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Introduction

Our participatory model of politics, and the ethic of "publicness" that undergirds it, is at a crossroads. In *Strong Democracy*, Benjamin Barber calls for a revised understanding of citizenship in response to this crisis. His concept "rests on the idea of a self-governing community of citizens who are united less by homogeneous interests than by civic education and who are made capable of common purpose and mutual action by virtue of their civic attitudes and participatory institutions rather than their altruism or their good nature" (1984, p. 117). Three decades later, Barber's call retains its urgent relevance.

It is particularly interesting that Barber framed this bold assertion without the slightest hint of self-doubt concerning its intrinsic political validity. Barber's celebratory tone clashes with the tenor of much writing in contemporary public policy; yet, I find it both welcome and warranted. As Alexis de Tocqueville observed, there is an uneasy tension in America between the exaltation of the market ethos (or more broadly, the ideal of individualism, the more rugged the better), while, at the same time, a genuine yearning for a sense of community sustained by strong civic-minded instincts. In the context of twenty-first-century globalization, this tension has flourished and spread. Following on de Tocqueville's observations, I suspect that many, if not most social science scholars and practitioners would find Barber's assertion unrealistic in its political objectives, and utopian in its societal expectations, especially in the rough and ready world of global (and domestic) politics. These are legitimate reservations, but they ignore what Irving Howe (1984, p. 138) so eloquently articulated, in a manner both somber and optimistic, that still resonates with me:

> Today, in an age of curdled realism, it is necessary to assert the utopian image. But this can be done meaningfully only if it

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> is an image of social striving, tension, conflict; an image of a problem-creating and problem-solving society.

Howe's 1984 statement identifies a worrying trend—the discouragement of meaningful critique of political powers and mores by our overarching structures of governance—prescient on both ends of the political spectrum. Recently, for example, some have argued that American conservatism itself has lost its way by focusing on only one overriding concern: "[s]eeking advantage over our opponents, [which has] poisoned the civic foundation from which we all drink, with predictable results" (Flake, 2017, p. 94). At the same time, American liberalism is increasingly criticized for its unwillingness to tolerate ideological tension within the institutions where it reigns supreme, particularly university campuses (Stephens, 2017). This trend is worth pondering in that it is fair to assume that we teach and conduct research in public affairs (and in the broader social sciences) with the main purpose to nurture the ideals of a democratic ethos in an effort to better understand and resolve the major societal issues of the day. This rationale is predicated on another assumption that often goes unspoken: that social conflict represents, to large degree, a fundamental failure in policy design, implementation, and management, rather than the broader political contradictions and economic tensions condensed in the existing societal arrangements of political power. Not surprisingly, there has been an ongoing debate on how best to achieve the goals of managerial effectiveness and policy efficacy given that it relates directly to the raison d'être of public policy and public management/administration. However, I argue that too many scholars of both fields writing since the 1980s, have been content to take primarily a managerial and analytical perspective, which has undoubtedly advanced our knowledge and practice of public affairs. Likewise, many others have emphasized the varying normative aspects of public affairs in teasing out the philosophical implications (and ideals) of policy objectives. Regardless of the different approaches pursued and their respective validity in providing crucial insights, the current culture of both fields prompts us to contend that scholars and practitioners have, for the most part, become increasingly cautious in choosing the questions we believe are important to explore. That is, the questions posed have become ever more narrow and pedestrian, leaving untouched the "domain assumptions," as Alvin Gouldner (1970) called them, that underlie the theoretical and pragmatic foundations of both public policy and public management/administration. This penchant

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can be seen in the paucity of recent scholarship exploring the relationship of public management and public policy with the modern state, and the inherent tensions of such a relationship. This tension, in part, is due to the theoretical uneasiness of the politics and administration dictotomy that continues to haunt both fields. After all, many in both fields would contend that we are at our best only when addressing primarily administrative questions central to the efficient functioning of the modern state. This book responds to these emergent norms by asking this crucial question: Are we as scholars of public management/administration and public policy willing to question the arrangements of modern power and governance under which we operate? By deemphasizing this question and its implications, we run the risk of both fields becoming nothing more than a legalistic, managerial, economic mode of inquiry with a procedural emphasis. To be sure, some might insist that this is precisely the role both fields should play in societal affairs. Generally speaking, I do not entirely disagree with this view. My contention is that we need to be something more in this time of political estrangement, polarization, and unequal democracy (Bartels, 2016).

