THE OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT: A STUDY IN
THE POLITICS AND ADMINISTRATION OF AMERICAN GOVERNANCE

by

Larry M. Lane

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Public Administration

APPROVED:

James F. Wolf, Chairman

Charles T. Goodsell

Thomas H. Roback

John A. Rohr

Gary L. Wamsley

June 1989
Blacksburg, Virginia
This study examines the origins, development, and political significance of the U. S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) during the ten-year period from its founding in the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978. The premise of the dissertation is that OPM has been significantly involved in the transformation of the guiding beliefs about the public service in America and that OPM's administrative actions have had important impacts on the institutions and capacity of American governance. OPM has been infused with values of political responsiveness to the detriment of competing values of merit, competence, and technical effectiveness.
The study creates an analytical framework which reveals a fundamental realignment of the relationships of political institutions, values, and administrative organizations. The developmental events in OPM's history are traced in detail through the Carter and Reagan administrations. The contribution of OPM's policies and actions to the shift of values and institutional relationships is documented. The ultimate result has been the weakening of the institutions of the presidency as well as the public service. OPM's policies have furthered the politicization of the federal personnel system and have contributed to the decline of public agency competence and performance.

The study develops an evaluational framework for examination of OPM's performance in regard to legislative intent, the policy objectives of successive administrations, and the criteria of the public interest. The dissertation evaluates OPM's problematic performance both in what it has produced and in what it is as an organization of democratic governance. The current crisis of the public service, as documented by recent studies, is analyzed. The study concludes by identifying the essential aspects of the future role of the central personnel office in devising solutions to the challenges of effective human resource management in the public sector.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This effort at analysis and interpretation of events draws on many sources and is indebted to many people, both from the world of public affairs and from the academic environment. My appreciation first must go to all of my colleagues in the public service——employees, managers, executives, personnel officers and specialists——who for thirty years provided friendship, counsel, and challenge.

The chairman of the committee, Professor James Wolf, sensed the potential of this study for a dissertation. I am grateful for his guidance and motivating persuasion. He was a challenging "muse" who led me to a higher level of achievement. Professor Gary Wamsley also encouraged me to deepen my analysis, and he deserves credit for opening windows on new ideas in his inimitable way. Professor John Rohr provided a continuing example of learning and meticulous scholarship, and many valuable suggestions for improvement. Professor Thomas Roback guided me by asking fundamental questions about the relationships and meaning of evidence. I particularly thank Professor Charles Goodsell for stepping in at the critical last minute to assist in the finalization of the paper. I am also appreciative of Professor Goodsell's continuing support and encouragement over the years of my involvement in the
program. Also, I wish to thank for her
tireless administrative assistance, friendly concern, and
interest as I progressed through the program.

The dissertation itself began some fifteen months ago as a
modest undertaking to write a paper on OPM for the Civil
Service Reform Conference at Syracuse University in October
1983. I am grateful to for
extending the invitation. She and others at the conference
were supportive of the concept and encouraged further
effort. Professor Ingraham has been a continuing source of
inspiration, advice, and counsel on this project. Her name
should be associated officially with the dissertation, even
though an emergency situation prevented her from serving on
the committee.

Finally, my heartfelt thanks go to my family. My own
teenagers, , were always tolerant and
sometimes even proud of the strange behavior of their aging
father pursuing a graduate degree. They have been an
inspiration for me as they have made their way through the
snares and traps of adolescence. To my wife, , I am
grateful for her love and understanding, for specific
assistance with language and syntax, and generally for
making possible a good and stable life.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS** ........................................ iv

**Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION** .................................. 1
   A. Statement of the Problem ............................ 2
   B. Premise of the Study ................................ 4
   C. Significance of the Problem ...................... 7
   D. Literature Review .................................. 8
   E. Approach to the Study .............................. 18

**Chapter 2: INSTITUTIONS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND VALUES** ....... 25
   A. Concepts of Organization and Institution .......... 27
   B. Values, Institutions and Public Organizations .... 38
   C. Definition of Value Clusters ...................... 43
   D. The Value Shifts, 1978-1988 ........................ 54
   E. The Presidency, the Public Service, and OPM ...... 59

**Chapter 3: OPM: THE ORIGINAL INTENTION** .................. 69
   A. Environment and Conditions for OPM's Birth .... 70
   B. Conceptual Origins .................................. 74
   C. Specific Origins .................................... 90
   D. Policy Objectives and Legislative Intent .......... 101
Chapter 4: DEVELOPING REALITY--MANAGEMENT AND POLITICS 112
   A. Initial Goals and Objectives of OPM .......... 113
   B. Creation of the New Organization ............ 121
   C. Contradictions and Dilemmas .................. 134
   D. Alan Campbell and the Carter Presidency ...... 148

Chapter 5: THE PRIMACY OF POLITICAL DOCTRINE .......... 152
   A. Initial Changes in Policy Direction .......... 153
   B. Attacks on the Public Personnel System ....... 160
   C. The Creation of Organizational Incapacity ... 172
   D. Donald Devine and the Reagan Presidency ...... 182
   E. Constance Horner: Change and Continuity ...... 195

Chapter 6: A TEN-YEAR ASSESSMENT OF OPM .............. 207
   A. Criteria for Evaluation ...................... 209
   B. OPM Performance: Intent and Objectives ....... 215
   C. OPM, High Politics, and the Public Interest .. 230
   D. Implications for Political Institutions ...... 245

Chapter 7: THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE OPM EXPERIENCE .... 252
   A. Unanticipated and Unintended Consequences .... 252
   B. Consequences: Crisis of the Public Service ... 255
   C. The Decline of the Federal Personnel System .. 261
   D. Organizational Pathologies .................... 268
   E. The Weakening of Political Institutions ...... 273
Chapter 8: OPM AND THE FUTURE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE . 282
  A. The Need for a New OPM ............................. 283
  B. The Need for Consensus ............................... 291
  C. The Need for a New Public Service Model ...... 300
  D. Conclusion: Governance and the Public Service 306

Appendix: LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .......................... 315

BIBLIOGRAPHY .................................................. 316

VITA ................................................................. 342
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The influences which dominate the contemporary world of public personnel administration are largely traceable to the passage of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 (CSRA) and to its subsequent implementation by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and other federal agencies. The Act was the self-proclaimed centerpiece of Jimmy Carter's approach to governance, and its provisions were vigorously endorsed, promoted, and utilized during the Reagan administration. Ten years after its passage, the Act was firmly established as the centerpiece of the American public service system. The influence of the CSRA has spread far beyond the federal sector to state and local governments where senior executive services and merit pay systems have been devised and put in place.

In 1979, the Office of Personnel Management assumed its role as the organization principally responsible for the implementation of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978. The new organization moved away from its origins in the former Civil Service Commission and began working toward its initial legislative and policy objectives of improved federal management, stronger executive direction, greater responsiveness of the civil service, and modernized
personnel management. In ten years, the changes brought about by CSRA and OPM dramatically altered the landscape of public administration. The history of OPM is revealing and instructive regarding the past, present, and future state of the American public service. Additionally, OPM's organizational record has theoretical and practical as well as normative and operational implications for the American governance process.

A. Statement of the Problem

The central importance of CSRA and OPM remains undiminished despite the documented failure of implementation to achieve the objectives of the legislation. To date, no specific program in the Act—merit pay, performance appraisal, senior executive service—has been judged a success in the extensive literature that has examined the programs. On the other hand, OPM has been an important and influential political force within American government. The gulf between promise and performance, and the seeming irrelevance of technical success or failure to the political acceptance of the concepts of CSRA, raise important questions. The explanation of how CSRA and OPM have shaped the current world of the public service, despite technical and organizational failures, lies in
analysis at other and higher levels of concern. The greatest impact of the Act and its implementation—the dominant effect of the years from 1978 to 1988—was the striking changes in the institutions and values of governance and the public service.

The guiding beliefs about the public service in America, and the organizational mechanisms for translating those beliefs into administrative action, have been transformed. This transformation has had significant implications regarding organizational role, mission, clientele, effectiveness, technical operations, morale, and administrative capacity, not just in OPM but also for the public service as a whole. It is the purpose of this dissertation to review, analyze, and assess the implications for governance and for the federal service of the significant change in institutions and values represented by OPM and the Civil Service Reform Act.

The dissertation closely examines the essential role of public organizations in a political system to transform ideals and values into the reality of administrative action. The dissertation also contributes to an understanding of how public organizations represent specific interests within the political society.
Organizational changes of the magnitude of the CSRA implementation disrupt and revise clientele relationships and alter balances of power and influence.

In the case of OPM and CSRA, the question of who benefits is directly related to the values expressed in the organizations involved. Prior to CSRA, a policing and enforcement system emphasized the rights of employees and protection against political influence, with only a secondary emphasis on effective management practices. Under CSRA, OPM intended to serve and thereby benefit political leadership and program managers. This dissertation shows how the original intention was modified over time, and how other different interests began to derive benefits and incur costs from the reform.

B. Premise of the Study

At the highest level of generalization, the premise of this dissertation is that there were significant developmental changes in the American political institutions of the presidency and the public service in the decades immediately before and after 1978. These changes have been accompanied by a major realignment of the values that are expressed in administrative action. The Civil Service
Reform Act and OPM have been both mirrors and instruments of the value shift and of the institutional changes in the political system.

The Office of Personnel Management was designed to be an organization closely identified with and supportive of the institution of the presidency. The creation of OPM by the Civil Service Reform Act codified and legitimated an altered relationship between the presidency and the public service which began in the presidency of Richard Nixon. Prior to Nixon, the modern presidency had been protective of the public service and its value system of merit and neutral competence. After Nixon, the relationship of the presidency to the public service changed to one of attempted presidential domination. From the point of view of the president, democratic responsiveness and managerial imperatives seemed to require that the neutral competence of the public service be changed to passive obedience. Accordingly, the structure of the merit system came under increasing assaults of politicization.

In its first ten years, the Office of Personnel Management emerged as the vehicle and instrumentality of the altered relationship between the public service and the presidency. OPM became the embodiment of a theory of responsiveness to
the personal and political executive leadership of the president and his appointees. This strong commitment to the presidency has resulted in OPM's adversarial relationship with the other constitutional institutions of the legislature and the courts, and has weakened the organizational representation of the institution of the public service. The development of OPM has been accompanied by an overwhelming infusion of the values of partisan political responsiveness, supported by an orthodox model of executive management. It is these values which have transformed the organization and have driven administrative action.

At a more specific level, an application of Herbert Kaufman's model of public administration values (1956; 1969), as modified by David Rosenbloom (1986) and Edie Goldenberg (1984), demonstrates a marked shift in OPM's value orientation away from merit, first toward management and then to political responsiveness as the dominant value. These value shifts have had significant implications for federal human resource management and ultimately for effective governance. The developmental history of OPM illustrates the problems that political responsiveness as a dominant value creates for the maintenance of public
service competence, the delivery of governmental services, and the faithful execution of the laws of the nation.

C. Significance of the Problem

Many observers and analysts have detected and described a quiet crisis or a noisier crumbling of the American public service (e.g., Levine and Kleeman, 1986; Lane, 1987; Havemann, 1988; Clark and Wachtel, 1988). The Civil Service Reform Act and its implementation by OPM have coincided with a widely perceived deterioration of the federal personnel system and its ability to assure the human resource capability of the government. A decline in the human capability of the federal service raises serious questions about the maintenance of an effective capacity for governance in the American polity.

The history of OPM is illustrative of the continuing tension between democratic and organizational theory, both in OPM's internal organization and in its impact on government-wide administrative operations. The maximization of the partisan political responsiveness of public organizations creates conditions which are inherently inimical to organizational continuity, expertise, and professionalism. The story of OPM thus
becomes broadly significant in terms of national competence to operate an effective government in a democratic system.

D. Literature Review
The creation and implementation of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 has resulted in a large body of literature which examines various aspects of the reform and its programs. Much analysis has been devoted to the specific individual programs of the reform (merit pay, performance appraisal, senior executive service, demonstration projects, labor relations), but the broader organizational and institutional aspects of the reform have received much less attention.

In the literature pertaining to the civil service reform of 1978, the specific treatment of OPM as an organizational instrument of the reform has been relatively neglected. Consequently, this dissertation fills a gap in the conceptual treatment of civil service reform. Similarly, in regard to values, only a few authors have directly dealt with the value expressions of the legislation (e.g., Rosenbloom, 1986). No study, to date, has directly analyzed the linkage of the specific organizations of the reform to the values of the reform. Thus, the dissertation
provides a new perspective on laws and their implementation and on values and their embodiment in organizations.

The implications of the 1978 reform on American political institutions has also been neglected. Customarily, CSRA receives a passing notation in recent studies of the presidency, but the implications for the public service, as a political institution, have been neglected. The prevalent phenomena of politicization, denigration, and disarray in the civil service have been noted but not analyzed in institutional terms. Thus, this dissertation presents a different interpretation of contemporary political developments from the perspective of the public service.

The field of inquiry represented in these pages is very broad, beginning with the necessary historical background to the reform of 1978, and ending with current documentation of research and analytical studies which are being produced and published almost up to the very moment of final dissertation submission. Essential perspective is obtained for the study through the utilization of a wide variety of conceptual literature, with particular attention to theoretical treatments of institutions, values, organizations, and political and administrative theory.
1. **Background.**

The most important and useful aid to research on civil service reform is unquestionably David Dillman's comprehensive bibliography (1987) which references historical sources and contemporary literature through the first half of 1986. This work contains over 500 references (government documents, books, and articles) which are concisely and accurately annotated.

An understanding of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 requires an acquaintance with the origin, development, and characteristics of the merit system as it evolved from the Pendleton Act in 1883. In this regard, the most relevant literature includes Van Riper's excellent *History of the United States Civil Service* (1958); the comprehensive Committee Print on the history of civil service merit systems (U.S. Congress, Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, 1976), and Bernard Rosen's analytical monograph on the condition of the merit system, the organization for personnel administration, and the role of the Civil Service Commission (1975). Additionally, conceptual issues in the historical development of the American public service are authoritatively discussed in Mosher's *Democracy and the Public Service* (1982).
The specific origins of the OPM concept are to be found in the Brownlow Committee report (The President's Committee on Administrative Management, 1937) and the two Hoover Commission reports (1949, 1955), containing specific recommendations which were forerunners to many of the provisions included in the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978. The Brownlow Committee and Hoover Commissions are usefully discussed and summarized by Ronald Moe (1982).

2. Contemporary Accounts and Records.
This dissertation deals with events of the recent past; therefore, a large volume of contemporary accounts by participants in the origination and development of OPM are available in journal articles, speeches, newspaper accounts, periodical literature, and newsletters. Readily available Congressional documents (House and Senate reports and records of hearings on CSRA) contain thousands of pages of expression of intentions, testimony, and formal statements of virtually all the direct participants in the development and implementation of the reform legislation.

The day-to-day events of the entire time period covered by the dissertation are competently reported in the Government Employee Relations Report (GERR), which is issued weekly by
the Bureau of National Affairs, Inc. This publication features balanced reporting, interviews, and summaries and quotations of statements of key participants in the events under consideration. Additionally, the published writings of people who were directly involved in the creation and development of OPM are of particular value. These include: for the founding period—Campbell, Ink, and Sugarman; for the subsequent years—Devine, Sanera, Culler, and Morris.

3. **Principal Normative and Theoretical Literature.**

The conceptual structure of the dissertation is built from three separate sources of normative and theoretical concern: the nature and interaction of political institutions and public organizations; the role and significance of values in organizational and institutional life; and the dynamics of the relationship between politics and administration.

a. **Institutions and Organizations.** The dissertation draws on March and Olsen's recent identification of a "resurgence of concern with institutions" as a key factor of political theory and analysis (1984:734). In this approach, March and Olsen observe: "Political democracy depends not only on economic and social conditions but also on the design of political
institutions. . . . They are political actors in their own right." (1984:738). A current example of this approach is found in Terry Moe’s discussion of "The Politicized Presidency" (1985). Other important recent treatments of the presidency are found in Lowi (1985), Tulis (1988b), and Heclo and Salamon (1981).

The dissertation basically examines OPM as a public organization which has acted in its own right in American political life, with significant consequences and implications. As an organization, OPM is viewed as being embedded in a complex matrix of political institutions. In this approach, the dissertation adopts Philip Selznick’s conceptual approach (1968; 1957); however, the focus of the analysis is directed more at the level of the political institutions of the presidency and the public service than at the internal workings of OPM.

While the argument of the dissertation is couched in terms of institutions and values rather than internal organizational effects, the work is infused with the spirit of what Wamsley and his colleagues call "the agency perspective" (1987), a concept that has been further developed independently by Wamsley (1988). The replacement of the former Civil Service Commission by OPM created a
discontinuity in utilization and valuing of experience, expertise, and the developed consensus formed over 95 years regarding civil service issues. The leadership of OPM chose different new perspectives, resulting in specific costs and consequences for the American political system.

b. Values and Models of Public Administration.
The classic model of shifting emphasis on fundamental values (neutral competence, executive leadership, and representativeness) was created by Kaufman (1956; 1969). Kaufman's basic model has been revised and refined by Goldenberg (1984) and Rosenbloom (1986). The latest and most comprehensive work is found in the essay by Ingraham and Ban (1988) in which a multi-dimensional approach is developed. Almost all of the work of David Rosenbloom over recent years has addressed the importance of values in the analysis of political developments and administrative activities. In his 1983 essay, Rosenbloom specifically attempts to link values and institutions as a means of understanding the problems of public administration in a democratic polity. In his 1986 publication, he brings a value perspective to bear on the development of a theory of personnel reforms.
c. Relationship of Politics and Administration.

The dynamics of the interrelationship and interaction between politics and administration in a democratic system have been the subject of analysis and theorizing at least since Woodrow Wilson's influential essay which first appeared in 1887. Seminal treatments of the relationship include Appleby (1949), Waldo (1984), and Long (1949). Other classic treatments of various aspects of the politics/administration "problem" include Heclo (1977), and Redford (1969).

