiser, 1996). This dissertation offers one answer—for knowledge to enter the cognitive processes of practitioners and for that knowledge to be retained pending application, research findings are best framed by relevant stories.

As citizens, we live in a political world bounded by symbolism. If we are to be true agents for defending democratic values, recognition of these symbols is an important responsibility. That responsibility hangs even heavier on public administration and political science scholars whose most important role is the generation of knowledge for the betterment of society. As Arnold states, "The question is whether the science of government, by understanding the function of symbols and ideals, can make [people] as enthusiastic about sensible things as they have been in the past about mad and destructive enterprises" (1962, p. 252). The National Performance Review has served an historic role in the annals of public administration history. Its skillful and successful use of a vast variety of media outlets, both old and new, is likely to inspire subsequent reform efforts for a variety of policy issues across all government levels. The National Performance Review may eventually be viewed as the prototype for a new form of political activity which self-consciously taps into stories and other symbolic forms for purposes of influencing value systems. One of Al Gore's original goals for the National Performance Review was for it not to be a report sitting on a shelf. As Bob Stone states, "Sitting on a shelf is so far from what's happening—we've moved way beyond that" (personal communication, July 14, 1998). And the National Performance Review obviously has moved beyond sitting on a shelf—it is an active reform initiative which has exploited modern multimedia technologies to foster an interactive change process. Semiotics should prove to be an extremely useful research method in the political, administrative, and social environments in which signs and symbols play such crucial roles—especially when these signs and symbols are distributed at accelerated rates through the use of new technologies.

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Appendix I

Content Analysis Coding Scheme:
Examples of Value Indicator Key Words and Concepts

Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Sensitivity Concern Human Systems Morale **Commitment**	Creativity Insight Innovation Adaptation **Change**	Assets Compensation Resource Acquisition External Support **Growth**	Achievement Accomplishment Profit Impact **Productivity**
Acceptance	Action (Taken or to be taken)	Advantage	Accuracy
Americans	Adjust	Accumulate	Better
Autonomy	Alter	Augmentation	Best
Care	Amend	Capital	Bottom-line
Children	Challenge	Enlargement	Competition (Market-
Citizens	Chaos	Excise	oriented)
Community	Choice	Expansion	Correction
Consideration	Clever	Extension	Cost-cutting
Counseling	Convert	Fee	Economy
Culture	Creative	Finances	Efficiency
Customer	Demonstration Project	Funds	Effort
Delegate	Differentiation	Gain	Entrepreneurial
Diversity	Envision	Increase	Excellence
Empathy	Experimentation	Instrumental	Exhaustion
Empower	Flexibility	Invent	Expedite
Enlighten	Forming	Invest	Faster
Enrichment	Fresh	Money	Improvement
Entitlement	Ideas	Opportunism	Market
Equity	Imagination	Pay	Maximize
Fairness	Initiative	Procurement	Outcomes
Faith	Inspiration	Purchase	Output
Family	Intuition	Recognition	Performance
Freedom	Liberate	Reimbursement	Problem-solving
Guidance	Liberal (Progressive)	Revenue	Progress
Health	Modern	Rewards	Results
Human Development	Modify	Size	Quality
Human Resources	New	Strengthen	Savings
Independence	Opportunity	Supplies	Streamline
Informal	Optimism	Supply	Success
Individualism	Originality	Tariff	Task
Indulgent	Overhaul	Taxes	Timeliness
Lax	Pioneering	Wealth	Work
Learning	Pilot-test		
Lenient	Problem-existence		
Liberal (social concern)	Recommend		
Justice	Reform		
Mentor	Re-engineer		
Moral Support	Refuse	Negative Indicators (-)	Negative Indicators (-)
Neighborhood	Reject	Attrition	Failure
People	Reinvent	Clear away	Waste
Permissiveness	Reorganize	Contracting out	Mistakes
Personnel	Responsiveness	Curtail	
Protection	Revise	Cut	
Public	Revolutionize	Decrease	
Safety	Risk	Diminish	
Staff	Solution	Eliminate	
Taxpayers	Shift	Reduce	
Tolerance	Stimulation	Simplify	
Training	Transition	(Streamline)	
Trust	Transformation	Strip away	
User-Friendly	Variety	Trim	