To put this question in more provocative terms, does the relationship between public policy and public management/administration and the modern state inhibit the exploration of certain theoretical issues as politically infeasible and too controversial to pursue? To continue this same point but in a somewhat different direction, does the focus on professionalism—as critical as it is in an era of heightened politicized partisanship—carry with it potentially deleterious consequences that may erode democratic values considered pivotal in educating future policy analysts and public managers? Finally, and perhaps the most controversial point of all, have we in public policy and public management/administration—regardless of our empirical sophistication in analyzing complex social problems (and our confidence in doing this consistently in a rigorous manner)—become an intricate part of "a disguised normative dimension of the established power configuration" (Ramos, 1981, p. 4) and, knowingly or unknowingly, a managerial instrument of what some have referred to as a "good" techno-governance system (Mouffe, 2005; Dean, 2009; Swyngedouw, 2011; Purcell, 2008)? All of these questions are a reminder of Robert Lynd's polemic observation, in the classic work *Knowledge for What* (1939, pp. 125–126), that the social scientists should never be afraid "to be troublesome, to disconcert the habitual arrangements by which to live along, and to demonstrate the possibilities of change in more adequate directions."As cynical as these concerns may seem, and as

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understandably disconcerting, they nonetheless represent a cogent reminder of a point once made by John Dos Passos (1936), the novelist, who asserted that "the greatest enemy of intelligence is theoretical complacency."

These assertions (and questions) alone should give us pause to reconsider some fundamental issues that go to the heart of public policy and public management/administration. However, recent events throughout a good portion of the developed world have added another level of complexity to these questions. Some academic critics of modern public affairs have questioned both whether the focus on policy analysis has caused us to deemphasize normative questions and whether the incessant emphasize on empiricist/positivist approaches can lead to naive inductivism (Andreski, 1972). And, as this debate is taking place in academic circles, many societies face a populist backlash (Moffitt, 2016) with critics from primarily outside academia questioning whether the detached, professional public analyst/administrator works for the broader public interest.

These recent complications of the relationship between the social sciences and the public especially highlight that we call ourselves "public" policy and "public" management/administration. In fact, until recently the concept of publicness (and its changing meaning over time) did not attract much intellectual attention in our theoretical and professional discussions (Stivers, 2010; Natabachi, 2010; Ventriss, 1987). After all, as argued in the chapters that follow, those of us who study and practice public affairs put the word *public* first not merely for semantic reasons, but rather because it conveys, or should convey, some salient ethical and societal implications for what we seek to achieve in the broader social context.

When I first raised this point (Ventriss, 1987), my focus was on the development of a theory of the public—a reconceptualization of the meaning of publicness. Yet the notion of the public was—and remains—a concept fraught with inherent theoretical ambiguity (Ventriss, 1987; Pesch, 2008). I anchored the idea of publicness predominantly in John Dewey's terms; that is, as an integral aspect of the citizenry's capacity and maturity in understanding the interactive societal consequences of public actions on others. Since that time there has been an emerging debate on what might constitute the meaning of "publicness" and what it implies for both public policy, public management/administration, and public affairs in general (Pesch, 2005, 2008; Bozeman & Bretschneider, 1994; Haque, 2001; Frederickson, 1997; Barnes, Newman, Knops, & Sullivan, 2003; Low & Smith, 2005; Moulton, 2009; Williams & Shearer, 2011; Nabatchi, 2011). Irrespective of the varying theoretical perspectives taken on this concept, I maintain