More recent comprehensive discussions of the relationship between politics and administration are found in Aberbach and Rockman (1988), Rohr (1986), and Seidman and Gilmour (1986). A politically influential view which is supportive of the maintenance of a dichotomy may be found in Devine (1987) and Sanera (1984; 1987). The strongest theoretical case for political domination of the administrative process is presented by Nathan (1983). The seemingly fundamental conflict between political and organizational theory is discussed conceptually by Victor Thompson (1965), Ostrom (1974), Thayer (1986), and Yates (1982). Additionally, Gaertner and Gaertner bring together recent research findings and a provocative discussion of the conflict.
4. Evaluation of OPM and the Public Service Crisis.

The development of an evaluational framework to assess the consequences of the history of OPM is made possible first by a significant number of formal evaluation studies which have specifically examined the implementation of CSRA, and secondly by a body of literature which has studied generally the political and administrative developments in the 1980's.

a. Specific Studies. Two thorough and comprehensive studies of civil service reform and OPM have been issued in 1989. The first, by the General Accounting Office, is an intensive study of OPM's leadership in addressing critical human resource issues of government. It is based on a major attitude survey and on dozens of prior GAO reports on specific aspects of federal personnel policies and programs (U. S. GAO, 1989). The second report is by the Merit Systems Protection Board (U. S. MSPB, 1989). This report provides a ten-year retrospective evaluation of OPM's major activities since 1978. The report is based on substantial interviews throughout the federal sector and on the annual oversight reviews by MSPB which are required by the CSRA.

The state of the public service has been described in terms of a quiet crisis by a number of studies including Levine and Kleeman (1985), the Brookings Institution and the American Enterprise Institute (The Quiet Crisis ..., 1986), Clark and Wachtel (1988), Lane (1987), and the preliminary and final reports of the National Commission on the Public Service (1989).

5. Future Issues.

The challenges for the future federal personnel system are thoroughly charted in the recent Hudson Institute analysis (1988) and in the report of the National Commission on the Public Service (1989). Specific detailed discussion of recommendations for the future role of OPM is found in the National Academy of Public Administration issue paper
prepared by the Standing Panel on the Public Service (1988). Finally, the future challenges and opportunities for the central personnel function of the federal government are identified at a theoretical level by McGregor (1988).

E. Approach to the Study

This dissertation is a case study and an institutional history of a specific public organization in its first ten years of experience. As such, the study looks back to antecedents, analyzes intentions and subsequent events, and looks for lessons and guides to future action.

1. Historical Approach.

Although the time frame of the dissertation is contemporary, extending to the immediate present, the general approach is still consistent with the historical method. The origins of OPM lie in historical influences, and the evolution of the organization has historical connotations and implications. Thus, in some ways, the dissertation will be a chronicle of the birth and early development of OPM, using contemporary documentation, first-hand accounts, and a substantial amount of secondary sources. All evidence will be subjected to evaluation in
accordance with standard procedures of the historical method.

Reference will be made, although not rigorously applied, to the creative approach of Neustadt and May to the use of history in developing and evaluating public policy (1986). In this case, a historical perspective on the 1978 civil service reform provides a useful analytical tool. The reform occurred at a specific place in a time-line of political and administrative events beginning at least at the founding of the republic. The Office of Personnel Management adopted roles and identities which had distinct historical roots and connotations.

Because of the contemporary nature of the events under consideration, documents and other data are readily accessible. The chief problem of this approach is to maintain perspective and objectivity. This problem is particularly sensitive since the author of the dissertation was personally close to the scene, although not directly involved in the specific organizational life of OPM, throughout most of the period under consideration. Every effort has been made to retain as great a degree of objectivity as possible while still deriving the advantages of the participant-observer.
2. **Conceptual Approach.**

This dissertation is in most respects a case study, but it aims at a somewhat higher level of apprehension than the standard public administration case approach (see Stein, 1948). Instead of a detailed, fact-filled approach to the inner workings of OPM as an organization, the dissertation attempts to view the total entity of OPM as a political actor in its own right on a larger stage (March and Olsen, 1984). The dissertation identifies the demise of the merit system and investigates what has emerged as a replacement in terms of a public philosophy which defines problems and provides direction for governmental policies to deal with these problems (Beer, 1978:5).

The dissertation provides an interpretive study of OPM as the leading central governmental organization acting on and in the larger institution of the public service. Implications of political and administrative action are determined, meanings captured, and significance assessed. The study is based on intensive review of research, data collection, and surveys performed by others during the past ten years. The aim of the dissertation is to understand rather than to create data. As Jeffrey Tulis notes in his discussion of "The Interpretable Presidency," this is "more a search for meaning than for causes, more a concern for
significance than for laws, more a quest for coherence than for certainty” (1988a:46).

The analytical framework of Terry Moe (1985) provides a useful model which can be utilized in viewing OPM and the public service in institutional terms. The dissertation attempts to assess the implications of institutions and organizations as political influences and actors. The objective is to move toward understanding of the theoretical basis for explaining historical development of political phenomena in a democratic polity (T. Moe, 1985: 238). In Moe’s essay, the presidency provided the perspective. In this dissertation, the vantage point is that of the public service.

At its most fundamental normative level, the dissertation is sensitive to the call of White and McSwain for a resurrection of the "traditionalist" era in public administration (1988). Thus, emphasis is not on organizational behavior as commonly understood but rather on political institutions and relationships. Further, critical elements of the analysis include attention to the myths and symbols of the public service, and to the creation of a sense of dialogue and consensus about what
the people want in a public sector system of human resource management.

Ultimately, the dissertation intends to contribute to the development of a meaningful concept of the public interest in the sense, as developed by Norton Long, of "an evaluatory instrument, a tool of thought, created in action for the purposes of action, and itself evaluated and improved as the consequences of its uses in action are observed" (1988:117). In this, the dissertation may make a contribution to the epistemology and ethic of public administration—to the testing of claims and the evaluation of success and failure of public programs (Long, 1988:112).

3. **Specific Procedures and Data Collection.**

The primary method of data collection will be through exhaustive literature search, including books, journal articles, government documents, newspaper accounts, and newsletters. Additionally, the detailed and comprehensive surveys and studies conducted by the Merit Systems Review Board and the General Accounting Office will be utilized. Personal contacts with individuals who have been involved in the events under consideration have been utilized on an informal basis; however, no formal interviews have been
conducted. The dissertation is primarily based on the public record.

4. Qualifications of Author as Participant-Observer. The author of the dissertation is uniquely qualified to undertake a study of the origins and development of OPM. He has had thirty years of progressively significant experience in federal personnel administration, and he occupied a senior executive service position in an executive department during the passage and implementation of CSRA. This experience provided the author with first-hand, personal knowledge of the events of the period. Additionally, for the past two years, the author has been a regular participant in the monthly meetings of the Public Service Panel of the National Academy of Public Administration. This participation has provided broad exposure to the continuing events of OPM development as well as personal relationships with many past and present leaders in the field of public personnel administration.

In addition to the author's professional experience, he has also established academic credibility through regular teaching in business administration and public administration subjects at The American University and at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. The
author's academic credentials are supported by several publications on administrative management and public service subjects since 1983. His publications have appeared in Administration & Society, The Bureaucrat, and Administration and Policy Journal. A prototype article on OPM has been accepted for publication in the Policy Studies Journal, and the author has edited the recently released NAPA publication on The Campus and the Public Service.
In 1958, the United States Civil Service Commission celebrated the diamond anniversary of the Pendleton Act by preparing a publication entitled *The Biography of an Ideal* (Cooke, 1959). The ideal in the title was merit—a fundamentally important set of political and administrative beliefs which held that public employment and advancement should be on the basis of individual competence and ability as determined by objective mechanisms of competitive examination and demonstrated performance, and that employees should be protected from partisan political influences.

The ideal of merit was embodied in a value-driven organization of government—the Civil Service Commission—which developed, operated, and maintained surveillance over the technical programs designed to give life to the ideal. The Commission was an influential arbiter of federal employment practices, and it maintained merit system standards for state and local governmental personnel systems. It had a proud history and a reputation for a high level of expertise. Yet, only twenty years after its diamond anniversary, the Commission was broken by legislation into three separate independent organizations,
with OPM inheriting the most visible and significant policy and operational functions.

If a contemporary biography of the ideals inhering in OPM were to be written, it would be very different from the version of 1958. The changes in ideals and their representation in prominent public organizations, occurring in a relatively brief period, are significant and revealing. These changes provide an approach to understanding developments in American political life and they also provide a rationale for the creation of a framework for deeper analysis.

As an organization, OPM quickly became politically influential. It is thus a revealing subject for an institutional and organizational history which leads to a distillation of meaning and significance in American political development. In the following pages, OPM will be studied as a public organization with meaningful relationships to the evolving institutions, values, structure, and mechanisms of government. The analysis will be essentially an interpretation of contemporary political developments, utilizing a conceptual framework of organization/institution/values, from the perspective of the political institution of the public service.
A. Concepts of Organization and Institution

The development of an analytical framework provides a method for studying the relationships between and among OPM and the political institutions of the presidency and the public service. The focus is primarily on OPM and its actions, relationships and effects within the larger political society, not on the internal workings of the organization as a human system. As an organization, OPM manifests the behavioral characteristics and dynamics of a social system with formal and informal organizational phenomena and human interaction; however, these concepts of standard organizational analysis are not of primary concern in the following pages.

For purposes of clarity of conceptual approach, the terms "organization" and "institution" require a specific and consistent meaning. All too often, in political analyses, these terms are used loosely and interchangeably to the extent, as Wamsley suggests, that the terms "have been badly debased or lack adequately developed normative dimensions, to meet our theoretical needs" (1988:8). Here, the usage is intended to be disciplined and precise. The usage derives largely from an interpretation of the work of Philip Selznick but with a special adaptation (1966; 1957).
1. Definition of Organization.

In the following discussion, a public organization is defined as a technical, rationalistic instrumentality of purpose and intent, established by law and endowed with authority and means (resources) for the accomplishment of certain specific public policy objectives. An organization has discrete boundaries of task and function and a generally accepted perception of identity. A public organization also exercises primary influence within a policy subsystem which consists of individuals, groups, and organizations who are affected by and interested in a particular policy area (Wamsley and Zald, 1976:26).

Public organizations embody ideals and become infused with values which are reflective of the institutions of the political society and which are directly related to the particular laws, policies, and programs for which they are responsible. It is in this way that public organizations as social systems become "institutionalized" (Selznick, 1966:256-257). In Selznick's analysis (1957:5-21), the organization as a rational, technical instrument becomes an institution when it becomes infused with values, develops social patterns of personal and group interaction, and changes "from an expendable tool into a valued source of personal satisfaction" (1957:17).
Organizations as institutions, in Selznick's sense, are still tangible and relatively well defined accumulations of people, processes, real estate, property and material, and objectives which are specific in nature. For purposes of this analysis, a public organization, even when institutionalized, is related to a higher societal level of political institutions as a specific instrumentality is related to a more generalized environmental aggregation of "the rules and belief systems as well as the relational networks that arise in the broader societal context" (Scott, 1983:14). Thus, returning to Selznick's terms, a public organization may be seen as "imbedded in an institutional matrix and . . . therefore subject to pressures upon it from its environment, to which some general adjustment must be made" (1966:251).

2. Definition of Societal Institution. A useful approach to the definition of institution at the societal level is contained in the standard sociological differentiation between institutions and associations (defined as organized groups). In this distinction, institutions are regarded as "a formal, recognized, established and stabilized way of pursuing some activity in society," and further as collections of norms and organized procedures which "always require specific associations
[organizations] to sustain them" (Bierstedt, 1970:320-322). Organizations thus may be seen as tangible entities which are conceptually subordinate to societal institutions.

In summary, an institution at the societal level refers to a higher order of social perception and consciousness, which is expressive of overarching societal patterns, functions, and clusters of values. Societal institutions, then, are aggregations of established laws, customs, practices, ideals, symbols, understandings, traditions, rules, systems of beliefs, relational networks, and myths. There are many categories of societal institutions (e.g., economic, cultural, kinship), but it is the concept of political institution that is particularly relevant to an analysis of governmental processes.

3. Political Institutions.
In his book on the public policy process, Peter Woll identifies six major political institutions which are involved in national policy-making: "interest groups, political parties, the presidency, Congress, courts, and the bureaucracy" (1974:vi). Three of these institutions are legitimated in the Constitution, and three have developed as significant political factors outside of the formal political structure of the nation.
a. **Constitutional Institutions.** In American political life at the national level, the principal political institutions are the presidency, the Congress, and the federal courts. These institutions are founded in the Constitution as well as in subsequent specific legislation, historical practice and experience, and American customs and myths. They are the source and repository of fundamental "regime values" of the American republic (Rohr, 1978:59). These institutions are sustained and given practical effect by a broad variety of diverse organizations such as the Executive Office of the President, the House Post Office and Civil Service Committee, and the U. S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia.

b. **Parties and Interest Groups.** American political life is also conditioned by three other institutions which, although not specifically established in the Constitution, are nevertheless called into being by the political processes of the nation. The first two of these, which are of only tangential interest here, are the institutions of American political parties and interest groups.
The nation's founders saw only risk and threat in the potential activities of faction and party; yet, as Robert Dahl points out, the founders made political parties possible through the Bill of Rights and inevitable through the requirements of election campaigns and the need to establish legislative majorities (1972:250). The sustaining organizations for the institution of political parties include the Republican and Democratic National Committees.

In similar fashion, the founders were concerned that the effects of interested parties banding together could be inimical to the public good; however, the Madisonian political system established a pluralistic governmental structure which enables private groups to gain access to the policy process (Woll, 1974:53-54). The immensely significant political influence of voluntary associations, pressure groups, and lobbies are documented in Theodore Lowi's analysis of the effects of interest group liberalism (1979). Among the myriad associations which sustain the institution of interest groups are many which are particularly relevant to public service issues. These would include, for example, Common Cause, the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, and the National Civil Service League.
c. The Public Service. The third extra-constitutional institution, which is of principal concern here, is the American public service, considered as an aggregate of laws, regulations, procedures, customs, values, and practices pertaining to the people of the governmental process—the appointed (not elected) administrative officials. This political institution has often been identified by other names, all of which capture some aspect of its nature, function, and composition.

Structural and functional characteristics of the public service are emphasized in the Weberian concept of "bureaucracy" and in Rosenbloom's use of the term "administrative branch" (1983). John Rohr also refers to bureaucracy as encompassing all public officials appointed under a merit system (1978:2). The term "permanent government" (Goldenberg, 1985) denotes the enduring qualities of stability and continuity, while "civil service" captures normative and career aspects of the institution.

The term "public service" is chosen here because it is inclusive of political and career appointees; it captures the significance of service in the public interest; and it relates to promising current attempts to develop a
sophisticated normative model for the institution (Ingraham and Ban, 1988). The public service as an institution may be considered as a key part, although only a part, of an even broader institution of public administration which can be described in more comprehensive terms (e.g., Wamsley, et al., 1987).

Although the Constitution does not provide a title or a defined branch of government for the public service, American political history has provided an institutional identity which has specific origins in the founding and political development of the nation. The Constitution itself contains specific reference to subdivisions of a public service—executive personnel, inferior civil officers, a foreign service, and judicial officers. The Federalists and Anti-Federalists formed a remarkable consensus, positively and negatively expressed, of what the administrative establishment should and should not be (Lane, 1988:36-40). The early history of the republic featured a kind of apolitical administrative service which endured until 1829 (Mosher, 1982:58-64; Van Riper, 1958:11-29).

Following the triumph of Jacksonian democracy and the ensuing growth and eventual decline of politicized
administration, the civil service reformers of the late
nineteenth century rediscovered the founders' model of the
public service, joined it to the progressive movement of
political reform, and set in motion a merit system concept
that survived under protection of the presidency until at
least 1968 (Lane, 1988:40). In a fundamental sense, the
development of the public service concept, following the
Pendleton Act of 1883, was joined with the evolution of the
modern American presidency. The public service occupies a
significant position in American governance, to the extent
that John Rohr prefers to look on it "not as a neutral
instrument of management, but as a mighty institution of
government" (1978:40, emphasis in original).

From 1883 to 1978, the United States Civil Service
Commission served as the primary sustaining organization
for the institution of the public service. The
Commission, a bipartisan unit, served simultaneously as
protector of the merit system against politicization,
adjudicator of rights of public employees, inspector and
policeman, policy formulator and regulator, sponsor of
organized labor-management relationships, provider of
services (competitive examinations, registers of eligibles,
training, and retirement system operation), repository of
specialized knowledge, and advocate of modern management
practices. The awkward relationship of these often conflicting roles provided one rationale for the reform of 1978.

With the passage of the Civil Service Reform Act, the single organizational arm of the public service was fragmented. The adjudicating and protective functions were given to the Merit Systems Protection Board, and the collective bargaining relationships were assigned to the Federal Labor Relations Authority. The Office of Personnel Management assumed responsibilities for personnel policy and regulation, inspection and evaluation, promotion of effective management practices, and leadership and expertise in federal personnel practices. This functional fragmentation weakened the organizational representation of the public service and made each of the new organizations more closely tied to the presidency and consequently more susceptible to executive and partisan influence.

B. Values, Institutions and Public Organizations

Values are a defining characteristic of institutions, as noted by Harold Lasswell in his definition: "Institutions ... are the patterns that are relatively specialized to the shaping and sharing of a principal category of values"
Since institutions do not relate to single unitary values, it is necessary to expand Lasswell's idea of "category" to a more comprehensive notion of "cluster" of values. Thus, institutions can be defined by their association with a specific cluster of values. Following John Rohr's usage, values are defined as the "beliefs, passions, and principles that have been held for several generations by the overwhelming majority of the American people" (1978:65).