Content Analysis Coding Scheme: Examples of Value Indicator Key Words and Concepts

Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7	Factor 8
Purpose Direction Decisiveness Planning **Goal Clarity**	Coordination Stability Tradition Continuity **Control**	Measurement Recordkeeping Documentation Information Mgmt. **Standardization**	Discussion Teamwork Openness Cohesion **Participation**
Agenda	Accountability	(Analysis)	Affiliation
Analysis	Administer	Assessment	Agreement
Anticipate	Audit	Benchmark	Alliance
Appropriations	Authority	Calculate	Associate
Bearing	Boundaries	Calibrate	Availability
Blueprint	Bureaucracy	Certify	Belonging
Budget	Cautious	Classify	Bottom-up
Chart (verb)	Centralization (-	Communication	Coalition
Clarification	decentralize)	Computerization	Collaborate
Concentrate (focus)	Compel	Consistency	Conspire
Course	Conservative	Count	Consulted with
Design	Consolidation	Criteria	Cooperate
Development	Contract	Criterion	Cross-agency
Directive	Custom	Data	Debate
Examine	Defragment	Estimate	Deliberation
Focus	Dependable	Evaluation	Display
Forecast	Dictate	Evidence	Distribute
Formal	Direct	Expert	Engage
Future	Directive	Facts	Feeback
Heading	Disallow	File	Input
Imperative	Discipline	Gauge	Involvement
Intention	Enforce	Inquiry	Interaction
Leadership	Ensure	Indicators	Interagency
Mandate	First Step	Investigate	Join
Mission	Force	License	Labor-Mgmt (Cooperation)
Objective	Govern	Norm	League
Outline	Guarantee	Numbers	Negotiations
Perspective	Habit	Objectivity	Partnership
Principles	Headquarters	Paperwork	Release
Prioritize	Integrate	Prove	Reveal
Policy analysis	Law	Quantitative	Share
Projection	Manage	Rank	Survey
(Propose)	Monopoly	Rate	Talked with
Steps	Obstacles	Red tape	Task Force
Strategy	Order	Re-examine	Voice
Structure	Organize	Report	
Target	Oversight	Research	
Toward	Perpetuate	Review	
Unfolds	Police/Policing	Science	
Vision	Predictability	Scientific Method	
	Procedures	Seamless	Negative Indicators (-)
	Regulation (Red tape) Rules	Specifications	Antagonistic
	Restrictions	Standards	Competition
	Reliable	Statistics	Conflict
	Review	Study	Controversy
	Rigid	Survey	Defiant
	Routine	Synchronize	Friction
	Security	Technology	Labor Managment (Conflict)
	Status quo	Threshold	Resistance
	Steer	Uniform (adjective)	Rivalry
	Technology	Write	Strife

Appendix II

The University of Oklahoma

PROGRAMS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Dear Public Administrator:

Thank you in advance for participating in this research project! Your participation in this research project is strictly voluntary. However, your responses to this survey will aid in the understanding of how values are communicated within the public administration community.

This survey is part of a research project conducted under the auspices of the University of Oklahoma at the Norman Campus. This research project is a dissertation called, *Expressing Political and Administrative Values Through Stories: A Semiotic Analysis of the National Performance Review*. The principal investigator is Brett S. Sharp, doctoral candidate with the Department of Political Science. He can be reached at 405/297-2862 or at the e-mail address: brett.sharp@ci.okc.ok.us.

All respondents to this survey shall remain anonymous. Data derived from the tabulation of this survey will be merged with data from other returned questionnaires.

This survey is in two parts and should take about a half-hour to complete altogether.

Part 1 of this survey is a short questionnaire asking about your management work style. This questionnaire is the Competing Values Leadership Instrument - Extended Version by Robert E. Quinn (1988, pp. 174-177).

Part 2 is a more extensive questionnaire asking for your opinion about the *value* orientation of several stories. These stories are related to public administration and were first presented by the presidentially-sponsored blue ribbon commission, the National Performance Review.