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(as I will make clear in this book) that publicness denotes something more than a concept coterminous with the role of the modern state, or a term so amorphous that it lacks any viable guide to how we should proceed on important policy matters. Instead, publicness is fundamentally an adherence to democratic ideals and democratic aspirations epitomizing the following general characteristics: (1) publicness is inherently a process of civic responsibility, consistent with Richard Flathman's (1989) conception of high citizenship, that is, an inclusive critical learning process involving a network of different publics sharing crucial information in initiating and debating public action and, more important, critically examining the substantive impact of policy actions on others; (2) publicness also directly implies a responsibility for those in public policy and public management/administration in sorting out and exposing the misinformation and distortion of crucial data that can obscure the normative impact of certain policies on the citizenry (Stone, 2012); (3) publicness acknowledges the central validity of citizen dissent, or other venues of constructive public contestation, in publicly expressing concerns about unequal influence and societal impacts in the policy process, especially in this era of political and economic uncertainty; (4) publicness refers to the notion that, given there are so many "publics" in society, it is crucial to experiment with policies that are nonaggregate, that is, publicness requires the importance of including the unique and particularized knowledge of different publics into the policy process congruent to public service values; and finally, (5) in the face of the rise of pseudo-democratic populism often indifferent to factual information, a revigorated view of publicness is called for in confronting, among other things, the perils of interest-group liberalism and the growing distrust of governmental institutions.This later point will be discussed at length in subsequent chapters of this book.

This is hardly an exhaustive list of what could be considered as publicness and its relevance to those who practice and study public policy and public management/administration. However, I contend this approach to publicness can loosen, or at least weaken, the strong grip of an instrumental rationality and a market mentality that hovers over the theoretical landscape of public affairs. It is not claimed here that publicness would, or should, replace the value of other conceptual perspectives on public matters. Rather, a focus on publicness would demonstrate, and hopefully clarify, the *limitations* of these other perspectives. In short, it would have us refocus our role more attentively to the broader substantive obligations of those powerful residual political and economic conditions contributing to what David Harvey (1996) described as "parochialist politics" and "political passivity." To many,

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this may sound not only pretentious to our modern pragmatic ears, but as an invitation to a Sisyphean exercise in intellectual futility. No doubt, this intellectual endeavor will not be easy. Nevertheless, this new theoretical and pragmatic trajectory could be crucial in facilitating a "problem-solving" approach emphasized earlier by Irving Howe. This book is written to move us closer to reinvigorating publicness in this era of political and economic uncerainty with all the inevitable theoretical twists and turns that are bound to happen in this intellectual journey.

Some might argue that neglect of the theoretical underpinnings of publicness is hardly surprising given that public policy, and in particular public management/administration, have little theoretical coherency to speak of. As Iain Gow puts it, "The field has a hard time getting respect from academic colleagues in the social sciences" (2010, p. 31). This has especially been the case relative to political science, which has often criticized the field for being atheoretical; focused on applied empirical research meant to improve governance, rather than theory testing about governance. Gow has dismissed these discussions, accepted that "*[l]a science administrative est une science empirique par excellence*" (1993, p. 87), and has termed this "pragmatic institutionalism." The term nicely combines the emphasis on structure (institutionalism) and technique (pragmatism) in a single paradigm, and identifies this, for example, as "the default position in public affairs [and public policy] in Canada" (p. 10). He describes this paradigm as focused on being "comprehensive and accurate, to 'get it right' " (p. 5).

However, for many scholars in public affairs, this pragmatic, intellectual mosaic of different disciplines, while commendable in this age of specialization, has especially taken its scholarly toll on the reputation of public administration/management. But truth be told, both intellectual enterprises (with a few exceptions who argue for a more critical perspective) suffer from a conceptual parochialism and intellectual ambivalence that has left theoretically untouched the Hobbesian/Lockean mentality in modern politics and the consequential residue of possessive individualism which continues to run rampant through our political veins (Macpherson, 1973). Public policy and public management/ administration are, of course, historically and contextually specific to the country in which they are practiced and theorized. Even given this reality, a serious debate needs to emerge—a point I emphasize in many of these chapters—about the ideological, political, and economic forces that coalesce into a managerial consensual governing system that essentially undermines the consideration of different ways of incorporating

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democratic processes into community life (Ranciere, 1999). Peter Bachrach (1967, p. 99)correctly emphasized that what we face in modern politics is an uncomfortable Hobson's choice: "a theory which is normatively sound but unrealistic, or a theory which is realistic but heavily skewed toward elitism." While this theoretical dichotomy is admittedly overstated, this book echoes an approach that Foucault (in Simon, 1971, p. 201) emphasized:

> What I am trying to do is grasp the implicit systems of thought which determine our most familiar behavior without our knowing it. I am trying to find their origins, to show their formation, the constraint they impose upon us . . .