In a government characterized by separation of powers, it is tempting to identify certain clusters of values, as they pertain to public administration, with specific political institutions. Thus, Rosenbloom (1983) develops a model which links managerial values (effectiveness, efficiency, economy) with the executive; political values (representation, responsiveness, accountability to the citizenry) with the legislature; and legal values (procedural due process, protection of individual substantive rights, equity and fairness) with the judiciary. He then postulates that "all three governmental functions have been collapsed into the administrative branch," creating both operational and theoretical difficulties for public administration (1983:225). Rosenbloom's model relates specific clusters of values to
specific institutions and, in so doing, provides a traditional, normative, constitutional approach. It is perhaps only necessary to add that while the functions may have "collapsed into the administrative branch," the value base of the public service, in the traditional view, centers on concepts of merit and neutral competence as the essential prerequisites for any approach to efficiency, accountability, and equity.

The traditional model has theoretical power; however, it requires substantial modification on two counts. First, the separation of powers is not a functional division of labor; rather, it is a power relationship of checks and balances between and among political institutions, each maximizing a particular cluster of dominant and secondary values, and each sustained and given force and effect by a variety of organizations. Thus, both powers and values are not separated as much as blended in the principal political institutions (Rohr, 1986:15-27). Second, the model requires modification because of the political developments of the recent past which have altered the value clusters associated with the political institutions of America.

The first and most dramatic change has been the increase in the politicization of the executive branch as manifested in
the development of the politicized and plebiscitary presidency (T. Moe, 1985; Lowi, 1985) as will be discussed below at some length. The effect of this development has been to strengthen the orientation of the political presidency to values of personal responsiveness and loyalty, and to intensify the direct relationship of the president to the popular mandate. At the same time, management values of efficiency and effectiveness, while still stressed, have weakened in effect. As Patricia Ingraham notes: "The marriage of management initiatives to political control initiatives is not particularly harmonious. Very often, the rhetoric and the intensity of the partisan political activities have overshadowed—or worse, subverted—more mundane management reforms" (1987:425-426).

The second change has been the tendency of the Congress to develop operational bureaucracies, to engage in micro-management of agency activities, and to enhance its capability for technical program review and oversight. Organizations of the legislative branch, such as the General Accounting Office, the Congressional Budget Office, and the Office of Technology Assessment, have developed analytical and research capabilities which are not currently matched by any unit within the executive branch.
These developments signify a strengthened orientation of the Congress to values of efficiency and effectiveness.

The third change has been a weakening of the merit and neutral competence values of the public service, and the replacement of those values by a consistent emphasis on responsiveness of the civil service to political direction. The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 purported to strengthen the protection of merit principles through the creation of a Merit Systems Protection Board, but the political imperatives of the presidency and its control over the civil service were enhanced by the creation of OPM as an agency of presidential direction.

The organizational implications of these institutional and value relationships are significant. Values are the defining element of institutions, and by extension, of organizations through the phenomenon of institutionalization. The essential role of public organizations in a political system is to transform ideals and values, as determined through the political process, into the reality of specific actions. This requires people, organization, and administrative technologies. In this sense, public organizations become "instruments for the pursuit of the public interest" (Wamsley, et al., 1987:
300). Organizations embody ideals and become infused with values which are reflective of the larger political society and its institutions and which are directly related to the particular laws, policies, and programs for which they are responsible.

Before CSRA, the Civil Service Commission clearly possessed a distinct institutional relationship, "agency perspective," and a specific, powerful organizational culture. The Commission was infused with the values of merit which permeated the objectives and processes of the organization. The creation of the Commission's successor organizations resulted in substantial changes in the organizational perspectives, cultures, knowledge requirements, behavioral patterns, and internal and external relationships and alignments. However, most of the organizational routines, procedures, and technical mechanisms were still driven by existing law and regulation, and most of the personnel for the new OPM came from the old Civil Service Commission.

Public organizations also represent specific interests within the political society. Organizational changes of the magnitude of the CSRA implementation disrupt and revise clientele relationships and alter balances of power,
influence, and access to the decision-making process (Seidman and Gilmour, 1986:15-16). In reviewing reform as a generic phenomenon, Miewald and Steinman note that "particular reforms have utilities and inutilities for various people. All the traditional goals of reform such as efficiency, accountability, and effectiveness now have to be reevaluated in terms of the payoffs to diverse participants" (1984:8).

In the case of OPM and CSRA, the question of who benefits is directly related to the values expressed in the institutions involved. Under the merit system, a policing and enforcement system emphasized the rights of employees and protection against political influence, with only a secondary emphasis on effective management practices. This formula was inadequate at a time when public program managers were insisting on flexibility and political leaders were demanding responsiveness.

C. Definition of Value Clusters

During the debates in 1978 on the Civil Service Reform Act, the terms merit, management, and responsiveness were constantly employed by both supporters and opponents of the legislation. These terms, which relate to fundamental
political and administrative values, were persistently underdefined and were simplified and utilized with no precise regard for exact meaning and content of core ideas. An example of this is provided by the later testimony of Sally Greenberg, one of the principal architects of the Senior Executive Service section of the legislation. In response to a question of how a manager was defined by the drafters of the bill, Greenberg responded: "We adapted the Potter Stewart definition of pornography: I can't define it but I know it when I see it" (U. S. GAO, 1988:46).

The problem of underdefinition involves more than the niceties of language usage. The accomplishment of systemic change in the public sector requires political persuasion, and the establishment of new organizations requires symbols and procedural doctrines. The significance of the use of language is discussed by Philip Selznick in terms of the utility of unanalyzed abstractions (1966:59-64): "Language used for self-protection and for exhortation develops terms which are unanalyzed, and persistently so, for their effectiveness depends upon the diversity of meanings with which they may be invested." Thus, imprecise and undefined language serves to link doctrine and organization to societal values in ways that permit actual behavior to
respond as necessary to "immediate exigencies and specific pressures" (Selznick, 1966:59).

As shall be seen in the case of the civil service reform of 1978, the legislation was enacted and the organizations began operation on the basis of unanalyzed abstractions. These abstractions were the source of political debate, legislative lobbying and, later, organizational exhortation, or as Alan Campbell came to refer to it, "cheerleading" (U. S. GAO, 1988:17). In the process, the procedures and organizations of CSRA became, in Selznick's terms, "the receptacle of the positive emotional values provided by the general principle, even if what is put into practice is a theoretically unsatisfactory rendering of the original moral imperative" (1966:62). OPM was dedicated to the unanalyzed abstractions of management and political responsiveness, while merit, defined in the legislation but similarly unanalyzed, was shunted off to the Merit Systems Protection Board.

At this point, and for further analysis, it is important to correct underanalysis and to attempt a definition of the value clusters under consideration. No attempt is made to exhaust all definitional possibilities. Clearly, each term can and does contain a negative, pejorative concept which
has been utilized in the continuing debate over civil service reform. Thus, merit can become bureaucracy, red tape and inflexibility; management can become the arbitrary revocation of employee rights; and responsiveness can become politicization. In the following definitional attempts, negative constructs are disregarded. A positive definition of the value clusters, in their normative context, is necessary in order to track the relationship of institutions, values, and organizations.

1. **Merit.**

As a value system, merit is defined by Rosen (1975:7-8) as a "fair and orderly process" for utilizing people in governmental service "on the basis of ability and performance." It is the antithesis of political or other preference, and it is "designed to produce a competent, stable work force to carry on the business of government." The merit value includes an orientation to impartiality and to continuity of personnel and organization in the governmental process.

Merit values are based in law and require performance that is dedicated to execution of law rather than compliance with personal or political preference. Hence, merit values are protective against partisan influence, and they require
nonpartisan (neutral) competence in the execution of public policy. Neutral competence gives primary importance to expertise, professional standards as appropriate, and objectivity of fact and data. The perspective of the merit value system is long-term, career oriented, and dedicated to a concept of the public interest as opposed to private interests.

The merit value became enmeshed in an elaborate scheme of law, regulation, standard procedures, and practices which are captured in the term "merit system," which is defined by Stahl in these terms:

Nowadays, the term merit system is commonly used not only to convey a form of selection for entrance to the service but also to embrace other aspects of the personnel system—advancement on merit, pay related to the nature of the job and to quality of performance, and desirable working conditions. In its broadest sense a merit system in modern government means a personnel system in which comparative merit or achievement governs each individual's selection and progress in the service and in which the conditions and rewards of performance contribute to the competency and continuity of the service (1962:28, emphasis in original).

In David Rosenbloom's view, the post-Civil War reform movement established the "fundamental value framework" of public personnel administration which lasted almost a century (1981:3). By the mid-twentieth century, the value system of merit and neutral competence had achieved the
status of a public philosophy, "an outlook on public affairs which is accepted within a nation by a wide coalition and which serves to give definition to problems and direction to government policies dealing with them" (Beer, 1978:5). Until at least the 1960's, merit was broadly accepted as the appropriate means of dealing with issues of public service employment.

2. **Management.**
As a value system, management centers on the process of control and direction of resources and activities to achieve effectiveness of organizational performance (Drucker, 1973:48). Management is expected to result in organizational efficiency and governmental economy. These objectives of the management process have achieved great rhetorical significance, as virtually every organizational and managerial action taken in the public sector must somehow be justified in terms of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.

As a process, management is oriented to means and functions (planning, organizing, integrating, measuring) as its unique and necessary contribution to organizational ends. The essential emphasis on process is captured by Drucker when he says: "Function rather than power has to be the
distinctive criterion and organizing principle" (1973:394). The conception of management values derives primarily from private sector experience which has been imported into the public sector. The nineteenth-century reform movement deliberately embraced business parallels as a concomitant of the politics/administration dichotomy and as a reinforcement of the merit concept. Reformers and progressives were joined to Frederick Taylor's ideas of scientific management which resulted in a mechanistic view of organizations, a maximization of the division of labor in order to optimize production, and ultimately a view of human beings as cogs in the productive machine.

The managerial value system which derived from scientific management places great importance on rationality and objectivity in the design and implementation of work. As Dwight Waldo summarizes it: "This is the 'positivist' theory of modernity: rationalist, secular . . . , based in science and technology, disdaining politics, and seeking to replace the political with its own ethos and order" (1984:xxx). It was this "modernity" that formed the basis of a historical alliance of management concepts with the merit system, which also was predicated on rational foundations.
The effective introduction of scientific management into the federal bureaucracy came via the New Deal and, specifically, the Brownlow Committee report of 1937 (Merkle, 1980:250). The needs for governmental efficiency and managerial control led to the development of essentially authoritarian techniques of administration which were placed in the service of political democracy (Merkle, 1980:276; also see Waldo, 1984:74).

Management as a public sector value system implies an alliance with the merit system but it also requires a linkage to the political environment. Dwight Waldo believes that "scientific management was a significant, perhaps a major, input to the sociopolitical realm of the United States" (1984:xxi). The linkage to active politics requires the dichotomies of fact/value and politics/administration, and it requires a theory of passivity to political direction, of responsiveness to political institutions, and of political executive leadership. The indispensable theory is documented by Emmette Redford in his description of overhead democracy (1969:70-72). The transition from management values to political responsiveness values is the transition from what Joseph Bower terms "technical management" to "political management" (1983:13-45).
3. **Political Responsiveness.**

Responsiveness is an essential tenet of democratic governance. The value premise relies on the fundamental assumption that government is the servant, not the master of the people. The principal problem of governmental administration in a democratic context is assuring the responsiveness of the administrative process to popular control. This is difficult in a government of separation of powers, webs of interlocking relationships, weakness of hierarchy, and representation of powerful interest groups (Truman, 1951). As Norton Long observed years ago: "The unanswered question of American government—'who is boss'—constantly plagues administration" (1949:264).

At the level of values, an answer is provided by the concept of overhead democracy, which has achieved powerful normative status despite its failure to adequately deal with the political and administrative realities of American governance. Overhead democracy asserts "that democratic control should run through a single line from the representatives of the people to all those who exercised power in the name of the government. The line ran from the people to their representatives in the Presidency and the Congress, and from there to the President as chief executive, then to departments, then to bureaus, then to
lesser units, and so on to the fingertips of administration" (Weisford, 1989:70-71).

This traditional doctrine of administration is integrated, hierarchical, linearistic, and it requires obedience to political direction. In this doctrine, as described by Victor Thompson (1985:206-207), the bureaucracy is unquestioningly obedient:

It is considered to be a single, monolithic tool; and good administration consists of making this tool predictably and reliably responsive to the wishes of the owner [the public]. This result is sought through a hierarchy of authority. Authority to act comes down from the very top, and only from the top, by means of delegation, and responsibility is directed up the hierarchy, and only up the hierarchy, from lower to higher official. No official is to have authority or rights apart from that granted him by his superior officer and such grants are revocable at will.

This traditional doctrine is a powerful normative theory which satisfies the need for establishing political control over the bureaucratic administrative establishment. It is also a simplistic myth—a fact which does not diminish its significance as component of political and administrative values.

The early formulation of the theory ran, as noted, from people through Congress and the executive to the bureaucracy. This has been modified by the rise of the
modern presidency, the incumbents of which claim to be the only representative of all the people, thereby asserting a mandate to determine as well as execute policy. This development has served to link responsiveness to representativeness within the presidency. This originated with Woodrow Wilson who advocated, in William Morrow's description:

the strengthening of executive institutions within government as the route to more effective representation of the common good. . . . In sum, Wilson was a champion of a strong executive branch, sensing that representation from that perspective was more balanced and integrative. More relevant and effective policy decisions would, therefore, be an inevitable by-product of a stronger executive (1984: 259-260).

The modern concept of executive direction begins with the notion of the president-as-manager and then assumes a political content by reason of its association with the president-as-politician (Heclo, 1981:15). In this formulation, responsiveness is defined predominantly, if not exclusively, as pertaining to the president and his appointees, who in fact comprise the political presidency. Responsiveness to law, Congress, interest groups, professional standards, requirements of technology, public opinion, and the public interest is subordinated.

The concept of political responsiveness justifies patronage
The concept of political responsiveness justifies patronage and political affiliation as criteria for membership in the public service. Theoretically, if the administrative establishment is politicized by the widespread inclusion of active supporters of the president, responsiveness to the electoral mandate of every four years will be assured. In recent years, the presidential tendency to monopolize the issue of responsiveness has also provided the essential link to the issue of representativeness. As Rosenbloom and Berry correctly note, "a president's political agenda may or may not stress EEO" (1984:190), or for that matter any other basis of desired representation. Regardless of the parties or interests for whom representation in the governance process is sought, political intervention by the executive is required.

D. The Value Shifts, 1978-1988

The organizational history from the demise of the Civil Service Commission to the condition of OPM ten years later serves to illustrate and confirm Herbert Kaufman's theory of the cyclical nature and constant realignment of central values pertaining to public administration (1956; 1969). Kaufman provides a theory of the relationship of three core values (1956:1058-1067): 1) Representativeness (the
electoral principle; legislatures and people); 2) Neutral Competence (expert performance of work; objective standards; merit system); and 3) Executive Leadership (president as chief executive; management effectiveness; resolution of the fragmentation of the political system).

In recent years, other analysts have developed value models which revise or supplement Kaufman's original formulation of core values (Goldenberg, 1984; Rosenbloom, 1988). Rosenbloom proposes a three-fold framework of perspectives: 1) Managerial (efficiency; economy; organizational effectiveness); 2) Political (representativeness; responsiveness; accountability to the public); and 3) Legalistic (individual substantive and procedural rights; liberties; adjudication and adversary proceedings). Goldenberg creates a model of four broad perspectives on the role of the career service: 1) Extension of the Presidency (hierarchical subordination; passive obedience); 2) Active Supporters of the Presidency (application of knowledge and expertise to president's agenda); 3) Brokers of Conflicting Interests (accommodation; compromise; serving multiple masters); and 4) Protectors of the Public Interest (merit; neutral competence; protection from political control).
These models are displayed in Figure 1 in a matrix which relates to the principal value systems of merit, management, and political responsiveness. These value systems are particularly significant as the defining characteristic of specific political institutions and the inspiration for specific organizational action. The evolution of OPM's attachment to particular values will be charted in some detail in the following pages. The matrix of value models (Figure 1) provides a basis for a simplified road map (Figure 2) on which the value-orientation journey of OPM may be charted. This journey reflects at each step some version of the current "regime norms and values of the political system" which David Rosenbloom suggests must inevitably attach to public personnel administration (1982:6).

In summary, dominant and secondary value combinations changed from merit/management (Pre 1978) to management/responsiveness (1978-1981) to responsiveness/management (1981-1988). Prior to CSRA, the Civil Service Commission had attempted a marriage of merit and management, joining the objective qualities of competence and efficiency. The intent of CSRA was to marry management and responsiveness, thus providing political legitimacy and support for traditional management
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kaufman</th>
<th>Rosenbloge</th>
<th>Goldenberg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Protectors of public interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politically neutral competence</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Brokers of conflicting interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive leadership</td>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>Active supporter of presidency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representa- tiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td>Passive extension of presidency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Array of Value Models for Public Service Systems**

*Figure 1*
Primary relationship is indicated by a solid line and secondary relationship by a dotted line.

INSTITUTIONS, VALUES, AND ORGANIZATIONS

Figure 2
practices. The Reagan administration reversed the emphasis and emphasized the subordination of management to politics, attempting to put managerial control in the service of the furtherance of political ideology.

These value realignments and combinations have had significant organizational implications regarding role, mission, effectiveness, clientele, technical operations, morale, and technical capacity, not just in OPM but also for the public service as a whole. As Merkle notes: "Value orientations are . . . an integral part of all sequential human activity designed to attain goals, including those organized activities designated as 'administration.'" (1980:278).

E. The Presidency, the Public Service, and OPM

The relationship between the institutions of the presidency and the public service, and of the values they represent, is of particular importance in American political development. From the latter part of the nineteenth century until at least 1969, a close and mutually supportive relationship developed and was maintained between the modern activist presidency and the modern professionalized public service. Both institutions were
strongly influenced by the movements of progressivism and civil service reform. Both institutions embraced values of administrative efficiency and governmental effectiveness in a system which required and supported a powerful chief executive who aspired to be the political embodiment of all the people (Yates, 1982:20-32).