Please indicate below the level of government or area of public administration in which you would most like your responses to be identified (check only one):

❑ Federal ❑ State ❑ Local ❑ Education ❑ Not-for-profit

What is your job title? (optional): ____

Please return the completed survey to:

Brett S. Sharp
University of Oklahoma
Department of Political Science
455 West Lindsey Street, Room 205
Norman, OK 73019-0535

Department of Political Science. 455 West Lindsey Street, Room 305, Norman, Oklahoma 73019-2003 PHONE: (405) 325-6432 FAX: (405) 325-3733

Part 2: Story Analysis Instrument

Instructions:

Your valuable time in completing this questionnaire is greatly appreciated!

On the following pages are eleven stories excerpted from the National Performance Review's initial report, *From Red Tape to Results: Creating a Government That Works Better and Costs Less.* As a member of the public administration community, please read each story and critically evaluate the *values* that you believe each story *promotes.*

Following each story on the next several pages is a small table of values. Look at each table and refer to its corresponding story. Then, identify those values which you believe the story supports. Remember, just because a story concerns a particular value, does *not* mean it necessarily supports that value. Your responses should be based on your own personal interpretation — *there are no right or wrong answers.*

For example, someone responding to the values contained in the familiar fable of the race between the tortoise and the hare might identify the following values:

Story: "The Tortoise and the Hare"

Concern		**Commitment**	✔	**Morale**	
Insight	✔	**Innovation**		**Adaptation**	✔
External Support		**Resource Acquisition**		**Growth**	
Accomplishment	✔	**Productivity**	✔	**Profit/Impact**	
Goal Clarification	✔	**Direction**	✔	**Decisiveness**	
Stability	✔	**Control**	✔	**Continuity**	✔
Measurement		**Information Management**		**Documentation**	
Discussion		**Participation**		**Openness**	

Of course, this is an example only. Someone else reading the same fable may have a different interpretation and would select a different set of values that they believe are being promoted.

Once again, thank you for your time and effort in helping to complete this project!

Story 1

During Vice President Gore's town hall meeting with employees of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the following exchange took place:

Participant:

We had an article in our newsletter several months ago that said — the lead story was "I'd rather have a lobotomy than have another idea." And that was reflecting the problem of our Ideas Program here in HUD.

Many of the employees have wonderful ideas about how to save money and so on, but the way it works is that it has to be approved by the supervisor and the supervisor's supervisor and the supervisor's supervisor's supervisor before it ever gets to the Ideas Program ...

Many of the supervisors feel threatened because they didn't think of this idea, and this money is wasted in their office, and they didn't believe or didn't know it was happening and didn't catch it. So they are threatened and feel that it will make them look bad if they recognize the idea.

Vice President Gore:

So they strangle that idea in the crib, don't they?

Participant:

And then they strangle the person that had the idea.

Story 1: Please place a checkmark beside each value listed below that you believe the above story *promotes*.

Concern	**Commitment**	**Morale**
Insight	**Innovation**	**Adaptation**
External Support	**Resource Acquisition**	**Growth**
Accomplishment	**Productivity**	**Profit/Impact**
Goal Clarification	**Direction**	**Decisiveness**
Stability	**Control**	**Continuity**
Measurement	**Information Management**	**Documentation**
Discussion	**Participation**	**Openness**

Story 2

Catch-22

Our federal personnel system ought to place a value on experience. That's not always the case. Consider the story of Rosalie Tapia. Ten years ago, fresh from high school, she joined the Army and was assigned to Germany as a clerk. She served out her enlistment with an excellent record, landed a job in Germany as a civilian secretary for the Army, and worked her way up to assistant to the division chief. When the Cold War ended, Tapia wanted to return to the U.S. and transfer to a government job here. Unfortunately, one of the dictates contained in the government's 10,000 pages of personnel rules says that an employee hired as a civil servant overseas is not considered a government employee once on home soil. Any smart employer would prefer to hire an experienced worker with an excellent service record over an unknown. But our government's policy doesn't make it easy. Ironically, Tapia landed a job with a government contractor, making more money — and probably costing taxpayers more — than a job in the bureaucracy would have paid.

Story 2: Please place a checkmark beside each value listed below that you believe the above story *promotes*.

Concern	**Commitment**	**Morale**
Insight	**Innovation**	**Adaptation**
External Support	**Resource Acquisition**	**Growth**
Accomplishment	**Productivity**	**Profit/Impact**
Goal Clarification	**Direction**	**Decisiveness**
Stability	**Control**	**Continuity**
Measurement	**Information Management**	**Documentation**
Discussion	**Participation**	**Openness**

Story 3

"Ash receivers, tobacco (desk type)..."