Inspirations and Areas of Inquiry

This book builds on the ideas of many preeminent scholars, and in this respect particular attention is owed to Alberto Guerreiro Ramos. At least three of his works, *The New Science of Organizations: A Reconceptualization of the Wealth of Nations* (1981), *A Reducao Sociologica* (1958), and the essay *Patologia Social do Branco Brasiseiro* (1955), serve as a springboard for my argument. Guerreiro Ramos was one of the earliest scholars to point to the risks of a social science that took *homo economicus* as its referent. A solution that he offered was to recognize the importance of nonmarket settings in which people could pursue other, nonmaterialist interests. As a result, Guerreiro Ramos criticized both mainstream public policy and public management/administration (and social science) as reluctant, or more accurately, intellectually unwilling to comprehend the irreconcilable conflict between instrumental rationality and substantive rationality, and the consequential implications of this tension on the body politic.

In light of the increasingly narrow scope of both fields that I have mentioned earlier in this introduction, it should come as no surprise that many have responded coldly to Guerreiro Ramos's thinking, with theoretical dismay or even "polite" neglect of his scholarship. This reception is primarily because, in Guerreiro Ramos's typical sharply edged polemic tone, he criticized the conventional scholarship in public affairs as indulging in a theoretical self-deception camouflaged by a ubiquitous market ideology which has shaped the manner in which we formulate, define, and design policy approaches, points also echoed by Crouch (2004, 2011). That these

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trends persist despite nearly a half-century of critique, and do not necessarily command the respect of public affair scholars and practitioners, illustrates the intellectual malaise that this book aims to address.

It is, to reemphasize, not my purpose in this book to elucidate all the various nuances of Guerreiro Ramos's thinking on political and administrative matters. Rather, it is to point out that Guerreiro Ramos tried, in his own way, to awaken us from our intellectual complacency and theoretical timidity—and, judging from where we are today, he has largely failed. This raises the question: What additional perspectives can we in public affairs bring to theory and practice to reinvigorate contemporary governance and participatory politics? Much like John Stuart Mill, Guerreiro Ramos reiterated the necessity of continuously scrutinizing the presuppositions of policy issues, thinking this intellectual posture could foster both a moral alertness and a more vibrant notion of "publicness." As an Afro-Brasileiro scholar and public official growing up in highly segregated Brazil, he was keenly aware of those forces of political domination, both subtle and explicit, that can emerge in society and, just as important, what can occur when such forces are ignored and/or unchallenged. While I disagree strongly with many aspects of Ramos's major arguments and his theoretical contentions (which will be explored later in the book), he did posit the need for theoretically unpacking, so to speak, the hegemony of deeply embedded belief systems that are often glossed over in our theoretical and pragmatic considerations of policy ends. The intellectual malaise, Ramos tells us, facing specifically public policy and public management/administration is not the result, as Udo Pesch (2008) has enumerated, of trying to reconcile various meanings of publicness or the inevitability of seeing publicness as an intrinsically ambiguous concept. The real issue, he emphasized, is how the notion of publicness itself has been eclipsed and distorted by "cognitive politics" (Guerreiro Ramos's term), which "consists in a conscious or unconsciousness use of distorted language, the intent of which is to induce people to interpret reality in terms that reward it direct and/or indirect agents of such distortion" (1981, p. 76).