A merit and competence-based civil service aided the presidency in breaking free from Congressional control and exerting authority over policy formulation as well as policy execution. In turn, an active, energetic presidency served to protect and expand the civil service. Herbert Kaufman recognized the strength of the ties between the institutions: "For many years, the proponents of neutral competence and the partisans of executive leadership were able to make common cause, and their alliance became so imbedded in their thinking that the differences between them were hardly recognized" (1956:1087). President Lyndon Johnson was the apotheosis of this relationship—a most energetic, partisan, political president who also strongly supported and appreciated the public service.

The shared goals of the presidency and the public service masked divisive factors which were appearing in American political life. In 1956, Kaufman predicted the emerging
conflict between the executive and the bureaucracy. With uncanny prescience, he saw that the great growth of the bureaucracy meant that neutral competence could no longer contribute sufficiently to increased executive control and could not adequately meet the perceived needs of an activist executive in personally leading social welfare programs (1956:1069-1072).

The strains between the political presidency and the merit-based public service were particularly apparent in the first years of the Eisenhower presidency. In the early 1950's, as the Republicans took control of the executive branch for the first time in twenty years, the responsiveness of the protected civil service to the new political leadership was severely questioned (Mosher, 1982:89-91). A partial solution was found early in the Eisenhower administration through the creation of a new category of political appointment positions (Schedule C). Despite the strains, however, Eisenhower and his immediate successors, Kennedy and Johnson, ultimately were supportive of the public service and the value of neutral organizational competence (T. Moe, 1985:251-255).

Ironically, it was big, activist government which created the conditions for executive hostility to the human
resources of that government. The size, complexity, and uncontrollable nature of the vast administrative establishment of government led to the ultimate break between the presidency and the public service. In 1968, the presidential election of Richard Nixon marked the changed nature of the presidency and signified the reality of what Heclo has called the "institutional estrangement" of American governance (1983:48). In Harold Seidman's assessment, a system has been created "in which the presidency exists wholly apart from other institutions and is at one with the people" (1986:110-111).

President Nixon and his successors have attempted to adopt the centralization of power and the hierarchical management patterns of an administrative efficiency model of government, but at the same time they have denigrated the values of neutral competence, merit, and professionalism of the public service. The result has been an operational model of politicized centralization which derives its legitimacy from the direct representation of the people by the president and only by the president. The development has been characterized by Terry Moe as the "politicized presidency" (1983:239):

Yet the precise kind of institutional presidency he [the president] needs is determined by the kinds of expectations that drive him. He is not interested in
efficiency or effectiveness per se, and he does not
give preeminence to the 'neutral competence' these
properties may seem to require. He is a politician
fundamentally concerned with the dynamics of political
leadership and thus with political support and
opposition, political strategy, and political
tradeoffs. What he wants is an institutional system
responsive to his needs as a political leader. He
values organizational competence, to be sure, but what
he seeks is 'responsive competence,' not neutral
competence.

The politicized presidency has also become, in Theodore
Lowi's terms, the personal and plebiscitary presidency:
"an office of tremendous personal power drawn from the
people . . . and based on the new democratic theory that
the presidency with all powers is the necessary condition
for governing a large, democratic nation" (1985:20). The
direct relationship of the president to the people requires
media command, diversionary entertainment and spectacle,
image building, symbolism and myth, manipulation of
information, and the management of fantasy (Lowi, 1985:
112-117; Miroff, 1988:289; Kertzer, 1988:C3; Newland, 1987:
45; Blumenthal, 1988:260).

The politicized, personal, and plebiscitary presidency has
also become a locus of romanticism. In this, President
Carter was a transition figure, characterized by Beer as
"at once a technocrat and a romantic" (1978:43). When
Carter was succeeded in the presidency by Ronald Reagan,
the "marriage of Hollywood and Washington" was consummated (Wills, 1987:202). Ironically, this romanticism was a conservative adaptation of aspects of the 1960's romanticism of the radical left—specifically, the subjectivity of trusting the heart and not the head as expressed in ideology and a marked hostility to data, analysis, and professional expertise. As president, Ronald Reagan was a true romantic figure whose disdain of facts and information was legendary (Wills, 1987:334-377).

Of seeming necessity, the politicized president looks for advice solely from those "who only have him as their constituency" (Reedy, 1988:1). Within the governance system, as Moe states: "The pursuit of responsive competence . . . encourages two basic developmental thrusts. . . . Increasing centralization of the institutional presidency in the White House . . . [and] the increasing politicization of the institutional system." (1985:244-245). In this way, the presidency turned away from its old alliance with the public service in an extraordinary parting of the ways and a striking development in political dynamics. The result has been a new configuration—not of politics and administration but of politics against administration. This configuration has
stretched even further the constitutional bonds and understandings of American governance.

The constitutional implications of these institutional developments are significant. From its inception, the modern presidency has been constitutionally problematic. The founders assumed that the people would be primarily represented in the Congress, that the president would be primarily an executive rather than policy-making officer, and that a nonpartisan and incorrupt administration was a necessity. The presidency envisioned by the founders derived its authority from the Constitution; the presidency of Woodrow Wilson and his successors has its power and authority conferred by the people (Tulis, 1988b:107). The history of the modern presidency, as Edward Corwin once noted, "has been a history of aggrandizement" (1951:58), taking on the functions of representation and policy determination as well as execution and administration. In the development of the modern presidency from Woodrow Wilson through Franklin Roosevelt to Lyndon Johnson, the constitutional problem was at least partially solved by the linkage of the presidency to a competent, nonpartisan public service. This was essentially the solution prescribed by the Brownlow Committee in 1937. The report of the Committee made extraordinary claims of broad
presidential authority and executive supremacy, including a proposed executive domination of the personnel management process. However, the Committee also stressed the vigorous extension of the career service and concepts of expertise and competence (President's Committee on Administrative Management, 1937).

Through the Brownlow formula, the president's constitutional responsibility for execution of the law (the "take care" clause) was effectively represented, even as Roosevelt and the Brownlow Committee changed the nature of American government. There is a certain irony in the need for the extra-constitutional device of a competent, nonpartisan administrative establishment to tie the modern presidency and its anti-constitutional nature into the normative structure of American governance.

After 1968, the Nixon/Carter/Reagan formula for governance has been essentially what Richard Nathan calls the "administrative presidency" (1983). In this model, presidential aggrandizement is complete; however, as Lester Salamon notes, "presidential government at its best turned out to be constitutional government at its worst" (1981: 288). There is no place in the constitutional structure for a plebiscitary president who claims exclusive executive
power. This doctrine, as John Rohr notes, "found its origins, not in the framers of the Constitution, but in the presidency of Andrew Jackson. Its fulfillment comes in the presidency of Richard Nixon. At the heart of the doctrine is a fundamental error that transforms the president from chief executive officer into sole executive officer" (1986:139).

In the administrative presidency, political and administrative responsiveness is newly defined as responsiveness not to laws, or public interest, or Congress, or courts, but responsiveness to the persons of the president and his appointees. This new formula was created in Richard Nixon's "new American Revolution" (Seidman and Gilmour, 1986:98-111). It was legitimated in the Carter administration by a new civil service reform, and it was brought to full flower in the Reagan administration.

In the 95 years before CSRA, the Civil Service Commission served as the organizational representative of the public service, embodying the values of merit and neutral competence. During those years the relationship of the public service and the presidency was personified by the close working relationships of Chairman Roger Jones with
President Eisenhower and Chairman John Macy with President Johnson (Harvey, 1970:27-29). In these cases, the head of the Commission was an ardent supporter of the public service, who believed that good personnel management could contribute to effective governance. Jones and Macy worked closely with their respective presidents, and were able to convince them that it was in their interest to support the merit system.

After 1968, the new presidency--personal, plebiscitary, politicized, and romantic--has been hostile to the core values of the public service--impersonal, politically neutral, oriented to law and systems, and rationally objective and professionally expert. This institutional and value-based incompatibility provided the environment and motivation for the development of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 and for the creation and development of the Office of Personnel Management as an organization dedicated to the presidency.

The politicized presidency is driven by perceived needs and requirements of incentives and resources to establish and maintain partisan political control over the governmental establishment (Moe, 1985:237). Correspondingly, a new kind of public service has been created, with the subjugation of
the values of merit, competence, and professionalization in order to increase responsiveness to the politicized presidency. All of this was ratified and legalized by the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, and the Office of Personnel Management became an instrument of a new order of American politics.
CHAPTER 3: OPM: THE ORIGINAL INTENTION

In the political conditions of the late 1970's, the Civil Service Commission was perceived to be inadequate, both in terms of political responsiveness and in the protection of the principles of merit. These inadequacies led to a new civil service reform. Twenty years earlier, the Biography of an Ideal contained what proved to be a prophetic warning: "Institutions built on a high promise of public service, as the merit system was built, must fulfill that promise—or they will surely be discarded and replaced by something else" (Cooke, 1959:123).

The "something else" turned out to be in large part the Office of Personnel Management, designed to be "the President's managerial arm for the federal service" (Rosenbloom, 1978:172). The result of the change was more than a governmental reorganization. The birth of OPM signaled a reorientation and realignment of the public organizations which support and sustain American political institutions.
A. Environment and Conditions for the Birth of OPM

The Office of Personnel Management began organizational life as a complex mixture of old and new influences. Its people and other resources and its technical operations were largely the same as substantial portions of the old Civil Service Commission. The specific functions of recruitment, examination, position classification, and pay and benefits administration, were little changed. This continuity of technical functions and human resources existed in an environment of change and new demands.

OPM emerged from the legislative process in 1978 as a new organization with an amply documented public record of its genesis. In that regard, OPM was an appropriate example of Herbert Kaufman's observation that "organizational birth is an open book. Agencies come into existence in response to demands for service from politically mobilized segments of society, both inside and outside the government" (1976:66).

The parties at interest in the reform of 1978 included the general populace which was expressing discontent, disillusionment, and doubt about the ability of government to perform effectively its responsibilities; federal program officials who were disillusioned with the governmental management system and its inflexibility,
regulations, and restrictions on effective managerial action; and political officials in the executive branch who believed that the civil service was not sufficiently responsive to political direction.

In the policy environment of 1978, as it affected the reform effort, "the most relevant variables" were political (Kramer, 1982:7). Public attitudes were widely perceived as not only dissatisfied with governmental performance but also angry and apprehensive about the increasing impact of public bureaucracies on private lives. These concerns resulted in increasingly effective popular opposition to patterns of growing governmental taxation and spending. In many states and local jurisdictions, specific civil service reform initiatives were being undertaken in the 1970's (Argyle, 1982:157-159).

At the national level, issues of governmental effectiveness and economy had become prominent in presidential election campaigns since 1968. Presidential candidates used the issue of the responsiveness of the bureaucracy as a means of reversing the perceived post-Watergate "decline in the authority, status, influence, and effectiveness of the Presidency" (Huntington, 1976:24). Additionally, as Kramer reports: "The political benefits of pushing for
bureaucratic reform . . . were not lost on the members of Congress and on congressional hopefuls" (1982:8).

Civil service reform became an issue which could be used politically to mobilize the disaffected parties at interest. Consequently, a concentrated public relations effort, both inside and outside of government, was developed to build support for the proposed reform measures. This effort tapped into a persistent theme of American public life—the denigration of the public service—which was resurgent in the 1960's and 1970's.

"Bureaucrat bashing" was not a new phenomenon, but it now became a prominent and successful ingredient in presidential electoral campaigns. Governor George Wallace found attacks on the "pointy headed bureaucrats" to be politically profitable, and Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter achieved the presidency on the basis, in part, of attacks on the bureaucracy. The selling of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 was accompanied by unflattering portrayals of the bureaucracy, featuring horror stories and worst-case scenarios about the difficulty of removing incompetent federal employees. The campaign was successful, but the burden of a negative and adversarial image became firmly attached to OPM (Ingraham, 1984:21).
The pressure from the general populace and the assertions of election campaigning were joined by pressures from inside the federal government for greater managerial flexibility and responsiveness to political direction (Cohen, 1984:14-15). Alan Campbell, the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission in 1978 and soon to be first director of OPM, noted the situation this way:

I had been in town but a few hours when I was contacted by a wide range of groups—including people from the federal bureaucracy, the media, members from the Hill, newly appointed cabinet members—all concerned that something had to be done about the civil service system. . . . I indeed was bombarded with complaints; and worse still, the president heard complaints at every cabinet meeting. Quite naturally, . . . he was less than pleased to find himself plagued by continuous criticisms from individual cabinet members of their inability to find and use the civil service system in a way they believed would serve the interests of their agency. This situation reaffirmed the president's view that reform of the personnel management system was central to his total reorganizational effort (1979:5).

In Campbell's view, the causes of the problems which were so forcibly impressed upon him could be summarized as: 1) a widespread loss of confidence in the merit system; 2) procedural obstacles to effective managerial action to remedy performance deficiencies; 3) weaknesses in the authority and incentives for federal managers; and 4) persistent systemic obstacles to achieving social representativeness in the federal work force (Cohen, 1984: 15).
The political environment provided the rationale for specific measures designed, according to Campbell, to improve governmental efficiency and effectiveness; "to create a positive, rather than negative, personnel management system;" to delegate personnel authority to departments and agencies; to provide for research and demonstration projects; to create a senior executive service which would blur the line between career and non-career positions; and to emphasize performance in the management of personnel (U. S. GAO, 1988:12-15).

B. Conceptual Origins
Although the 1978 reform was expressive in some ways of a break with reform tradition (Caiden, 1984:251-253), it was more clearly an example of Kaufman's shifting and realignment of values. The traditional civil service idea--of a merit system of legal and regulatory restrictions, elaborate centralized personnel administrative systems, and protections against politics--was subordinated to executive management. However, the values of the merit system continued to live in the language of CSRA, in the Merit Systems Protection Board, and in the Office of the Special Counsel (see Office of the Special Counsel, 1985).
The roles and missions envisioned for the Office of Personnel Management were not fundamentally revolutionary. The reform effort as a whole was "extensive but not radical in its degree of change from the traditional system of employment practices" (Kramer, 1982:18). OPM thus had deep roots in American political and administrative management traditions (Nigro and Clayton, 1984:154). The challenge for the creators of the new organization was to give force and effect to a new mix of old doctrines.

1. **Management Orthodoxy.**

In the political and managerial environment of the late 1970's, there was a change of emphasis from an inner-directedness of service to the externally imposed mandate of formal authority. The terminology shifted from a concept of civil or public service to a concept of public management (Hauptman, 1982:124). The change in terminology signaled "an emerging reorientation. The words management and service carry different implications. Service implies response and subordination, while management involves direction and superordination" (Hauptman, 1982:124). The dominant managerial concept required emphasis on performance management, monetary incentives, and disciplinary sanctions. These features of managerialism, as expressed in CSRA and to be implemented by OPM, led one
of the harshest critics of the reform to proclaim the triumph of Theory X in the federal establishment (Thayer, 1978).

Accordingly, a model of administrative management orthodoxy was the first, most heavily emphasized conceptual origin of OPM (Beam, 1978). The first Deputy Director of OPM, Jule M. Sugarman, noted that the old civil service system had "erected a pretty firm wall against effective managerial action" (quoted in Beam, 1978:74). OPM clearly was intended to be the organizational mechanism for dismantling the procedural barriers to the improvement of management at all levels of federal operations.

In 1977, as Chairman of the Civil Service Commission, Alan Campbell was acutely aware of the problem of balancing management requirements with protection of employee rights. He saw effective management and protection of employees as "essentially two opposite sets of principles related to management-employee relations" (Campbell, 1977: 49). The structural answer to the problem was proposed in CSRA by assigning concern for employee rights to the Merit Systems Protection Board, while the principles of management, as understood in CSRA, became the province of OPM. Of course, Campbell went to OPM as its first Director, taking with him
the bulk of central personnel resources, effective influence over administrative action, and organizational power. After all, as Campbell said, "this is a management-oriented administration" (1977:49).

The traditional public management philosophy expressed in CSRA centers on the president as chief executive officer and is predicated on subordinate managerial action within a system of hierarchy, control, and accountability. While the proper roles and functions of a federal manager were not clearly defined in the drafting of the legislation, assumptions were clearly made that management meant transmission of authority through hierarchical structures of organization. This was the classical doctrine of the 1930's (Beam, 1978:72), updated by the importation of private sector concepts of performance measurement and monetary incentives, enriched by the adaptation of the British notion of an elite senior executive cadre (administrative class), and permeated by rather simplistic notions of reward and punishment in organizational life.

Although the reform purported to enhance the reputation of public employees and to reward excellence, the traditional concept of managerialism bore no relationship to influential theories of human behavior and motivation in
organizations (e.g., McGregor, 1960; Herzberg, 1966; Maslow, 1954) which stress the importance of employee self-actualization and realization of human potential. The managerialism of CSRA certainly offered no preparation for, compatibility with, or reflection of the emergent theories of organizational excellence and human resource management. Frederick Thayer's analysis of CSRA lays bare the authoritarian assumptions of the reform (1984:272-273):

The premise of the 1978 civil service reform was that even if policymakers and administrators serve common purposes, the former completely define those purposes. . . . The increasingly coercive nature of the policymaker-administrator relationship now lays to rest any lingering notion that the two are partners, as well as the old canard that authority flows in all directions. Ironically, reform was advertised as an application of business principles, but corporations now study Japanese concepts of participatory management and permanent job security.

The basic approach of the management concept of CSRA, as it was reflected and implemented in OPM, was the recognition, even the necessity, of an adversarial relationship between the operative management theory and the merit system. This further implied an adversarial relationship between employer and employee, which was not significantly ameliorated by provisions encouraging or requiring employee participation in the drafting of performance standards. The adversarial nature of the management concept fit well with the anti-bureaucratic sentiment of the times, and it
blended well with the growing hostility of political leadership toward the career service.

The management theory inherent in CSRA had significant implications for the theory and practice of federal personnel management. Alan Campbell frequently expressed his abhorrence of the federal personnel practices which had evolved with the merit system. To Campbell, personnel managers were more dedicated to the intricacies of the system and to its rules and regulations than they were to the effective management of human resources for organizational accomplishment.