Our federal procurement system leaves little to chance.

When the General Services Administration wanted to buy ashtrays, it has some very specific ideas how those ashtrays—better known to GSA as "ash receivers, tobacco (desk type)," should be constructed.

In March 1993, the GSA outlined, in nine full pages of specifications and drawings, the precise dimensions, color, polish and markings required for simple glass ashtrays that would pass U.S. government standards.

A Type I, glass, square, 41/2 inch (114.3 mm) ash receiver must include several features: "A minimum of four cigarette rests, spaced equidistant around the periphery and aimed at the center of the receiver, molded into the top. The cigarette rests shall be sloped toward the center of the ash receiver. The rests shall be parallel to the outside top edge of the receiver or in each corner, at the manufacturer's option. All surfaces shall be smooth."

Government ashtrays must be sturdy too. To guard against the purchase of defective ash receivers, the GSA required that all ashtrays be tested. "The test shall be made by placing the specimen on its base upon a solid support (a 1 3/4 inch, 44.5mm maple plank), placing a steel center punch (point ground to a 60-degree included angle) in contact with the center of the inside surface of the bottom and striking with a hammer in successive blows of increasing severity until breakage occurs."

Then, according to paragraph 4.5.2., "The specimen should break into a small number of irregular shaped pieces not greater in number than 35, and it must not dice." What does "dice" mean? The paragraph goes on to explain: "Any piece 1/4 inch (6.4 mm) or more on any three of its adjacent edges (excluding the thickness dimension) shall be included in the number counted. Smaller fragments shall not be counted."

Regulation AA-A-710E, (superseding Regulation AA-A-710D)

Story 3: Please place a checkmark beside each value listed below that you believe the above story *promotes*.

Concern	**Commitment**	**Morale**
Insight	**Innovation**	**Adaptation**
External Support	**Resource Acquisition**	**Growth**
Accomplishment	**Productivity**	**Profit/Impact**
Goal Clarification	**Direction**	**Decisiveness**
Stability	**Control**	**Continuity**
Measurement	**Information Management**	**Documentation**
Discussion	**Participation**	**Openness**

Story 4

How Much Do You Get for a 1983 Toyota?

What does the price of a used car have to do with the federal government's family policies?

More than it should. Caseworkers employed by state and local government to work with poor families are supposed to help those families become self-sufficient. Their job is to understand how federal programs work. But as it turns out, those caseworkers also have to know something about used cars. Used cars? That's right. Consider this example, recounted to Vice President Gore at a July 1993 Progressive Foundation conference on family policy in Nashville, Tennessee:

Agencies administering any of the federal government's programs for the poor must verify many details about people's lives. For instance, they must verify that a family receiving funds under Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) does not own a car worth more than $1,500 in equity value. To give a poor family food stamps, it must verify that the family doesn't own a car worth more than $4,500 in market value. Medicaid specifies a range that it allows for the value of a recipient's car, depending on the recipient's Medicaid category. But under food stamp rules, the car is exempt if it is used for work or training or transporting a disabled person. And under AFDC, there is no exemption for the car under any circumstances.

Recounting that story to a meeting of the nation's governors, the vice president asked this simple question: "Why can't we talk about the same car in all three programs?"

Story 4: Please place a checkmark beside each value listed below that you believe the above story *promotes*.

Concern	**Commitment**	**Morale**
Insight	**Innovation**	**Adaptation**
External Support	**Resource Acquisition**	**Growth**
Accomplishment	**Productivity**	**Profit/Impact**
Goal Clarification	**Direction**	**Decisiveness**
Stability	**Control**	**Continuity**
Measurement	**Information Management**	**Documentation**
Discussion	**Participation**	**Openness**

Story 5

The Air Combat Command —Flying High with Incentives and Competition

The military: the most conservative, hierarchical and traditional branch of the government and the bureaucracy least likely to behave like a cutting-edge private company, right? Wrong.

One of Washington's most promising reinvention stories comes from the Air Combat Command. With 175,000 employees at 45 bases across the country, the ACC owns and operates all of the Air Force's combat aircraft. Says its commander, General John Michael Loh, "We manage big, but we operate small."