In many respects, Ramos's conception of publicness is foundational to my own argument. Putting aside this awkward phrasing, Guerreiro Ramos illuminates a poignant issue missing in most of the literature in public affairs: that cognitive politics, in a chameleon-like fashion, has undercut the intellectual integrity of public policy and public management/administration—and much of the social sciences. This has resulted, in large part, in the legitimization of "the expansion of economizing organizations beyond their specific contextual boundaries by practicing a misplaced and mistaken

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humanism" (1981, p. 84). These fields, in other words, have become a mode of social inquiry peculiarly vulnerable to a utilitarian mind-set displacing social conflict and public dissent into new governance systems such as collaborative policy networks, participatory strategies, benchmarking for performance, or in new and revised managerial and policy strategies. Although these approaches are initiated for laudable reasons and are praised for their contributions to public affairs, little attention has gone into what this displacement means for our theoretical development and intellectual agenda. This neglect, Guerreiro Ramos would argue, has come, unfortunately, with a hefty intellectual and ethical price tag.

With that in mind, the first section of this book assesses the asymmetry of information and power among policy analysts, administrators, public officials, and the general public. This, again, is not new: writing in 1984, Eugene McGregor argued that "an extraordinary knowledge disparity exists between public service careerists . . . and a civitas that wants problems solved. The gap is not only large, it appears to be growing and the effects can only be worrisome. The knowledge gap may well contribute to mistrust of institutions by citizens to know when things are not working but not able to say what the possibilities for successful intervention are" (p. 127). Up until perhaps the last couple of years this claim would have been accepted by many: some citizens have lost faith with self-serving professionals and policy elites (an overwhelmingly elite class). McGregor continued, though: "The gap may explain some of the measured contempt public analysts have displayed toward an unknowing and disrespectful public" (ibid.). However, there is another question worth posing of professionalism: while policy experts can overlook the grounded information about policy provided by ordinary citizens, it is crucial to be cognizant of the current upsurge of anti-intellectualism, especially in the United States, that undercuts the specialized knowledge that professionals can bring to bear on important policy issues.

Both this imbalance of power and information, and the impact of anti-intellectualism, cannot be mitigated by merely appealing to the scientific method in exploring policy and administrative issues. While it is true this approach represents a significant aspect of what is usually done to achieve the goals of efficiency, expediency, and calculation of policy ends, one of the questions asked in this book is the following: Can this salient approach alone, for all its empirical acumen, expose the role of certain key powerful actors in the policy process without taking into consideration the broader historical and normative context of this issue, and how such power can marginalize political challenges to their continued influence on certain policy matters

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(Lustig, 1982; Crouch, 2004; Mayer, 2016; Dean, 2009; Jessop, 2005; Swyngedouw, 2011)? The most common reaction to such claims is that in public policy and public management/administration we do not *make* policy; rather, we only analyze the viability of policies and appropriately implement (and manage) them congruent to the rules and regulations dictated by legitimate political institutions. This viewpoint, particularly by practitioners, is strongly held because of the danger of undermining the nonpartisan role of public management/administration and public policy. The reasoning here is explicit and direct: we do not need, nor should it ever be desired, to do anything that smacks, or is even suspected by others, of having any other purpose than what is specifically prescribed by the state. Furthermore, any other outlook, it is claimed, would expand the meaning of both fields perilously beyond their traditional role and appropriate societal purpose.

Although the rationale behind these concerns is certainly understandable, I emphasize the implications of publicness as a major challenge to both fields. This implies, I contend, a reexamination of neo-managerialism and the relationship of the state to both fields. I also focus in this section on critical democratic thought and the reinvigoration of publicness as a way of introducing the kind of questions we should be asking ourselves and the theoretical perspectives needed in these challenging times. I end this section with a critical analysis of some of the theoretical shortcomings of Guerreiro Ramos and others in assessing the substantive aspects of publicness. I argue that it is crucial in this era of political and economic uncertainty to take Guerreiro Ramos's project forward, albeit in a revised manner, when discussing the interrelationships of citizenship, the state, and the public sphere.