As early as October 1977, Campbell challenged the federal personnel community to advance the profession by identifying with management rather than with the rigidity, red tape, inflexibility, and policing mentality of what was then, in his view, the systemic distortion of the merit principle (Campbell, 1978b:59-61). He promised changes in the system that would put the personnel office "fully in the mainstream of agency management" (1978b:64). In essence, he was demanding that the personnel administration community look away from the protective concepts of merit, away from reliance on a centralized system of control, and turn toward a concept of management which was in some
respects fundamentally at odds with emerging theories of human resource development and utilization.

In the political context of American government, personnel management was to be linked to the hierarchical and authoritative chain of command which reached to the presidency. The conventional public-administration formula for effective management consistently places ultimate reliance on the president as manager. A definitive statement of this formula was written in 1976 by Dwight A. Ink, a prominent career public official who was later to become a central figure in the development of proposals for the Civil Service Reform Act.

In his essay, Ink noted that the "deteriorating state of many government operations, the disenchantment of the citizen with government, and the importance of meeting national needs all require urgently that government begin to be truly managed." Ink then asserted that only the president could provide the needed management and "the president must manage . . . Without presidential managerial leadership, the huge and unwieldy executive branch will not be managed" (1976:508-515). Along these lines, with CSRA, the principal emphasis of managerial orthodoxy reached to the level of the political executive.
As David Rosenbloom observed shortly after OPM began operations: "The fundamental values expressed most clearly in the Carter reforms are executive leadership and accountability" (1979:172).

2. Political Accountability and Responsiveness.

In the public sector context, accountability means political accountability. The Civil Service Commission had traditionally preached management, but political leaders felt continually frustrated by the personnel system which, at heart, was designed to protect against political influence. Early in the Carter administration, cabinet officers demanded that the public service be made more responsive to political and managerial direction. This was to be translated into specific initiatives in CSRA. The then Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Wayne Granquist, made the fundamental point: "The underlying theory of the SES is that the top layer of bureaucracy will be more responsive to the President" (quoted in Mackenzie, 1981:130).

The emphasis in CSRA on merit pay provides another example of the importance of the idea of control and responsiveness. The point is made by James Perry:
From a symbolic perspective, merit pay represents the efforts of politicians, administrators, and the public to assert control over bureaucracy. It is a message from politicians and the public that the governed are in control and things are as they should be. At the same time it is a way for administrators to communicate that they are responsive to important external constituencies and that they are doing something about perceptions of lagging performance. In sum, merit pay is part of the ritual and myth that helps to retain the legitimacy of the governance system, but it may have little consequence for individual and organizational performance (1988:17).

Responsiveness of the bureaucracy was not a new demand invented by Jimmy Carter's political appointees. Such demands have reverberated through American history since the founding of the republic. The problem has always been to answer the question: responsive to what or to whom? The first, and easiest, answer is that responsiveness is due to the president and all his relevant political appointees. But public administrators must also respond to the political imperatives of key Congressional committees, to the law as interpreted by the judicial branch, to the needs and desires of their interest group constituencies, to the standards of their professions, to the normative and ethical standards of the American culture, to the elusive concept of the public interest, to their own career requirements and ambitions, and not least, to the specific technical requirements of effective program delivery.
The most persuasive answer for OPM was that "more responsive to the President" meant less responsive to other elements of the political society. In this answer, accountability of the career service to political officials was justified as a principal tenet of democratic politics and administration (Thompson, 1986:329). Thus, OPM was to become an instrumental expression of the responsiveness of the career public service to the political outcomes of the democratic process as manifested not so much in legislative processes and laws but primarily in the persons and personalities of the president and his political appointees.

In the recent context of American government, responsiveness to executive management is purported to be the functional expression of responsiveness to the people. The chain of responsiveness runs from the people through the plebiscitary presidency, then through the political appointees in executive positions to the working levels of government. Political executives form the critical link in this chain of responsiveness. They derive their legitimacy through the presidency and claim to be the surrogates and personal representatives of the presidential electoral mandate. In effect, their legitimacy is secured on the basis of a personal, ideological, or partisan relationship
to a single elected official—the president. These politically appointed officials are the principal members of what a recent study calls *America's Unelected Government*: "They are part of a president's administration because he asked them to be" (Macy, Adams, and Walter, 1983:2).

The extent of the identification of political appointees to the presidency intensified in the Reagan administration. One political analyst noted the following about the Reagan appointees: "They are an entirely different breed of appointee than in the Carter, Nixon, Ford administrations. They are ideologically committed. There is no allegiance to the department, but to the Oval Office or the conservative cause" (Paul Light quoted in Hedrick Smith, 1988:303). In cases of the pure political executive, responsiveness runs only to the president—an operative constituency of one person. The most controversial of Reagan's early political appointees (e.g., James Watt of Interior, Anne Burford of EPA, Donald Devine of OPM) were agents who were primarily influenced by no other interest or person than the president and their interpretation of his ideology. Loyalty to the president's agenda became the primary criterion of administrative action (Sanders, 1988: 394).
The executive supremacy model of political legitimacy and responsiveness is perhaps best demonstrated by an example from popular literature. In Isaac Asimov’s *Foundation and Empire* (1952:97), the following instructive dialogue occurs between the public servant and the political executive:

CAPT. PRITCHER: "Excellence, my duty is primarily to the state, and not to my superior."

MAYOR INDBUR: "Fallacious, for your superior has his superior, and that superior is myself, and I am the State."

This expression of executive supremacy is, of course, far removed from the reality of American governance with its complex patterns of multiple authority, weak chains of command, and interplay of conflicting interests. At the normative level, the theory of executive supremacy is also far removed from the classic expression of Woodrow Wilson when he said: "The question for us is, how shall our series of governments be so administered that it shall always be to the interest of the public officer to serve, not his superior alone but the community also, with the best efforts of his talents and the soberest service of his conscience?" (1978:16).

3. Orthodoxy of Reform and Structural Change.

The reformers of 1978 were seeking a dramatic break with almost a hundred years of the consistent evolutionary trend
of public personnel administration in the direction of development of the merit system concept (Ershkowitz, 1984: 77). However, the break with historical development was to be achieved through another American tradition—an orthodoxy of reform—which was to be employed once again in an attempt to reconcile the conflicting and competing requirements of democracy and bureaucracy (O'Toole, 1984: 238-239).

In its concentration on structural change, the reform missed the moral fervor and idealism that had characterized earlier civil service movements. The only dimension of "good" versus "evil" that Alan Campbell and other advocates of CSRA relied on was the relatively pallid "good" of economic behavior and efficiency as opposed to the "evil" of an allegedly uncontrolled and unresponsive bureaucracy. Thus, CSRA was not a reform stemming from moralism, extremism, or movement politics (see Lipset, 1976:145-147). The reform was placed in the camp of conservative pragmatism rather than the utopian moralism that often provided popular fervor and commitment for reform objectives. Arguably, it is difficult to create and sustain moral fervor around the assumptions of CSRA "that monetary rewards are significant motivators" (Bozeman, 1979:185).
The reform of 1978 was pragmatic, embracing the conventional wisdom of new legislation and governmental reorganization in the creation of OPM. This orthodox theory of reorganization was expected to result in economy, efficiency, better management, and enhanced presidential capability to run the country (Seidman and Gilmour, 1986: 3-36). In this, the objectives of the reform rested on a conventional and traditional approach to structural change.

The assumption of the reform effort was that revisions in governmental organization and personnel program structure would "change the way people behave in the conduct of personnel management" (Bellone, 1982:59). The expectations of the legislation included the following: 1) given flexibility and authority, federal managers would begin to devote substantial time and attention to personnel issues, particularly performance management; 2) given monetary incentives and disciplinary sanctions, employees would respond with increased productivity; 3) given delegations of authority, managers and personnel specialists would collaborate to develop and utilize creative and effective employment practices; and 4) given status and opportunity for reward and responsibility, federal executives would become more responsive to
political direction, more creative and risk-taking, and more occupationally and geographically mobile.

Each of these expectations required behavioral change on the part of affected employees, but neither the legislation nor the implementation planning provided sufficient guidance or attention to the requirements of effective change processes. The reliance on structure to the exclusion of considerations of behavioral change, and the negative, anti-employee campaigning associated with the reform effort, led Carl Bellone to predict that the Act would be unable to achieve its goals (1982:68).

The reform was particularly interesting because it advocated alteration of an organization and the practices of the merit system which themselves had been a major reform achievement (Rourke, 1978:xi). A second striking characteristic, as noted by Rourke, was the attitude of the reform to political influence: "Whereas reformers once sought to insulate executive agencies from political pressures and influence, the emphasis today is on the need to subject bureaucratic decision making to greater public scrutiny and control" (1978:xi).
With CSRA, public personnel administration moved away from reliance on technical mechanisms and toward greater political influence. This required a substantial conceptual reorientation along the lines of Lee Cronbach's assessment: "Personnel selection is a political act and a proper concern of national policy. The accommodative process of the political system is a better way to resolve conflicts of interests than is the unilateral rationality of even the best-intentioned professional in a back room" (1980:49).

However, CSRA did not look toward citizen participation or Congressional involvement for its "accommodative process;" rather, it was dedicated to the theory that control by the people of the administrative activity of government is best secured through the president and his political appointees. Thus, the "back-room professionals" of the merit system were to give way to executive management and political direction, not to the political processes of "social interaction" (Wildavsky, 1979:114-141) or to the mutual control and adjustment to be secured in a democratic "play of power" (Lindblom, 1980:43-63).
C. Specific Origins

The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 and the creation of the Office of Personnel Management had roots and foundations in specific governmental proposals and studies which had been undertaken during the previous forty years. The reports of the Brownlow Committee and the two Hoover Commissions were particularly influential regarding structure and programs. More immediately, the reports on abuses of the merit system during the Nixon administration also influenced the functional assignments of responsibility for merit system protection and personnel management under CSRA. These specific historical influences are easily identified and traced to their sources; however, the earlier ideas and recommendations were being applied in CSRA in a very different political and administrative environment. This difference was to be very influential in shaping the results of the reform.


The Brownlow Committee has been identified by Theodore Lowi as "One of the most important presidential commissions ever formed" (1985:1). The Committee's report was, and continues to be, extraordinarily significant and influential in the creation and development of the modern presidency and the administrative establishment ("Helping
the President," 1987:1,3). In regard to federal personnel management, the Brownlow Committee report created the formula for the replacement of the bipartisan Civil Service Commission by a presidential personnel agency under a single administrator, and a "nonpartisan instead of bipartisan" Civil Service Board to protect and develop the merit system (The President's Committee on Administrative Management, 1937:10-11). This proposal was considered too controversial for adoption until 41 years later when the reformers of 1978 created the Office of Personnel Management and the Merit Systems Protection Board.

The justifications presented in 1978 for the creation of OPM were virtually identical to the arguments presented in 1937. The change would alleviate the conflict of function and interest which existed within the Civil Service Commission and would provide a unitary executive office which "would act as the direct adviser to the President upon all personnel matters" and which would "assume initiative and leadership in personnel management" (President's Committee ..., 1937:10).

The similarity of expression and structural innovation in 1937 and 1978 masked a fundamental difference in a critical aspect of the conceptual theory underlying the proposals.
Simply put, the genesis of OPM in its Brownlow Committee version (to be called the Civil Service Administration) was not intended to be a political office in charge of a politically influenced personnel system. The proposal placed heavy emphasis on the need for a major expansion of the merit system "upward, outward, and downward" (President's Committee ..., 1937:7).

In addition to the expansion of the merit system, the report proposed that the executive director of the Civil Service Administration:

... should be selected on a competitive, nonpartisan basis by a special examining board ... and should be appointed by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate, from the three highest candidates passing the examination conducted to fill the post. In this manner careful attention would be given to the professional and technical qualifications required by the office and the merit principle would be extended to the very top of the Civil Service Administration. (President's Committee ..., 1937:10).

The similarities between the Brownlow Committee recommendations and the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 are interesting. The differences are significant. The Brownlow Committee stressed executive management, but it was fully compatible with the value framework of merit and neutral competence. The Brownlow Committee recommendations constituted a formal theory of the policy-making and policy-executing presidency, but they also provided a
formal expression of the close and necessary relationship of mutual dependency between the institutions of the presidency and the public service in the governance process. The Committee envisioned a prominent role for high level career personnel, including the possibility of career executives serving as executive assistants to the president (Rohr, 1986:150).

2. First and Second Hoover Commission Reports.

The reports of the Commissions on Organization of the Executive Branch of Government (1949; 1955) also influenced the content and concepts of CSRA. The objectives and recommendations of the two Hoover Commissions continued the legacy of the Brownlow Committee to strengthen the concept of presidential management (R. Moe, 1982:11). The Commissions did not, however, repeat the Brownlow recommendation that the Civil Service Commission be broken into two units, one for personnel policy and management and one for merit system protection. Rather, the Hoover Commissions looked to the strengthening and improvement of the internal operation of the Civil Service Commission and of personnel management operations in the agencies under the traditional concept of the merit system (Mosher, 1982: 87).
In its overall organizational recommendations, the first Hoover Commission (1947-1949) advocated an orderly grouping of functions, a clear line of presidential control over the agencies, and greater decentralization of administrative operations to the agencies (R. Moe, 1982:34). In regard to the personnel function, the Commission presented 29 specific recommendations, summarized by Van Riper (1958:457) as follows:

These [recommendations] called for a much greater decentralization of personnel transactions, within both the Civil Service Commission and the line agencies, and an emphasis on the development of more systematic line and staff relationships among all levels of personnel management. Pay plans should be unified and salaries raised. Position-classification should be decentralized and revised to allow for much greater administrative discretion. Employee development programs, particularly at the entering and top levels, should be undertaken. Employee participation in the formulation of personnel policies should be encouraged. The dismissal and reduction-in-force systems should be overhauled, most of the examination function decentralized to the operating agencies, and a system devised to measure the over-staffing of personnel sections.

Turning to the second Hoover Commission (1953-1955), perhaps its most significant contribution was its Personnel and Civil Service report which contained 19 specific recommendations for the improvement of federal personnel administration. Most significantly, the report contained a proposal for the creation of a Senior Civil Service which "was to consist of 1,500 to 3,000 top level career civil
servants with at least five years of experience, who were to be granted extra pay and emoluments as well as rank-in-the-man so that they might form a pool of readily transferrable career executives" (Van Riper, 1958:518).

Other personnel system recommendations of the second Hoover Commission included: recognition of the need for executive development and training; improvements in the pay structure to include higher pay for upper level employees and a prevailing rate system for lower levels; positive recruitment efforts and improvements in the examination rating system; a new emphasis on performance evaluation, following the pattern of the private sector; revision and improvement of the disciplinary practices; modification of veteran's preference; and a strong stress on decentralization of personnel management operations (Van Riper, 1958:518-519).

The recommendations of the second Hoover Commission, like those of the first, were directly influential in the formulation of later reform initiatives as they emerged in the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978. Particularly, as Ronald Moe has noted: "The SES is based, for the most part, on concepts underlying the report of the second
Hoover Commission and indeed has many of the features contained in the Commission's original proposal" (1982:93).

3. **Historical Precedents in Different Times.**

Like the Brownlow Committee, the Hoover Commissions were dedicated to the principle of presidential administrative leadership, management improvement, and better personnel operations. The Committee and the Commissions, however, advanced no recommendations to diminish or weaken the merit system or the career service. Rather, they praised the quality of the civil service and worked toward the maintenance and improvement of that quality (Van Riper, 1958:517). The second Hoover Commission in particular, according to Van Riper, "recognized to a much greater degree the crucial importance of political leadership in personnel management and contained refreshing and positive emphases on employee morale, motivation, and development" (1958:520).

The Brownlow Committee and the Hoover Commissions operated entirely within the value frameworks of merit, neutral competence, and rational management for the administrative functions of government. In 1978, the old value framework was dismantled. The new reform was compatible with the earlier theory of presidential leadership and management
initiative; however, CSRA provided a formal expression of a new superior-subordinate relationship between the presidency and the public service. The CSRA took structure from the Brownlow Committee and specific recommendations from the Hoover Commissions, but it did not adopt the strong Brownlow/Hoover support of the merit system and the public service. When CSRA became a reality, the political world was altered and the management value cluster was divorced from merit and married to political responsiveness.

4. Critiques of Public Personnel Administration. The final specific source of inspiration for OPM came from vigorous critiques of the operational viability of the Civil Service Commission, the merit system, and the entire structure of public personnel administration. The critiques came from all sides of the issue. As noted earlier, political executives and federal program managers were utterly dissatisfied with the responsiveness of the system to political requirements and to program requirements for timely and effective personnel services.

On another front, supporters of the merit concept had been appalled by the ease with which the Nixon administration had subverted the merit system in attempting to carry
forward political and administrative initiatives. The subversion was achieved with the apparent complicity of high Civil Service Commission officials. The political approach to public personnel administration was documented in the notorious "May/Malek Manual" which provided guidance to Nixon appointees on how to circumvent the merit system (White House Personnel Office, 1979). This "Manual" came to symbolize the domination of presidential politics over the merit system and the ineffectiveness of the Civil Service Commission in protecting merit principles.

The Nixonian political attack on the merit system was documented and analyzed in a well-publicized report, A Self-Inquiry into Merit Staffing, prepared in 1976 under the direction of Milton I. Sharon (Shafritz, Hyde, and Rosenbloom, 1986:25-27). The Sharon report added emphasis to calls for reform in the area of strengthening the merit system and protecting federal employees against political pressure. One well known critique, Robert Vaughn's The Spoiled System: A Call for Civil Service Reform, recommended "the creation of a true Civil Service Commission" by placing appeal adjudication in a separate agency and leaving "Service-oriented programs . . . in a revitalized Civil Service Commission, which could then serve as a true management consulting firm . . ." (1975).
serve as a true management consulting firm . . . " (1975). The critiques pointing to the weakness of the merit system were juxtaposed to the political and managerial critiques which complained of over-regulation and excessive protection of employees from either political or managerial interests. This created a triple-edged argument for change. The existing civil service system, it seemed, did not protect employees against politicization, did not serve the legitimate purposes of agency managers, nor did it contribute to political responsiveness. A powerful coalition, representing a broad spectrum of interests, was thus created in opposition to the merit system as it was then administered.