How? The ACC adopted overall performance standards, called quality performance measures. Each ACC unit decides for itself how to meet them. General Loh then provides lots of incentives and a healthy dose of competition.

The most powerful incentive is the chance to do creative work, General Loh told the National Performance Review's Reinventing Government Summit in Philadelphia. For instance, the Air Combat Command allows maintenance workers to fix parts that otherwise would have been discarded or returned to the depot for repair "under the thesis that our people aren't smart enough to repair parts at the local level." The results have been astonishing. Young mechanics are taking parts from B-1s, F-15s, and F-16s — some of which cost $30,000 to $40,000 — and fixing them for as little as $10. The savings are expected to reach $100 million this year. ACC managers have an incentive, too: Because they control their own operating budgets, these savings accrue to their units.

General Loh instilled competition by using benchmarking, which measures performance against the ACC standard and shows commanders exactly how their units compare to others. The ACC also compares its air wings to similar units in the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps; units in other Air forces; and even the private sector. Before competition, the average F-16 refueling took 45 minutes. With competition, teams cut that time to 36 minutes, then 28.

The competition is against a standard, not a fellow ACC unit. "If you meet the standard, you win," says General Loh. "There aren't 50 percent winners and 50 percent losers. We keep the improvement up by just doing that — by just measuring. If it doesn't get measured, it doesn't get improved."

Story 5: Please place a checkmark beside each value listed below that you believe the above story *promotes*.

Concern	**Commitment**	**Morale**
Insight	**Innovation**	**Adaptation**
External Support	**Resource Acquisition**	**Growth**
Accomplishment	**Productivity**	**Profit/Impact**
Goal Clarification	**Direction**	**Decisiveness**
Stability	**Control**	**Continuity**
Measurement	**Information Management**	**Documentation**
Discussion	**Participation**	**Openness**

Story 6

The "government look"

Here's a sad story about the Government Printing Office, multiple signatures, and $20,000 of wasted taxpayer money.

Vice President Gore heard it from an employee at the Transportation Department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which promotes highway safety. Hoping to convey safety messages to young drivers, her office tries to make its materials "slick" — to compete with sophisticated advertising aimed at that audience. Sound simple? Read on.

After the agency decides what it wants, it goes through multiple approvals at the GPO and the Department of Transportation. In the process, the material can change substantially. Orders often turn out far differently than NHTSA wanted. But under the GPO's policy, agencies must accept any printing order that the GPO deems "usable."

"I can cite one example where more than $20,000 has been spent and we still do not have the product that we originally requested," the employee explained, "because GPO decided on its own that it did not have a 'government' look. We were not attempting to produce a government look. We were trying to produce something that the general public would like to use."

Story 6: Please place a checkmark beside each value listed below that you believe the above story *promotes*.

Concern	**Commitment**	**Morale**
Insight	**Innovation**	**Adaptation**
External Support	**Resource Acquisition**	**Growth**
Accomplishment	**Productivity**	**Profit/Impact**
Goal Clarification	**Direction**	**Decisiveness**
Stability	**Control**	**Continuity**
Measurement	**Information Management**	**Documentation**
Discussion	**Participation**	**Openness**

Story 7

Dialing for Dollars: How Competition Cut the Federal Phone Bill

In the mid 1980s, a long-distance call on the federal system, which the General Services Administration manages, cost 30 to 40 cents a minute, the "special government rate." AT&T's regular commercial customers normally paid 20 cents a minute. The Defense Department, citing GSA's rates, would not use the government-wide system.

Spurred by complaints about high costs and the loss of customers, GSA put the government's contract up for bid among long-distance phone companies. It offered 60 percent of the business to the winner, 40 percent to the runner up.

Today, the government pays 8 cents a minute for long-distance calls. More agencies — including the Defense Department — are using the system. And taxpayers are saving a bundle.

Story 7: Please place a checkmark beside each value listed below that you believe the above story *promotes*.