The second section focuses on those debates that have not received the appropriate attention in public management/administration, and to a lesser extent, public policy. For instance, the first chapter in this section examines the economic crisis of 2008 in reference to not only economic inequality and limited economic mobility, but to political inequality and unequal democracy and their enduring, corrosive influence on the policy and administrative process. On a related theme, the spatial aspects of the market economy will be discussed and why this warrants critical scrutiny in this era of capital mobility, economic interdependencies, and a ubiquitous social media, which have contributed to a growing breeding ground for economic and political uncertainty (and insecurity) among certain segments of society. And finally, I argue that for all the celebratory arguments in praise of public participation and deliberative democracy (which I largely applaud), I wonder whether such discussions are only tiptoeing around other key issues

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concerning the transformative goals these noble intentions hope to achieve. This is not to imply for a moment that these participatory goals are unrealistic, but rather that we have succumbed too readily to the rationale that by continuously tinkering with an endless variety of managerial approaches and theoretical perspectives, new and old, this somehow will better prepare us for implementing more effectively the incremental policies that so often emerge from the legislative process (Layzer, 2015). It is no wonder, given this view, that there has been minimal debate concerning the underlying conditions that caused the problem in the first place. This section is guided by one of Thomas Pynchon's central characters in *Gravity's Rainbow*, who evocatively declared the following: "If they can get you asking the wrong questions, they don't have to worry about the answers."

As the chapters in this section try to make clear, the time has come to put at the forefront of the intellectual agenda the glaring economic tensions and social conflicts emerging both domestically and internationally, and whether contemporary political discord can be successfully mediated by a managerial and empirical outlook without seriously questioning the prevailing societal and economic arrangements. Concomitantly, I also address the question of civic responsibility. The "inclusive learning process involving a network of different publics . . . critically examining the substantive impact of policy actions on others" that I identify as the first of the five general characteristics, is not something that can be implemented in a top-down fashion. McGregor emphasizes the need for public analysts/administrators to nurture "a potentially argumentative public . . . a dominant ethic of public service must be that careerists keep citizens fully informed about the possibilities for public service. . . . The democratic point is that the public need is for intelligently organized information presented so that informed decisions can be made" (1984, p. 128). Yet the provision of this intelligently organized information will only help if "citizens" can better understand those political and economic forces that call for more social division and simplistic solutions.

The final chapter of this book focuses on how those of us devoted to both fields might proceed in meeting these challenges. I do not claim that this is an exhaustive compilation of challenges before us or that any of my suggestions are a panacea to these respective issues. Undoubtedly, some will view this part of the book as a jeremiad that paints those of us who study or practice public affairs in an unfavorable light, or, as some of our colleagues might argue, in an overly pessimistic manner. My intention here is quite the opposite: it is a call for a renewed sense of what is referred to

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as "elenchic citizenship" (Ventriss, 2007). It is a citizenship of publicness, Dana Villa (2001, p. 20) explains, that is Socratic in nature in that

> it consists in the endless and seemingly circular questioning of the basic terms of our moral culture, those whose meaning seems self-evident and unarguable. Questioning is an end itself . . . [but it is also a questioning to] maintain a critical distance on all accepted definitions . . . and ridding the various false beliefs that promote injustice.

That said, I contend that no amount of empirical studies, nor normative theorizing, nor new managerial or participatory strategies will ever suffice in cultivating a democratic ethos if we do not fully comprehend the normative implications of an "unexamined citizenship" and how this lack of understanding might lead us down a path toward intellectual hubris and theoretical complacency. Montaigne's (1976) erudite insight is worth pondering here: "No wind helps him who does not know to what port he sails." This task will be neither easy nor, I suspect, very popular among some of my colleagues. But the recognition of this crucial task, and the need for it, is the real challenge that lies before us. This book, hopefully, will explain this imperative, and so nudge us into taking this intellectual plunge.

Theoretical Grounding

Like any other work of this sort, the themes discussed in this book have been strongly influenced by certain contemporary seminal thinkers. These thinkers include (besides Guerreiro Ramos) the following: Albert Camus, Donald A. Schon, Deborah Stone, Harold Lasswell, Nancy Fraser, Karl Polanyi, Hannah Arendt, Jeffrey Isaac, Dana Villa, Albert Hirschman, Sheldon Wolin, Michael Walzer, Robert Nisbet, Dwight Waldo, John K. Galbraith, Bonnie Honig, Fred Hirsch, Daniel Bell, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, and Alvin Gouldner. Each of these thinkers, in varying degrees, has argued that it is problematic whether democracy can come into full development if we do not first carefully analyze the concrete behavior, motives, desires, and ideals that make up moral life. Moreover, these thinkers, putting aside their different conceptual venues in addressing these issues, are united in their refusal to view public life solely in instrumental and utilitarian terms. A common purpose cannot exist in the interstices of a liberal culture, they indicate,