The nature and strength of the coalition for civil service reform was revealed to Ernest Fitzgerald, the well-known whistleblower, when he attempted to raise concerns about the tendency toward politicization of the public service which was inherent in the reform proposals in 1978 (Fitzgerald, 1989:103-109). Fitzgerald discovered a tight linkage between Carter administration political officials and liberal reformers and reform groups such as Ralph Nader and the Fund for Constitutional Government. As Fitzgerald reports it, "whenever I tried to see Nader, it was clear that he didn't want to meet with me on this issue."
The argument over civil service reform was joined by the academic community of public administration. The academic critique tended to mirror the managerial point of view by pointing to the rigidity and rule-bound tendency of the system which Wallace Sayre had earlier called "the triumph of technique over purpose (1979:30-35). The critique noted the "intellectual disarray and operational contradictions" which pervaded the theory and practice of public personnel administration (Levine and Nigro, 1975:99). Other analysts noted the corrosive and self-defeating effect of an unrealistic and unresponsive system on the professionalism of the field of personnel administration (e.g., Shafritz, 1974; Chandler, 1986).

In its negative function of protection against politicization, the civil service system had become encrusted with laws, regulations, procedures, and administrative inflexibilities that made it appear to many observers to be unresponsive either to political or managerial values (Newland, 1984:26-29). Thus, the academic establishment of public administration gave CSRA an "overwhelmingly favorable reception" (Huddleston, 1982:607). The academic critique provided intellectual respectability and the support of learned analysis to political proposals for reform.
The chief architect of CSRA and the first director of OPM, Alan K. Campbell, was himself an academician. He had the support of many of his professional colleagues when he noted the "conspiracy, sycophancy, ideological conformity, caution, and class solidarity" and the punishment of "innovation, originality, and the work ethic" which he believed to be endemic to civil service systems (quoted in Caiden, 1984:252). Clearly, it seemed to many academicians that the time had come to modernize public personnel practices (Caiden, 1984:262). They were joined in this view by many federal managers and personnel practitioners.

D. Policy Objectives and Legislative Intent

Clearly, the Civil Service Commission had failed to protect the merit system from political abuse. Just as clearly, the personnel system had not provided program managers or agency personnel specialists with effective tools of human resource management. Political appointees continued to be frustrated by the regulations and procedures of the merit system which seemed to block responsiveness to political direction. By 1978, the Commission had no significant supportive constituency. It was the worst of all worlds for public personnel management, but Alan Campbell was
prepared to take remedial initiatives in a time of policy opportunity.

1. Reform Policy Development.

From the moment of his acceptance of the chairmanship of the Civil Service Commission in 1977, Alan Campbell had a clear agenda for reform of public personnel practices. He quickly undertook a "major effort to reform the Civil Service Commission and the civil service system" (Campbell, 1977:50). In May 1977, President Carter established a large-scale task force, the Personnel Management Project (PMP), to review the federal personnel system and make recommendations. In October 1977, Campbell addressed a conference of the International Personnel Management Association and presented a comprehensive outline of the policy initiatives he intended to pursue (Campbell, 1978b). He had already been successful in obtaining the support of President Carter and of key officials of the Office of Management and Budget for this project.

The formation of the Personnel Management Project, under the direction of Dwight Ink, was a key strategy for the successful implementation of major changes in the federal personnel system. The purported objectives of the Project were the definition of problems and the preparation of
were the definition of problems and the preparation of proposals for correction of those problems. Nine teams were created, composed primarily of federal line managers, to study specific personnel management topic areas and to report within 90 days on proposed system improvements (Cohen, 1984:16).

As reported by the National Academy of Administration (1981a:3-4): "the Project produced a series of issue papers which identified the major problem areas and offered the means to resolve them." The most significant of these problems included:

* The U. S. Civil Service Commission had lost its effectiveness.

* The inflexible system inhibited managers from carrying out their responsibilities.

* Managers and employees did not have a clear understanding of merit.

* Effective motivational tools were lacking.

* The labor-management relations program was poorly organized and perceived to be management dominated.

* There were no effective opportunities or means for research and demonstration.

These problems were closely related to the conceptual and specific origins of CSRA, as identified above. In addition, the major features of CSRA had specific origins outside of and preceding the Personnel Management
Systems Review Board came directly from the Brownlow Committee; the Senior Executive Service originated in the second Hoover Commission; merit pay came directly from the private sector; improved disciplinary procedures were proposed in both Hoover Commissions; performance appraisal on a private sector model was recommended by the second Hoover Commission; the emphasis on research and development was inspired in academia; the proposed modification of veterans preference was a feature of the second Hoover commission; and personnel program decentralization was proposed by the first Hoover Commission.

The Personnel Management Project was thus not primarily important for its substantive contribution. It conducted no research but rather relied on existing information from previous studies (Knudsen, Jakus, and Metz, 1979:175). One critic of the legislation, Representative Benjamin Gilman, wondered why the "project labored so mightily for over five months just to produce recommendations that are one part, Hoover Commission findings, and the other part, warmed over Nixon proposals" (U. S. Congress, House, 1978a:420).

In regard to the staffing of the project, it was not heavily influenced by personnel specialists. Membership was drawn primarily from government managers (Knudsen,
Jakus, and Metz, 1979:174). The leadership of the Project was similarly constituted (Stillman, 1979:4-6; Sugarman, 1978:7-8). Thus, the primary orientation of the project was not to technical personnel concerns but rather to larger issues of the frustrations of management in the governmental environment.

Some well-informed analysts assign great significance to the PMP product for its influence on the reform legislation (e.g., Dean, 1978; Cohen, 1984). Although the participants and leadership of the effort have continued to claim that PMP was largely responsible for the shape of the reform (U. S. GAO, 1988), not all participants at the working level of the Project were sure that decisions had not already been made. The existence of a "party line" has been vehemently denied (Ink and Murphy, 1978:12-13); however, it is clear that the general thrust of the reform was predetermined. For example, on the issue of organizational structure, both Alan Campbell and Jule Sugarman were publicly committed to the abolishment of the Civil Service Commission (Sugarman, 1978:7).

In regard to the general tenor of the project, one of the PMP participants, Joe T. Davis, has recalled:
We had people who wanted to participate. They weren't personnel specialists. We had a couple of personnel people, but they were mostly line managers or program managers who had knowledge of the agencies represented; and we followed the established criteria that Scotty [Campbell], Dwight [Ink], and the people at the top set for us" (U. S. GAO, 1988:25, emphasis added).

Whether there was in fact a party line, the PMP's primary role was to represent agency and managerial interests, to build a constituency, and to create the rationale that the reform program was the product of and supported by the career service. When the reform proposals were introduced in legislation, with the full endorsement of the president and leading officials of his administration, the point was constantly reiterated that the proposal before the legislature was the product of PMP. Specifically, in the Senate hearings on the reform legislation, OMB Director James T. McIntyre, Jr., noted "that these reform proposals were developed with the direct involvement of more than 100 civil servants" (U. S. Congress, Senate, 1978:7).

2. **Legislative Intent.**

The character of the reform, from the perspective of the Congress, lacked some of the comprehensiveness of the administration's claims and objectives. One of the principal advocates for the legislation, Representative Morris K. Udall, has been more modest in his assertions:
"What we did, basically, . . . with the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, was to correct things, to offer a new beginning, to try out some new ideas" (1982:52). The legislative process defined certain problems and created specific mechanisms for the resolution of those problems. The legislative intent was that OPM would act accordingly and develop and implement programs for the accomplishment of legislative objectives.

The principal objectives of the Act, as described by the National Academy of Public Administration, included the following (NAPA, 1981a:5-6):

* Maintaining integrity of the merit system.
* Defining merit principles and prohibited practices.
* Delegating authorities to carry out personnel functions.
* Establishing a Senior Executive Service to provide agency flexibility in recruiting and retaining executives.
* Authorizing research programs and demonstration projects.
* Providing a statutory base for the Federal labor relations program.

The new Office of Personnel Management was intended to be a principal agent in the achievement of the legislative objectives. In specific regard to OPM, the legislative history of CSRA, as cited by MSPB, identifies objectives
for the organization: "Taken within the larger context of the other provisions of the CSRA, it is clear that Congress intended OPM to be a pro-active central personnel management agency which would provide to the Federal civil service system aggressive leadership, guidance, and oversight" (1989:1).

In its retrospective review of the history of the reform legislation, MSPB identifies the expectations of CSRA for OPM as follows (1989:3):

* Judicious delegation of authority "to enhance the operation of the Federal civil service system within the context of the merit system principles."

* Establishment and maintenance of "an aggressive oversight program to ensure that Federal personnel management authorities are being used in accordance with the merit system principles and to gather data and analyses that will help improve the civil service system."

* The conduct or facilitation of the conduct of research and demonstration projects "to ultimately develop more effective or efficient methods of human resource management."

* The administration of laws, rules, and regulations, and the exercise of leadership "for the President" through active efforts to improve recruitment and retention, performance management, and equal employment opportunity.

During the hearings on the reform legislation, the issue of potential politicization of the civil service was prominently considered and discussed. Opponents of the
bill feared that it would result in a new spoils system. For example, Representative Herbert Harris reflected on the "noble objective" of the legislation, but went on to say: "Yet I was compelled to vote against the bill because I believe it is fatally flawed: it will open the door to politicization. . . . It may shake the very foundations of our merit system. It suggests that political affiliation is more important than competence" (U. S. Congress, House, 1978a:393,398).

Supporters of the bill were careful to point out the safeguards and protections which were deliberately placed into the legislation to prevent politicization. Such measures included limits on the numbers of noncareer appointments in the Senior Executive Service, the definition of prohibited personnel practices, and the creation of an independent Merit Systems Protection Board and Office of Special Counsel. When pressed on the potential dangers of a single, politically appointed director of OPM, Alan Campbell's response was sanguine:

It is simply unrealistic to believe that the Director willfully may inject political considerations into the personnel rules for the career system. The Director is fully subject to the personnel laws. . . . It would be a foolhardy Director indeed who believed in the face of these considerations that he held imperial sway over the policy field (U. S. Congress, House, 1978b:125).
Campbell specifically suggested that the close relationship of OPM to the president would be "an advantage for the career service, not a threat. . . . This close relationship . . . will emphasize the President's direct responsibility for the personnel system, including responsibility to carry out the merit system laws" (U. S. Congress, House, 1988b: 125). Further, Campbell responded reassuringly to a question from Representative Taylor (U. S. Congress, House, 1978b:157):

Mr. TAYLOR: If I understood you correctly before, and I certainly hope I am right, the Commission will persist in the authority that you now have to mandate correction of the merit abuses that have occurred under the previous administrations and continue to occur in my judgment.

Mr. CAMPBELL: I assure you, Congressman, that where the situation calls for it, appropriate legal action will be taken.

There can be little doubt that it was the legislative intent of Congress to guard against politicization of the career service and to clarify and affirm merit principles, even while it made fundamental alterations in the organizational structure of federal personnel administration. Representative Harris made the point very forcefully (U. S. Congress, House, 1978a:396):

I offered several amendments which were accepted that make it clear that the Director of the Office of Personnel Management is the individual responsible for compliance with civil service laws and procedures.
... OPM is responsible for seeing that merit system principles are enforced and that corrective action is taken when violations occur.

Thus, as the principal operating agency of CSRA, OPM was expected to operate within the spirit of merit principles. Upon passage of the reform legislation, the National Academy of Public Administration summarized the situation this way: "With this reaffirmation of America's commitment to merit as an integral feature of government, the new and existing agencies set about to meet their responsibilities under the Act" (1981a:10).
CHAPTER 4: THE DEVELOPING REALITY--MANAGEMENT AND POLITICS

The enactment of CSRA in 1978 required conceptual imagination, effective lobbying, and shrewd political bargaining. In 1979, the establishment and development of OPM required a different kind of leadership to transform the largest part of the old Civil Service Commission and its ideals into the new organizational concept. This transformation required the inculcation of a different set of values, the mobilization of existing and new resources, and the development of organizational capacity to translate new ideals, policies, and objectives into administrative action.

The Senate promptly confirmed Alan Campbell as Director and Jule Sugarman as Deputy Director of OPM. Their leadership provided the organization with continuity, energy, clear ideas, political credibility, proven powers of persuasion, and strong commitment to the specific thrust of the legislation and administration policy. However, these positive factors in organizational leadership were set against a backdrop of the declining political viability of the Carter administration. In July 1979, Carter addressed the nation in terms of "malaise" and "crisis of
confidence," thus diluting the effectiveness of presidential leadership. By the end of the year, the Iran hostage crisis had driven all other concerns from the center of political attention.

A. Initial Goals and Objectives of OPM

The initial programmatic objectives of OPM were strongly tied to the policy statements of the leaders of the reform effort and to the language of CSRA itself. The primary objectives fell into three major categories: managerial, political, and technical. Each of these clusters of objectives had specific implications for the subsequent actions of OPM and its organizational relationship to political institutions and values.

1. Management Objectives.

For Alan Campbell, the primary stated goal was to create improved management in federal agencies and programs (1980: 157). OPM was intended to "serve as the President's principal agent for managing the federal work force," and Campbell anticipated "that OPM would perform for the President the same role relative to personnel management that OMB does for financial management" (1978:100). The managerial objective sought "to maximize the values of
efficiency, economy, and administrative effectiveness" through application of certain personnel mechanisms and programs (Rosenbloom and Goldman, 1986:194).

Soon after the passage of CSRA, OPM developed a formal statement regarding its management role within the governmental system (quoted in U. S. MSPB, 1981:19):

The Office of Personnel Management is the President's principle staff arm on human resource management and related matters. Under OPM's leadership, human resources management will be elevated to a higher level of importance and will be integrated more closely into the day-to-day management of the Executive branch. Close working relationships between OPM and line managers will be encouraged to ensure that managers are aware of and effectively use OPM assistance and the flexibilities of the Federal personnel system to achieve their program objectives and resolve their management problems.

In a lighter moment of expressed intention, Campbell had proposed to steal the "M" from OMB (the Office of Management and Budget), on the grounds that the management function wouldn't be missed by the budget office because it wasn't being used (U. S. GAO, 1988:13). This demonstrated a realization that although the term "management" was actively used in the public sector vocabulary, the management process in governmental agencies in reality was peripheral to technical program concerns and to political imperatives. Thus, Campbell's management objective presented an enormous conceptual and behavioral challenge,
requiring the transplanting of certain private-sector management processes and attitudes into the different environment of the public sector.

Campbell was aware of the differences in public and private sector management practices as he called for an expanded vision of the federal management role. One of the primary objectives of CSRA was to provide opportunities and flexibilities and to remove disincentives for management action. Campbell believed "that while changing the structure and the authority did not guarantee the management leadership . . ., it certainly made it much more possible than was the case under the old system" (U. S. GAO, 1988:16). As Director of OPM, Campbell repeatedly exhorted federal managers to spend more time on personnel and productivity concerns as opposed to program work, noting that in the private sector, managers spent 40-60% of their time on such concerns but that in the federal sector, managers only spent 10-20% of their time in human resource management (GERR, May 19, 1980:9-10).

OPM also placed a heavy emphasis on employee productivity in the conduct of federal programs. This emphasis also reached the political level through President Carter's establishment of a Presidential Management Improvement
Council, intended to improve federal management and program performance. This council was co-chaired by the Directors of OPM and OMB and was composed of representatives of corporate executive officers, foundation and academic leaders, and federal agencies (GERR, May 7, 1979:12).

2. **Political Objectives.**

In the political arena, the initial objective of OPM was to be supportive of President Carter's interest in controlling the bureaucracy. This was essential to maintain the political credibility and viability of OPM's management objectives. This emphasis on the political objective made OPM "a part of a general movement to modify the principle of separating personnel from politics which had come to be the corner stone of personnel policy" (Sylvia, 1983:115). This joining of personnel administration with politics lent credence to the assessment of the Federal Times, a pro-employee publication: "But what this reorganization is all about is—as we keep saying—not reform but political control" (quoted in Mollenhoff, 1980:156-157).

The attainment of management objectives in a political environment required a delicate balancing of potentially conflicting values: "The political approach to public personnel stresses radically different values than the
managerial approach . . . Perhaps its underlying value is to maximize the responsiveness of the public sector work force to political officials and to the public at large" (Rosenbloom and Goldman, 1988:209). As Campbell said later: "We did believe, and I still believe, that what we were trying to do would serve the interest of whoever was in power and that it would be effectively used regardless of what happened on the political side" (U. S. GAO, 1988: 17-18).

Within the federal establishment, OPM's political objective was to assume leadership and to establish its influence over governmental operations (Campbell, 1978:103). In doing so, OPM was inevitably encroaching on the jealously held territory of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). During the House hearings on CSRA, the then-Director of OMB, James T. McIntyre, made it clear that from his perspective OPM was something of a lesser organization. His dialogue with Representative Lott was instructive (U. S. Congress. House. Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, 1978b:15):

Mr. LOTT. What about the Personnel Management Office being placed in the White House?

Mr. MCINTYRE. Well, it's not in the White House.

Mr. LOTT. Well, in effect, it would be similar to OMB.
Mr. McINTYRE. No; it's not in the Executive Office of the President. It's a separate agency.

Mr. LOTT. But as I understand it, it will be very similar to OMB and will be under direct guidance and direction of the President, in effect under the White House.

Mr. McINTYRE. It is not like the OMB at all, in my opinion. It is set up as a separate agency. It does report to the President just like many other agencies in the executive branch report to the President. But it is not a part of the Executive Office of the President.

A few weeks later, in hearings on the reform legislation conducted by the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, the question of the status of OPM was clarified in a written response from the Civil Service Commission to questions posed by Senators Ribicoff and Percy:

The Office of Personnel Management is an independent establishment in the Executive Branch as that term is defined in section 104 of title 5, U.S.C. Its status will be the same as any other 'independent' establishment of the Executive Branch as that expression is employed in title 5, U.S. Code, section 104. It is to be subject to the same direction and control by the President as any other independent establishment in the Executive Branch. Both OPM and the President are bound by law, and unless specifically and publicly changed, by civil service rules and regulations (U. S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Governmental Affairs, 1978:165).