Concern	**Commitment**	**Morale**
Insight	**Innovation**	**Adaptation**
External Support	**Resource Acquisition**	**Growth**
Accomplishment	**Productivity**	**Profit/Impact**
Goal Clarification	**Direction**	**Decisiveness**
Stability	**Control**	**Continuity**
Measurement	**Information Management**	**Documentation**
Discussion	**Participation**	**Openness**

Story 8

Roam on the Range

Ranchers, allowed to graze their cattle in Missouri's Mark Twain National Forest, regularly must move their herds to avoid over-grazing any plot of land. Until recently, ranchers had to apply at the local Forest Service office for permits to move the cattle. Typically, the local office sent them on to the regional office for approval, which, in some cases, sent them on to the national office in Washington. Approval could take up to 60 days — long enough, in a dry season, to hurt the forest, leave the cows hungry, and annoy the rancher.

Thanks to an employee suggestion, the local staffer now can settle the details of moving the herd directly with the rancher. If the rancher comes in by 10 a.m., the cattle can be on the move by noon. Ranchers are happier, cattle are fatter, the environment is better protected—all because local workers now make decisions well within their judgment.

Story 8: Please place a checkmark beside each value listed below that you believe the above story *promotes*.

Concern	**Commitment**	**Morale**
Insight	**Innovation**	**Adaptation**
External Support	**Resource Acquisition**	**Growth**
Accomplishment	**Productivity**	**Profit/Impact**
Goal Clarification	**Direction**	**Decisiveness**
Stability	**Control**	**Continuity**
Measurement	**Information Management**	**Documentation**
Discussion	**Participation**	**Openness**

Story 9

Measuring Outcomes

Outcome-based management is new in the public sector. Some U.S. cities have developed it over the past two decades; some states are beginning to; and foreign countries such as Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand are on their way. Sunnyvale, California, a city of 120,000 in the heart of the Silicon Valley, began the experiment 20 years ago. In each policy area, the city defines sets of "goals," "community condition indicators," "objectives," and "performance indicators." "In a normal political process, most decisionmakers never spend much time talking about the results they want from the money they spend," says City Manager Tom Lewcock. "With this system, for the first time they understand what the money is actually buying, and they can say yes or no." Sunnyvale measures performance to reward successful managers. If a program exceeds its objectives for quality and productivity, its manager can receive a bonus of up to 10 percent. This generates pressure for ever-higher productivity. The result: average annual productivity increases of four percent. From 1985 to 1990, the city's average cost of service dropped 20 percent, in inflation-adjusted dollars. According to a 1990 comparison, Sunnyvale used 35 to 45 percent fewer people to deliver more services than other cities of similar size and type. At least a half-dozen states hope to follow in Sunnyvale's footsteps. Oregon has gone farthest. In the late 1980s, Governor Neil Goldschmidt developed long term goals, with significant citizen input. He set up the Oregon Progress Board, comprising public and private leaders, to manage the process. The board developed goals and benchmarks through 12 statewide meetings and written materials from over 200 groups and organizations. "Oregon," the board stated, "will have the best chance of achieving an attractive future if Oregonians agree clearly on where we want to go and then join together to accomplish those goals."

The legislature approved the board's recommended 160 benchmarks, measuring how Oregon is faring on three general goals: exceptional individuals; outstanding quality of life; and a diverse, robust economy. Seventeen measures are deemed short-term "lead" benchmarks, related to urgent problems on which the board seeks progress within 5 years. They include reducing the teen pregnancy rates, enrolling people in vocational programs, expanding access to basic health care, and cutting worker compensation costs. Another 13 benchmarks are listed as "key" — fundamental, enduring measures of Oregon's vitality and health. These include improving basic student skills, reducing the crime rate, and raising Oregon's per capita income as a percentage of the U.S. average. Barbara Roberts, today's governor, has translated the broad goals and benchmarks into specific objectives for each agency. This year, for the first time, objectives were integrated into the budget—giving Oregon the first performance-based budget among the states.

Great Britain has instituted performance measurement throughout its national government. In addition, the government has begun writing 3-year performance contracts, called "Framework Agreements," with about half its agencies. These agencies are run by chief executive officers, many from the private sector, who are hired in competitive searches and then negotiate agreements specifying objectives and performance measures. If they don't reach their objectives, the CEOs are told, their agencies' services may be competitively bid after the 3 years.