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if the existing moral instincts of society become increasingly antipublic, or contribute to "the retreat of the political." The intellectual thread that ties all these thinkers together is their emphasis on the quality of political relationships and public commitments, which can never be reduced to mere private acquisitive behavior; that any viable public purpose finds its meaning in a reflective citizenship, not in the thoughtless conformity of Arendt's (1973) "behaving citizens" or the related disenfranchisement of Margaret Somers's (2008) market-driven postcitizenship. In the end, the luminaries in this field identify that the civic ethos can be easily atrophied or overridden by the exultation of a market mentality and by what has been referred to as the "economization of politics" (Brown, 2015) that lacks a coherent public discourse adequate to the complexities of social and political life, trends we see playing out today.

These thinkers have also provided us in public affairs a rich theoretical tapestry of ideas that is both cautious and, surprisingly enough, optimistic in what can be accomplished in our modern polity. This optimism is founded on the premise that we who study and serve in public affairs can reverse our myopic underpinnings with a more concerted focus on civitas—a civitas that stresses publicness as a bulwark against the unrestrained pursuit of private interest and as a way to legitimize public spaces for displaying conflict and public struggle in the pursuit of public purposes. It is an optimism borne of the reality, as William Sullivan (1986, p. 158) avers, that "the citizen comes to know who he [or she] is by understanding the social relationships surrounding him [or her] . . . [an] awareness of the interdependency of citizens . . . [and that it is] basic to the civic vision because it enlightens and challenges . . . disparate parties about their mutual relations." This will require the formulation of a renewed emphasize on "public language," the ability to become a "public social science," and finally a renewed sense of publicness that puts human dignity, critical inquiry, public responsibility, public accessibility, and public learning at the center of what we aspire to be in societal affairs (Ventriss, 1987; Sullivan, 1986; Ku, 2000).

Yet, ironically, a degree of caution is called for in this endeavor. This caution is due primarily to the reality of a growing public disdain for politics, a fragmented public with a tenuous sense of social cohesion, a growing distrust for government in general (Will, 1983; Nye, Zelikow, & King, 1997; Thompson, 2010) and more recently, the full emergence of a heretofore underlying phenomenon that has contributed to these other realities: anti-intellectualism. No doubt, it is difficult to be persuasive in such a polarizing political environment when stereotypes of "faceless" administrators

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and policy analysts are continuously misrepresented in the minds of the citizenry (Goodsell, 2014). Indeed, Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1973) warns explicitly that the emergence of anti-intellectualism is one factor among others that can stifle productive dialogue and political critique. Thus, there is a need to walk cautiously, so to speak, knowing that we have intrinsic limitations of what can be actually achieved given the vicissitudes of public opinion, public attitudes, and public expectations about government itself.

This caution, moreover, also comes with a theoretical awkwardness and intellectual solicitude. It leaves us, who teach or practice in public affairs, essentially on an intellectual (and pragmatic) tightrope. This balancing act requires maintaining the intellectual conviction to present the world as it is, and then of asking critical (and probing) questions of political and institutional life. Furthermore, this balancing act further requires coming up with ideas to effectively manage and better understand the labyrinthine policies of the state, as well as certain political movements and powerful institutional actors that seek to present a self-serving perspective of the world, not least to obviate the need for the sort of critical (and probing) questions mentioned above. We operate, in effect, in a continuous state of in-betweenness among those competing forces of political and intellectual gravity that constantly tug at us and which subsequently makes our balancing act especially arduous, frustrating, exhausting, and, exasperating. It is important to note that these dynamic and powerful political movements are not just unique to the United States; they have been documented in such countries as Australia, Brazil, and to a lesser extent Canada, to name a few (Candler, 2014).