This view was not persuasive to some observers in the public administration community. In testimony at the Senate hearings, James L. Sundquist, representing the National Academy of Public Administration, expressed his
belief that OPM should not be independent in any meaningful sense but should be in the Executive Office of the President in order to clearly maximize its influence and to establish accountability in the presidency for personnel administration (U. S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Governmental Affairs, 1978:383-388). However, Sundquist recognized a practical problem:

It may not be feasible to place the OPM in the Executive Office of the President at present, because of the President's stated intention to keep the Executive Office staff small. If so, the OPM could be given independent status until the personnel management operations are decentralized as proposed, and the Director of OPM could be given the same access to the President as that given to members of the Cabinet (U. S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Governmental Affairs, 1978:388).

Clearly, in the political environment of the executive branch, OPM's boundaries of influence would continue to be circumscribed by its organizational designation and location. OPM would be neither independent nor centrally placed in the presidency, and the personnel organization would continue to be subordinate to the superior organizational and tactical position of OMB. While the "H" might well remain in disuse in the budget office, the meaningful opportunity for OPM to influence federal management practices would be politically and structurally confined to certain specific technical personnel programs.
3. Technical Objectives.

The overall technical objective of OPM was the eventual "transformation of public personnel management into modern-day human resource management" (Cayer, 1987:330). Initially, despite claims to a comprehensive approach, this was limited to the adoption in the federal sector of specific private sector techniques of performance appraisal, merit pay, and employee discipline, as well as the implementation of the Senior Executive Service. These technical mechanisms were intended to unite political and managerial values by being useful to line program managers and by enhancing authority of the political executive (Rosenbloom and Goldman, 1986:190; Sylvia, 1983:116).

In its technical personnel administration role, OPM set out to be a policy maker, innovator, and technical leader, with the intention of eventually making fundamental revisions in the public personnel system. In Alan Campbell's view, it was necessary to alter the structure and authority patterns of the system in order to "create a positive, rather than negative, personnel management system" (U. S. GAO, 1988:13). Dwight Ink has summarized the overall technical objective in these words (U. S. GAO, 1988:23-24):

The single-headed Office of Personnel Management . . . was intended to serve as a central personnel management agency of the government, sensitive to the
legitimate needs of the President and the department and agency heads, providing personnel management leadership within the executive branch, including a more vigorous program of personnel management evaluation in federal agencies.

B. Creation of the New Organization
For a brief two-year period, Alan Campbell and Jule Sugarman, as Director and Deputy Director of OPM, performed the essential leadership function of developing the identity of OPM as an organization and defining its role and place in the political system. The key to making the new organization function effectively was the essential stimulus of leadership and the inculcation of the critical values of the management and political responsiveness model—first within OPM and then throughout the federal government. A clear and forceful expression of objectives was necessary to build commitment within OPM to new policy objectives, particularly because the organization was predominantly populated by former Civil Service Commission employees.

1. Organizational and System Leadership.
Although there was some predictable internal discomfort, the priorities of OPM as an organization were clearly
established (Ban, 1984:49), and the staff responded positively, as Campbell later noted:

> It was really a very difficult environment, but the amazing thing to me was once they became convinced that we were serious about making changes, and once I convinced them that it was in the interest of the career civil servants themselves, they very quickly accepted that I was there with good intentions. They rallied around, some more than others. Over time, I had put together a team made up almost exclusively of career people. It was, I felt, as good a group of people as one could find (Ershkowitz, 1984:76).

The utilization of career-oriented people in the process of developing the new organization was very significant. As Campbell and Sugarman were attempting to accomplish more than a technical revision of the methods and processes of public personnel administration, the organizational credibility and integrity of OPM needed to be initially established on the basis of professionalism rather than overt politicization. To some critics of the old merit system, it appeared that "the same old Civil Service Commission crowd" was still running things (Shafritz, 1979:175). Early in the implementation of reform, the continuity of some of the key personnel may have indicated that little substantive change was occurring, but as Shafritz also pointed out, the reform was already "an overwhelming success" on symbolic grounds, if no other (1979:176).
In fact, although symbolism was extraordinarily important, more than symbolic change was occurring. Much of the organizational, program, and system development in the period 1978-1980 was almost a textbook case in the implementation of change. The OPM approach made effective use of tactics for overcoming systemic obstacles to change. Herbert Kaufman, in his *The Limits of Organizational Change*, identifies such tactics as: importing resources; concentrating resources; lifting official constraints; reorganizing; recruiting unorthodoxy; and exposure to extraorganizational ideas; (1971:44-61).

Accordingly, in staffing the new organization, OPM imported resources from other federal agencies, the academic world, and the private sector. Resources of the new organization were concentrated in the critical new program areas, even to the extent of weakening older programs. Reorganization, as noted below, was an early priority. A deliberate attempt was made to expose the federal personnel community to extraorganizational ideas—­for example, arrangements were made for each agency to have a private sector consultant assist in the implementation of merit pay. Additionally, an easing of the constraints of the central personnel system was promised through deregulation and delegation of authority.
2. Organizational and System Developments.
In the two remaining years of the Carter administration, OPM made significant progress toward its initial objectives. Effective internal organizational change strategies were accompanied by continuing attempts to link OPM with the political leadership of the administration and thus establish OPM as a significant influence in governmental affairs. Although the active support of President Carter was soon drained by other more pressing concerns, the "vigorous and unanimous support" of agency heads and administrative assistant secretaries, which Campbell announced in January 1979 (GERR, February 5, 1979:7) continued to be apparent until the end of the Carter administration.

The passage of CSRA and Reorganization Plan No. 2 of 1978 required the immediate development of a new organizational structure for OPM. The initial structure of the new Office was announced in the first week of January 1979. This initial OPM organization followed a standard functional approach. The first level of organizational subdivision consisted of five associate directorships (Agency Relations; Executive Personnel and Management Development; Staffing Services; Compensation; and Work Force Effectiveness and Development). While only one appointment
was announced (George McQuoid, a long-term career official to head Agency Relations), the expectation was that all of the principal positions would be filled by career staff. This in fact soon occurred (GERR, January 8, 1979:5-6).

The principal departures from tradition were in the areas of Agency Relations and Work Force Effectiveness and Development. The latter unit assumed some traditional functions, but it also contemplated management consulting services to agencies, productivity and quality of work life concerns, and development of performance appraisal systems.

The Agency Relations associate directorate was the most radical departure from the old Civil Service Commission structure. Agency Relations was divided into four assistant directors for federal agency clusters which tracked the OMB structure. These assistant directors were expected to be agency-oriented, problem-solving, and dedicated to close working relationships with bureau and local level managers in the departments. Almost as an afterthought, the Agency Relations group also included an assistant director for agency compliance and evaluation. Thus, the old Commission policing function was carefully submerged in an agency-oriented associate directorate (GERR, January 8, 1979:5).
In the dispersal of the functions and resources of the Civil Service Commission, the largest share of human and material resources went to OPM. The other organizations of civil service reform (Merit Systems Protection Board; Office of Special Counsel; Federal Labor Relations Authority) were acutely understaffed and ill equipped for several years, while OPM had the building, the dollars, and most of the people. Representative Pat Schroeder complained at the time of the distribution:

I was truly disheartened . . . to see the President's budget request for the civil service agencies and to infer from that the priorities the President wants to set. The lion's share of the money went to the Office of Personnel Management and crumbs went to the [others]. OPM got $5.25 for every $1.00 the other three got together" (GERR, June 25, 1979:5).

For the following year, Fiscal Year 1981, OMB recommended an increase for OPM and FLRA but held MSPB and OSC at current levels (GERR, January 21, 1980:9).

In regard to the implementation of the specific programs of CSRA, OPM moved quickly in early 1979 to issue implementing regulations. The interim regulations on the Senior Executive Service were issued on March 27; proposed regulations on merit pay on April 20; proposed regulations on alternative work schedules on May 21; interim regulations on performance appraisal on January 16 and
final regulations on July 24, 1979 (GERR, April 9, April 20, May 28, August 20, 1979).

This impressive production of implementing regulations provided OPM with initial credibility as agency personnel offices scrambled to devise specific implementation plans and tactics. This early momentum, however, was soon eclipsed by the volume of specific agency implementation activity which was required under short deadlines. Agencies were required to implement the Senior Executive Service on July 13, 1979, only nine months after the enactment of CSRA. New performance appraisal systems and a merit pay compensation program had to be designed, tested, and implemented by no later than October 1, 1981. The agency personnel offices began moving ahead without waiting for detailed OPM guidance.

The aggressiveness of agencies in implementation activities soon left OPM behind in the learning curve and without an effective means of controlling or even tracking specific agency activities. Confronted with the weakness of effective administrative control mechanisms in a highly decentralized operational setting, OPM made an extraordinary decision. As Bernard Rosen reports it, OPM decided "to reduce significantly the number and scope of
evaluations in an already austere inspection program" (1982:44). Traditionally, inspection and evaluation are primary tools of central management control, but apparently they were too reminiscent of the regulating and policing functions of the old merit system. The oversight problem was further compounded by the organizational association of the inspection and compliance function with Agency Relations, which was principally dedicated to management assistance and program coordination.

OPM initially maintained its commitment to decentralization despite its deemphasis of oversight and compliance review. The regulations which were issued allowed substantial room for agency implementation. Specific delegations of a large number of personnel management authorities were planned. Within OPM, resource and program decisions also began to be made which furthered operational decentralization. For example, plans were announced in February 1979 to close 45 of 113 OPM Job Information Centers and to terminate the telephone call-in line for federal job openings (GERR, February 26, 1979:9). This marked the first turning of OPM away from the idea of the federal government as a single employer with a central job information system and a centralized hiring mechanism.
Although advocating a thoroughly decentralized environment for federal personnel operations, OPM did make a strong initial commitment of intent and resources to a serious attempt to evaluate the implementation of CSRA. This evaluation effort was developed as a "means of influencing external opinion" and as a device for deflecting criticism of CSRA implementation until the programs had an opportunity to function (Goldenberg, 1983:516). In March 1979, a five-year plan for evaluation was announced. The plan was to be under the direction of Edie Goldenberg who had been recruited from academia. In the announcement, Campbell explained that the plan would include "a series of studies examining the extent, speed, quality, and effects of the government-wide implementation of major reform initiatives" (GERR, March 26, 1979:8).

By August 1979, an Office of Planning and Evaluation was formed to be responsible for evaluation of CSRA implementation and for coordination of research and development projects. Campbell noted that "the establishment of a formal organization for civil service reform evaluation is a sign of the extreme importance that OPM attaches to evaluation and a recognition that it will require a long term effort" (GERR, August 20, 1979:9-10). By early 1980, OPM announced the award of $537,500 in
contracts as "a first step in a $2.5 million, five-year study of civil service reform" (GERR, January 17, 1980:16). This emphasis on research and evaluation, supported by contract dollars, was evidence of OPM's serious commitment to its academic constituency.

3. Constituencies.
The dedication by OPM to improved management and responsiveness required the cultivation of a constituency different from the personnel community which had been the principal customer of the Civil Service Commission. In Selznick's terms, this represented the deliberate selection of a social base (clientele, market, target, environmental segment) to which OPM's operations would be oriented (1957:104). A constituency is defined by Selznick as "a group formally outside a given organization, to which the latter . . . has a special commitment" (1966:145). The relationship is particularly significant because "the character of the constituency will tend to define and shape the character of the agency" (Selznick, 1966: 146-147).

OPM's new constituencies were initially conceived as: 1) the line managers of government; 2) the political leadership; 3) the public administration academic community; and 4) certain elements of minority
representation. Specific measures to secure support and obtain involvement of these groups were planned and implemented. In this configuration of social base or clientele, the federal personnel community was noticeably omitted.

OPM's managerial approach was directed at line managers who were actively sought and included in the development and implementation of CSRA. Agency line managers were heavily represented in the Personnel Management Project, and they were sought, invited, and given attention in large scale meetings sponsored by OPM both before and after passage of the reform legislation (e.g., see Knudsen, Jakus, and Metz, 1979:176-177). The second annual management conference held by OPM in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, in February 1980 was particularly significant. This conference stressed productivity issues and private-sector types of standards and methods of accountability and performance for managers and supervisors (GERR, February 25, 1980:9).

The direct approach to agency managers was implemented through the brilliant innovation of the OPM associate directorate for Agency Relations which was responsible for service to agency management and for coordination of OPM responses to resolve managerial problems with the personnel
system. Initially, this approach deemphasized the importance of staff personnel functions at the agency level. The objective was the direct encouragement and assistance of line managers in the utilization of personnel tools for enhanced performance and productivity.

OPM also invested heavily in the academic and consulting communities for a good-faith effort in research, development, innovation, and evaluation of CSRA implementation (Goldenberg, 1985:83). The initial positive attitude of OPM toward research and experimentation was very compatible with academic institutions, individual scholars, and research and consulting organizations (Ban, 1988:5). The major effort in evaluation of implementation was to be made through contracts with academic institutions. Additional evidence of OPM's commitment to academia came in 1980 when a contract was negotiated with Harvard University in the amount of $840,000 for development of curriculum materials for training mid-level and executive level federal employees (GERR, December 8, 1980:14).

A related commitment was made by OPM to equal employment opportunity interests. Although the Reorganization Act which accompanied CSRA in 1978 assigned responsibility for
federal equal opportunity programs to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, OPM nonetheless had specific EEO objectives and responsibilities, particularly for minority recruitment. OPM's Deputy Director, Jule Sugarman, made it clear that delegation of appointing authorities to agencies was intended as a means of increasing federal employment of women and minorities (Ban and Marzotto, 1984:153). In this way, decentralization was identified as a means by which the representativeness of the public service could be enhanced and accommodated within the personnel system.

In the Campbell years, OPM also made a primary commitment of effort at the political level of the federal government. The interest and commitment of the president was fundamentally important in the creation of CSRA and OPM. The support of agency secretaries and assistant secretaries was vigorously sought and secured (Ban, 1984:51). The initial emphasis of OPM was on the executive and managerial identity of political leadership. Operationally, the mutual support of management and politics was secured through the establishment and utilization by OPM of the Assistant Secretaries group, which became the forum for discussion and promulgation of personnel management initiatives. This group was predominantly composed of
political appointees, although several members were well-known and respected career managers.

The character of OPM was heavily influenced by its relationships with its constituencies. Specifically, OPM emerged in its first two years as an organization that was politically responsive to the president and his appointees, dedicated to specific managerial initiatives, with strong academic ties and a commitment to minority representation in the federal work force. The conventional personnel work of the agency was deemphasized, particularly in regard to the position classification program, evaluation of agency personnel programs, and staffing processes.

C. Contradictions and Dilemmas
Inevitably, the first years of implementation of policy and organizational change will reveal conceptual problems and design flaws. Philip Selznick has pointed out the tensions which inevitably exist between an idea and its implementing action: "Tension and dilemma are normal and anticipated corollaries of the attempt to control human institutions in the light of abstract doctrine" (1966:69). The CSRA was firmly based on a doctrine of political responsiveness, a theory of managerial authority and human response in
organizations, a concept of decentralization, and assumptions about the role of personnel management in the federal government. Implementation of these ideas was inevitably problematic.

1. **Tensions and Conflicts in System Design.**

   During a Congressionally-sponsored seminar in March 1988, a question was put to Alan Campbell about whether CSRA was a comprehensive and cohesive system or merely a series of parts, with internal tension and inconsistency. Campbell’s response was: "Nonsense." He maintained that the package of recommendations developed by the Personnel Management Project was comprehensive, and that while compromises were made in the legislative process, the central thrust was undamaged (U. S. GAO, 1988:19-20).

Despite Campbell’s claims of comprehensiveness and consistency, the development of the legislation and its subsequent implementation were marked by conflict, compromise, and tension. David Rosenbloom has noted the fundamental fragmentation of the personnel system by CSRA as it distributed basic functions to separate and independent organizations (OPM, MSPB, FLRA, and EEOC). Additionally, Rosenbloom notes a further problem: "But the reform was fragmenting in an even more fundamental sense."
It was the product of pluralistic politics that offered something to many participants in the personnel policy realm but developed very little commitment to a new personnel program per se" (1986:368).

Within a short time, the conflicts within the CSRA system reached the federal courts. In 1983, the Federal Court of Appeals for the Washington, D. C., Circuit noted "the statutory maze of CSRA," and observed that "the act is fraught with ambiguities, peppered with provisions that appear at cross purposes, and often lacking in any useful legislative history" (Federal Times, June 20, 1983:9).

In addition to the problems of the legislative process, the design of CSRA fostered ambiguity and inconsistency. In their study of CSRA design, Ingraham and White conclude that "the process of reform design and the assumptions that guided it created a reform package that was, at best, 'loosely coupled'; at worst, replete with internal contradictions" (1988:11). The problems of the design process included: 1) the nature of the design process which needed to provide something for all constituencies of the reform effort; 2) the pervasive influence of presidential and bureaucratic politics; and 3) the complexity and interrelatedness of the problems being
addressed (Ingraham and White, 1988:20-21). The subsequent record of the implementation of CSRA by OPM has testified to the consequences of these problems.

2. **Political Control Versus Decentralization.**

Within its own sphere of responsibility, OPM contained a basic normative contradiction. Its management doctrine was dedicated to control and accountability while its operational methodology was committed to decentralization and delegation. In the beginning stage of reform implementation, the operational methodology seemed paramount as Campbell proclaimed the emphasis on delegation and limitation of regulations: "We want to give the agencies maximum latitude with the least amount of restrictions and requirements on how the regulations are implemented" (GERR, February 5, 1979:7).