Story 9: Please place a checkmark beside each value listed below that you believe the above story *promotes.*

Concern	**Commitment**	**Morale**
Insight	**Innovation**	**Adaptation**
External Support	**Resource Acquisition**	**Growth**
Accomplishment	**Productivity**	**Profit/Impact**
Goal Clarification	**Direction**	**Decisiveness**
Stability	**Control**	**Continuity**
Measurement	**Information Management**	**Documentation**
Discussion	**Participation**	**Openness**

Story 10

The Productivity Bank: Paying Big Interest in Philadelphia

Mayor Ed Rendell says it's not hard to change incentives so that public employees save money.

"We tell a department, 'You go out there and do good work,'" Rendell told the National Performance Review's Reinventing Government Summit in his city. "'You produce more revenue. You cut waste. And we'll let you keep some of the savings of the increased revenue.'"

Traditionally, the mayor said, "every nickel that they would have saved would have gone right back to the general fund — They would have gotten a pat on the back, but nothing else." Now, city employees save because their departments can keep some of the savings for projects to help them perform better.

When the Department of License and Inspection beefed up collection and enforcement efforts and generated $2.8 million more than expected in 1992, Rendell said, the city let the department keep $1 million of the savings to hire more inspectors and, in turn, exceed the $2.8 million in 1993.

The city also opened a Productivity Bank, from which departments can borrow for investment-type projects—that is, capital equipment—to produce either savings or enough revenues to repay the loan in five years. To ensure that departments don't apply frivolously, the city subtracts loan payments from annual departmental budgets.

Successes already abound. The Public Property Department repaid a $350,000 loan to buy energy efficient lamps in one year — after saving $700,000 in energy costs.

Story 10: Please place a checkmark beside each value listed below that you believe the above story *promotes*.

Concern	**Commitment**	**Morale**
Insight	**Innovation**	**Adaptation**
External Support	**Resource Acquisition**	**Growth**
Accomplishment	**Productivity**	**Profit/Impact**
Goal Clarification	**Direction**	**Decisiveness**
Stability	**Control**	**Continuity**
Measurement	**Information Management**	**Documentation**
Discussion	**Participation**	**Openness**

Story 11

Money for Numbers

The National Technical Information Service runs a large and complex information collection and marketing operation. It is the nation's largest clearinghouse for scientific and technical information. Yet it covers the costs of its operations without receiving a penny in federal appropriations. Its customers pay — and their numbers are growing every year.

NTIS's archives contain about 2 million documents (from research reports to patents), more than 2,000 data files on tape, diskette, or CD-ROM, and 3,000 software programs. This resource is growing at the rate of about 70,000 items each year. NTIS's press releases, on-line services, and CD-ROMs serve 70,000 customers, three-quarters of whom are from business and industry.

In 1991, NTIS collected $30.7 million in revenues — 77 percent from its clearinghouse activities, the rest from other government agencies that reimburse NTIS for patent licensing services, and from billing other agencies for producing and distributing documents. NTIS is required by law to be self-sufficient.

Story 11: Please place a checkmark beside each value listed below that you believe the above story *promotes*.

Concern	**Commitment**	**Morale**
Insight	**Innovation**	**Adaptation**
External Support	**Resource Acquisition**	**Growth**
Accomplishment	**Productivity**	**Profit/Impact**
Goal Clarification	**Direction**	**Decisiveness**
Stability	**Control**	**Continuity**
Measurement	**Information Management**	**Documentation**
Discussion	**Participation**	**Openness**

Appendix III

TREND OF FEDERAL CIVILIAN EMPLOYMENT FOR EXECUTIVE BRANCH AGENCIES*
Employment at End of Fiscal Year**