In sum, the questions I ask and the suggestions I offer in this book have been deeply influenced by these seminal thinkers, whose foundations give us much needed perspective on the depth and scope of the issues facing us in public affairs today. These thinkers are crucial because they understand just how unsettling it can be as we try to maintain our delicate balance between dedication to democratic progress and deference to convention, especially given the absence of any theoretical banisters to hold us steady. This terminal condition, one could argue, may be the new and stark reality of modern democratic policymaking. But, on the other hand, this state of affairs can be regarded as a long overdue opportunity to step back and "to retrace our cultural steps, and rethink what we think" (Will, 1983, p. 163).

The need for such rethinking comes at a time when, beginning in the 1970s, trust in key governmental institutions, public officials, professionals, and the media has plummeted, leading to a heightened political and eco-

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nomic uncertainty of how we can resolve in the future—with any sense of confidence—such key societal issues and daunting public challenges as income and wealth inequality, economic insecurity, climate change, wage stagnation, political polarization, and immigration. This book is in response to these formidable trends and the perception of many citizens in the United States and elsewhere that believe government can no longer effectively ameliorate or resolve the uncertainities by conventional administrative and policy approaches. The overall theme of this book is straightforward: those of us who do research in public management/administration and public policy (and who work in the public and nonprofit sector) need to reassess some fundamental assumptions of whether the questions we have been asking—and the intellectual and professional heritage we have taken as a given—are expanding or restricting the centrality of publicness. Such "rethinking what we think" and how we confront the exigency of the challenges before us has a lot to say about the direction of our intellectual future and the substantive purpose we aspire to in this time of policy complexity, social discord, and uncertainty.

Conclusion

In this introduction, I have focused on the two fundamental tensions in the study and practice of public affairs that this book undertakes to address. First, I outlined the conflict between normative and utilitarian influences on public management/administration and public policy. And second, I underscored the pressing need for a revitalized view of publicness to equip those dedicated to public affairs to engage with the political and economic uncertainties that will pose significant challenges in politics, economy, and public life in the twenty-first century.

In painting a picture of the conflict between normative and utilitarian forces in contemporary public affairs, I drew on thinkers including Guerreiro Ramos, Barber, and Gouldner, to highlight the crossroads at which we now find ourselves. These authors, in particular, identified the increasingly market-centered and quantitative nature of scholarship in both fields. More importantly, they collectively suggest that, unfortunately, scholarly inquiry in both fields has become increasingly narrow and pedestrian in nature. Given their theoretical insights, I argue that in both fields we seem reluctant to recognize and interrogate the domain assumptions (those underlying assumptions that are rarely questioned or examined) under which we operate.

Following on this argument, I suggested that a different conceptualization of publicness will be required if we want to realize both fields'

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potential—and mandate—that bridges civic life, professional practice, and academic scholarship. I outlined five crucial elements of such an approach, which are: (1) an emphasis on reflective civic responsibility and critical public learning; (2) a mandate for scholars and professionals alike to identify and clarify misinformation and distortion of data to enhance civic engagement; (3) improved capacity for debate and constructive citizen dissent; (4) recognition of the existence of plural publics, and the designing of policies congruent to their respective and distinct public needs; and (5) a clarified and strengthened relationship between the public and professionals. I grounded this theoretical sketch in the works of diverse seminal thinkers, especially Ramos, all of whom have in some way called for an expanded role for a fundamental rethinking of what we do in both public management/administration and public policy.

In the coming sections of this book, I develop two related lines of inquiry. In the following four chapters (2–5, Section 1), I investigate the factors conditioning current tensions and theoretical needs in public affairs. Readers with a predominantly theoretical interest in the challenges facing public affairs today should focus their attention here. In the final three chapters (6–8, Section 2), I examine how these factors and theoretical needs play out in important contemporary issues/cases. Readers primarily interested in the more pragmatic aspects of contemporary public affairs may want to spend the bulk of their time with these chapters. Finally, in my closing chapter (9), I offer my personal reflections on steps to be taken at the individual and institutional levels to strengthen the normative dimensions of theory and practice in public affairs, based on insights developed over the course of my career. I hope that these insights will be especially relevant to graduate students and other professionals, who may be able to take advantage of them over their course of the study and practice of public affairs.

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