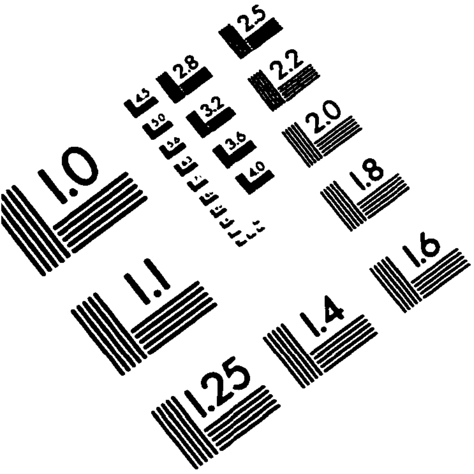
Fiscal Year	Executive Branch
1997	1,868,410 ***
1996	1,933,979
1995	2,010,921
1994	2,085,492
1993	2,156,844
1992	2,226,835
1991	2,243,265
1990	2,250,323
1989	2,237,818
1988	2,221,818
1987	2,234,686
1986	2,175,773
1985	2,213,521
1984	2,171,404
1983	2,157,467
1982	2,110,433
1981	2,143,001
1980	2,160,964
1979	2,160,845
1978	2,164,301
1977	2,131,225
1976	2,154,462
1975	2,148,840
1974	2,139,869
1973	2,082,642
1972	2,073,008
1971	2,106,143
1970	2,157,842
1969	2,301,127
1968	2,288,988
1967	2,251,361
1966	2,050,713
1965	1,900,578
1964	1,844,328
1963	1,910,545
1962	1,896,177
1961	1,824,582
1960	1,807,959

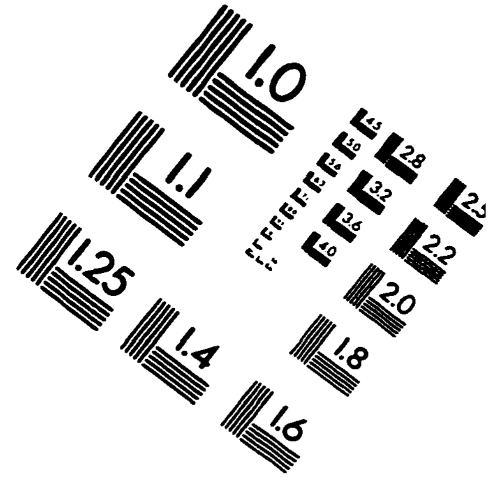
* Post Office/ Postal Rate Commission excluded. As of 10/1/96, the Defense Mapping Agency no longer reports 113-A data.
** From 1960 - 1976 as of June; from 1977 to present as of September.
*** Current level is the lowest since 1964.

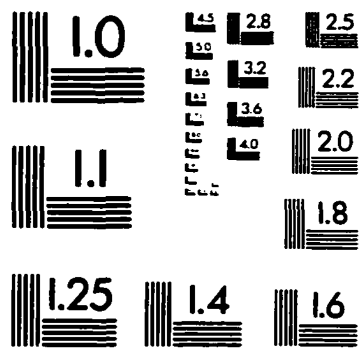
Standard Form 113-A, Monthly Report of Federal Civilian Employment collects monthly summary data about Federal civilian employment, payroll and turnover. Employment data is as of the last calendar day of the month or as of the end of the pay period closest and prior to the end of the month. Payroll and turnover data reflect the report month covered. Included are Federal civilian officers and employees in or under the U.S. Government (including Government-owned or controlled corporations) who are paid salaries, wages, or fees for personal service they render. The Central Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, National Imagery and Mapping Agency, and Defense Intelligence Agency are exempted by law. Most non-appropriated fund employees of the District of Columbia government are not included.

Source: U. S. Office of Personnel Management. (1998). *The fact book: Federal civilian work-force statistics 1997 Edition.* Washington, DC: U. S. Office of Personnel Management, Office of Workforce Information. Based on *SF 113-A Monthly Report of Federal Civilian Employment* (Revised December 2, 1997). Available: http://www.opm.gov/feddata/EXEC97.pdf (accessed 7-10-98).

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)







150mm

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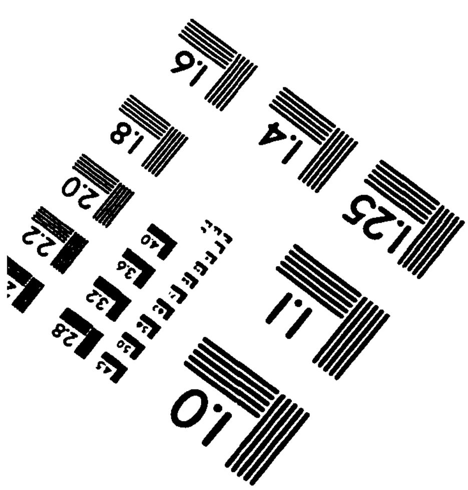

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