As a management agency, OPM had little that it could directly control. The meaningful action in implementing CSRA was at the agency level. The agencies quickly took the initiative to implement their own versions of civil service reform. One competent assessment of the implementation actions of the agencies found them to be "for the most part, well-considered and conscientiously undertaken, despite numerous last-minute program and policy
changes and consequent work load and time pressures" (The Institute for Social Research, 1982:ii). At the same time, in Chester Newland's judgement, OPM erred by "failing to provide adequate central guidance for the implementation of many Civil Service Reform Act provisions. This inaction was sometimes justified as decentralization when in fact it resembled laissez-faire" (1982:59).

With competent agency implementation under way, OPM found itself in the position of having to catch up with technical personnel program developments. When certain agency actions began to create political problems (primarily in the area of SES pay levels and bonuses), OPM found it necessary to attempt to assert control over agency implementation activities; however, OPM's attempts to exercise program control were universally regarded as too late, too inconsistent, and not sufficiently informed by an adequate level of technical expertise (Ban, 1984:51-52).

A major criticism in a National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) report in 1981 was directed at the "uncertain guidance" from OPM, as noted in the following examples (NAPA, 1981a:36):

* Advising agencies to proceed on conversion of supergrades to SES positions and then demanding a roll back once the results were known.
* Criticizing NASA on bonuses even though NASA had followed the Act and OPM guidance precisely.

* Developing and imposing requirements on relative payouts for levels of performance on merit pay after many agencies had developed their plans.

* Failing to issue a formal statement on its role in protecting merit.

All of these indicate unresolved questions about diversity vs. uniformity and centralization vs. decentralization. They also indicate that the central control agencies did not anticipate the results of agencies actions under delegated authority and were not willing to live with the consequences once action was taken. Until OPM and OMB develop and issue a management philosophy dealing with these issues, agencies will be reluctant to step out in the lead for fear they may continue to be 'second-guessed.'

OPM's neglect of its oversight function, the inadequacy of other management control mechanisms, and the interests of its own political appointees led OPM down a path toward reliance on a more political control process. The formal mechanism for this redirection was OPM's utilization of the semi-political Assistant Secretaries group which represented the beginning of a shift from a management emphasis toward a political orientation. This was the embryonic stage of what was to become the politicization of the administrative process.

According to a significant number of agency personnel directors interviewed at the time, "OPM's most senior executives clearly preferred to communicate directly with
agency Assistant Secretaries for Administration (or equivalent), rather than through personnel officers (as had been done in the past). In fact, many contended, it appeared that OPM desired to freeze personnel officers out of the line of communications" (U. S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 1981:51).

2. **OPM Versus the Federal Personnel Community.**

One of the most striking aspects of OPM's institutional history has been the consistent pattern of excluding the federal personnel community from deliberations on policy and program development. The pattern began even before the passage of CSRA and the creation of OPM. Alan Campbell was disposed to dismiss the personnel community as non-responsive to new ideas and resistant to all change. This feeling apparently began when a group of federal personnel directors asked to meet with Campbell when his appointment as Chairman of the Civil Service Commission was announced in 1977. According to Campbell, he was delighted at the prospect, but soon disappointed:

I had a lot of ideas about how to improve the personnel management system, and because of their initiative I believed they would be a very responsive group for testing this idea. We got together, and the thing that they pressed on me was their belief that the reform should require personnel directors in the departments and agencies to report to the Civil Service Commission rather than to their own agency management. That's an interesting view of the
personnel function, and I think that there is bound up in that attitude a partial explanation of why the R&D authority has not been effectively used (U. S. GAO, 1988:19).

Campbell's interpretation of this unfortunate event was that agency personnel directors were neither creative nor responsive to line management. Such an attitude was anathema to Campbell whose personnel management concepts were heavily influenced, by his own admission, by private sector practices (U. S. GAO, 1988:18). What the personnel directors may have been trying to communicate to Campbell, perhaps in a clumsy way, was that initiatives and new ideas were not likely to succeed in the federal program environment where "management" was dismissed as administrative trivia by most political appointees and line program operators.

Conceivably, the personnel directors were seeking leverage in an organizational situation where they were not able to apply professional human resource concepts because of the nature of political and program leadership in their agencies. But OPM's priorities were dedicated more to program managers than to agency personnel officers and specialists. As a result, OPM's institutional and value orientation caused the vestiges of the old civil service system and the federal personnel community to be caught and
neutralized between career line managers and political leadership.

The encapsulation of the personnel establishment was a brilliant tactic to achieve the objective of breaking past patterns; however, it had the decidedly negative effect of vitiating the government-wide resources which were required for the building of new personnel programs at the agency level. This was particularly problematic in view of OPM's value and policy commitments to decentralization, deregulation, and delegation of personnel authorities to the agencies.

Under Campbell's leadership, the problem of the relationship of OPM to the federal personnel community was exacerbated by OPM's early pattern of promoting decentralization and then "second guessing" and attempting to reverse agency actions. The earliest visible case was the imbroglio over SES pay rate levels which occurred in the spring of 1979 during the conversion of supergrade executives to the Senior Executive Service. OPM initially advised agencies to develop individual conversion formulas and then, when the results appeared to provide for too many high pay levels, attempted to role back the agency actions (NAPA, 1981b:26). This incident was perhaps the beginning
of the loss of OPM credibility with agency personnel officers—some agencies flatly ignored the OPM instruction in this case.

During these critical formative years, as OPM credibility began to suffer in the federal personnel community, Campbell seemed to continue to regard the personnel officers of government as part of the problem rather than as possible contributors to the solution. This was undoubtedly due in part to the traditional association of the federal personnel community with the regulations, procedures, and inflexibilities of the old civil service system.

3. Belief and Commitment Versus Research and Reality. Campbell's strained relationship with the federal personnel community was also in part caused by some agency personnel people voicing their practical realization of the difficulty of implementation and of the weakness of the theoretical assumptions behind the technical features of CSRA (Godwin and Needham, 1981). In the face of this critique, and the swelling restiveness of senior executives, mid-level managers, and rank-and-file employees about certain aspects of CSRA implementation, OPM issued a glowing report of the first year under CSRA in which
"Campbell paints a rosy-colored picture for nearly all major aspects of civil service reform" (GERR, September 22, 1980:9-10).

As reality began to intrude on Campbell's rosy picture, attacks on the motivational theory of CSRA began to appear from clinical psychologists (GERR, April 14, 1980:9-10; also see Andronicos, 1982:16). OPM's negative reaction to critiques of CSRA implementation began to raise doubts as to the willingness of its leadership to accept findings that were contrary to its hopes. The problem was made more acute when OPM's first study on implementation of merit pay and performance appraisal at the National Institutes of Health found that the intensely competitive nature of the programs was leading to conflict and lowered morale (GERR, November 3, 1980:7-8). This study was followed by a General Accounting Office report that OPM's conduct of experiments on flexible work schedules was imprecise and unscientifically conducted (GERR, December 1, 1980:6-7).

As the first adverse findings and evaluations began to appear, OPM did not adjust its commitment to the managerial and political doctrines which it derived from CSRA. The tension between ideas and actions began to increase. In such situations, as Philip Selznick has observed, analysis
is not popular "usually because doctrine, assuming an ideological role, is not meant to be analyzed" (1968:69).
In the first two years of CSRA, OPM leaders were prepared to be influenced by certain aspects of managerial theory, but in the implementation process they wanted true believers and team players.

4. Responsiveness Versus Management Versus Merit.
The implementers of civil service reform were attempting to combine a particular school of managerial rationality and a particular principal of political responsiveness. By the end of 1980, it was not clear whether these elements could live together in harmony, or whether their combination would result in improved governmental effectiveness. For OPM in the first two years, emphasis on its organizational concept of managerial mission and its identification with particular constituencies required a deliberate movement of value orientation away from the relationship which the Civil Service Commission had previously had with the merit concept.

While OPM’s basic technical objective was the modernization and improvement of personnel management practices in the federal government, the new organization inexplicably placed little emphasis on professional personnel concerns
other than those specifically included in CSRA (performance evaluation, discipline, merit pay, senior executive service). As OPM diverted interest and resources away from the traditional civil service functions of competitive examining and position classification, its concept of personnel management turned away from the merit ideal. The disconnection of merit and personnel management had important implications for the future.

Unquestionably, the former core value of the merit system, which had been the central to the Civil Service Commission, became a casualty in the process of creating and implementing OPM. Merit as a policy and operational concern virtually disappeared from OPM, which officially viewed merit solely in its protective mode and, therefore, the province of another organization, as evidenced in an early OPM policy statement (quoted in U. S. MSPB, 1981:19):

The new management orientation of the OPM coincides with the establishment of the Merit Systems Protection Board, a new independent agency that is basically responsible for safeguarding the merit system and protecting individual employees against abuses and unfair personnel actions . . . The assignment of these functions to the MSPB will free the OPM to be a more positive, mission-oriented agency . . . (emphasis added by MSPB).

In its first review of the significant actions of OPM, the Merit Systems Protection Board found that OPM "has not
established a credible presence as a firm and effective
monitor of the adherence of agencies to the merit mandates
in their personnel management activities (1981:8). In
fact, the MSPB could find no single specific example of how
merit considerations "had affected any particular program
or policy" (1981:22).

In an early review of CSRA, a panel of the National Academy
of Administration (NAPA) noted the legislation's
"reaffirmation of America's commitment to merit" (1981a:
10); however, representatives of the Academy were advised
by OPM officials during the review "that it [OPM] did not
have a primary role in the protection of merit" (1981a:12).
The NAPA panel expressed its "serious concern" not only
with OPM's reluctance "to acknowledge its responsibility
for the protection of merit" and for its "reduction in the
status and resources of the compliance and evaluation
functions," but also for the "limited attention given by
Federal agencies to those provisions of the Act relative to
merit protection" (1981a:12).

The concentration by OPM on its conception of management
and political responsiveness caused the organization's
aspirations to far exceed its ability to influence the
conduct of governmental affairs. In an early attempt at
evaluation of CSRA, Mark Abramson concluded: "It is important to remember that CSRA is a single piece of legislation dealing almost exclusively with personnel issues. It is not the 'Federal Management Improvement Act of 1978,' although some of the rhetoric selling CSRA made it sound like it" (1983:3). In reaching for a broad concept of management improvement and political responsiveness, OPM began to subordinate its attention to technical personnel management. As the Carter administration came to an end, political concerns became predominant.

D. Alan Campbell and the Carter Presidency

An analysis of the political significance and meaning of first two years of OPM indicates the dramatic linear movement from merit to management to responsiveness. In the first phase of OPM, Alan Campbell emphasized structure and management as solutions to the perceived problems of governmental performance. This accorded well with President Carter's engineering approach to problems (Germond and Witcover, 1981:27). Subsequently, Carter's emphasis shifted to the demands of political responsiveness as engineering did not solve national problems. The energy crisis, the hostage crisis in Iran, the Russian invasion of
Afghanistan, rampant inflation, and the "malaise" factor, all drove a dying administration to revert to political rather than managerial values. One scathing critic, from the liberal perspective, assessed Carter's situation this way:

Whether because of the enormity of the problems he faced, or his poor selection of personnel for many key posts, he lost the confidence of the voters. In his frustration with the ineffectiveness of his appointees to make government perform, he moved further and further along the line of the authoritarian methods of deception, secrecy, and bitter political retaliation (Mollenhoff, 1980:252).

In this political environment, executive concentration could no longer focus on management processes. The OPM director was called upon to enter the election fray. Thus, Alan Campbell appeared at a joint press conference with the Deputy Director of OMB and assailed presidential candidate Ronald Reagan's position on federal employment (GERR, July 28, 1980:12). In this way, Campbell moved OPM to an overtly partisan role. OPM's entrance into political campaigning, together with its earlier adoption of political control strategies, led to a revision of its basic orientation to management values, making them subordinate to political requirements. The way was thus prepared for the succeeding administration to fully politicize the organization and to further weaken its technical core.
The initial objective of Alan Campbell had been to strengthen federal management. Improved management practices required political credibility for administrative systems. After the presidential election in 1980, Campbell claimed that his efforts had resulted in the creation of a "new environment" that was sufficient to "strengthen the resolve of managers to deal with performance" (The New York Times, November 12, 1980:A24). However, the new environment and the resolve of federal managers were not adequate to withstand hostile criticism in the election campaign of 1980.

Insistent voices continued to demand greater political influence over the civil service. On October 12, 1980, Rudolph Penner, then a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, expressed doubt that the CSRA had provided sufficient authority for political executives: "it is necessary to make institutional changes that will give the President more control over the Civil Service" (The New York Times, October 12, 1980:3-2). The day after the election, Charles Peters, an outspoken critic of the bureaucracy, announced his answer to the problem: "The solution is to take back much of the power we have given the Civil Service and the courts and put it where it belongs--in the hands of people we elect and of people they

Statements of this sort joined with events in the declining days of the Carter administration to reinforce the potential threats to employees which were inherent in CSRA. Employee unions, mid-level managers, and senior executives all perceived the negative aspects of CSRA in a politicized environment. One employee organization voters' guide noted "that none of the three major Presidential candidates support federal unions' positions on issues of major concern to federal employees" (GERR, September 22, 1980). The negative tone in the selling campaign for CSRA had not abated in the four years following its enactment. The outlook for 1981 featured a continued and intensified presidential hostility to government employees, increased politicization of the organizations of government, and a further erosion of merit values and the institution of the public service.
CHAPTER 5: THE PRIMACY OF POLITICAL DOCTRINE

Alan Campbell and Jule Sugarman had only two years to establish the organizational form and direction of OPM. This was insufficient time to institutionalize the changes which were called for in CSRA. At his confirmation hearing in 1979, Sugarman had estimated that five or ten years would be required before the success of the reform could be determined (GERR, July 30, 1979:9). Alan Campbell left the government in December 1980, and a new administration took office in January 1981. The fragile patterns of organizational behavior, administrative action, and value constructs of OPM were disrupted. Campbell's departure, which had been rumored for several months, and that of Jule Sugarman almost immediately thereafter, removed the original leadership of OPM and increased the uncertainty of transition under a new president.

The concepts of CSRA and the organizational mechanism of OPM were certainly of potential use to the incoming administration. President Carter and Alan Campbell had left an important political and administrative legacy for President Reagan (Sanders, 1988:389). The initial question was what use would be made of this legacy which provided an
opportunity for strengthened political leadership and control of the career civil service.

A. Initial Changes in Policy Direction

The Reagan administration began on what seemed to be a positive note for the public service. The transition officials for OPM, Donald Devine and R. T. McNamar "stressed that President-elect Reagan and his advisers have a high regard for career federal workers, the merit system, and the reforms made in it by the Carter administration" (GERR, November 24, 1980:11).

The ideological position of the incoming administration was initially non-threatening to the public service. For example, the Heritage Foundation, the preeminent voice of conservative ideology, had virtually nothing to say in its Mandate for Leadership about OPM, and it was balanced and non-controversial in its discussion of the Senior Executive Service. The most specific criticism had to do with proposed SES reduction-in-force procedures which might be too protective: "their effect will be to reduce CSRA's otherwise commendable renewal of emphasis on political responsiveness within top management" (Huberty and Malone, 1981:878).
1. **Sending Mixed Signals.**

When Donald Devine emerged as a key figure, first on the OPM transition team, and then as Director, he appeared to be arguing for a conventional view of the role of the central personnel agency and of the merit system in American governance. The new director of OPM came to the administration from the academic world of the University of Maryland where he was an Associate Professor of Political Science. However, Devine was more oriented to political action than to academic inquiry. He had run for political office in Maryland and had been extremely active in Republican campaign activities in that state on behalf of the election of Ronald Reagan. His qualifications for the position of Director of OPM were primarily political and ideological, supported by his academic background. Like his predecessor, Alan Campbell before him, Devine had no specific experience in governmental administration or human resource management.

Upon assuming office, Devine seemed ready to undo the previous administration's emphasis on the innovations of civil service reform. He called for a recentralization of some authorities, a renewed emphasis on "traditional responsibilities of OPM," and a "back to basics" movement in public personnel administration (U. S. Merit Systems

The purpose of federal personnel regulations is protection of the civil service as an institution. . . The institution of the civil service has not worked perfectly. But it is a rational system which over time has earned the respect of the American people. It allows the hiring of qualified individuals according to objective standards, which is a necessity for fairness to job applicants. This serves the further goal of efficiency, . . . And that means the OPM must police the merit-based system throughout the government.

In reality, Devine's approach did not mean a return to the values of the merit system or to the support of the institution of the public service, even though his specific agenda included emphasis on upholding civil service rules and regulations. Devine's focus did mean a continuation of the Carter administration's predominant emphasis on management techniques, particularly the use of performance appraisal, merit pay and bonus systems as effective management tools. However, the primary emphasis of Devine's new agenda seemed to be as a rationale for staff cutbacks in OPM and elsewhere in government and for reductions in personnel program and benefit costs throughout the federal sector (see U. S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 1982:9-15).
2. The Emergence of a New OPM Doctrine.

Within an hour of his inauguration, President Reagan imposed a rigid hiring freeze on the federal government. In his announcement of the freeze, he said: "Beyond the symbolic value of this, which is my first official act, the freeze will eventually lead to a significant reduction in the size of the federal workforce" (GERR, January 19, 1981: 14). Budget proposals quickly appeared, announcing the intention to cut 92,000 jobs by the end of Fiscal Year 1982 and reductions in the compensation comparability formulas for federal wages (GERR, February 23, 1981:5-7).

During his confirmation hearings in March 1981, Devine stressed the importance of a smaller, more productive workforce which would aid in winning back the "high regard of the public." In addition to reducing government employment, Devine's announced priorities included aggressive implementation of merit pay and performance appraisal, and a reform of federal pay practices to correct public perceptions of overcompensation (GERR, March 16, 1981:13-14). These basic themes of OPM's mission to correct the perceptions of an overpopulated, underworked, and overcompensated federal bureaucracy became a constant factor in Devine's doctrine of personnel management.
By the end of 1981, the administration position regarding the federal service was being clearly and vocally presented. At a meeting in Washington of the American Society for Public Administration in December, Edwin Meese and Edwin Harper of the White House staff and Donald Devine offered sharp criticism of "the federal bureaucracy's productivity, efficiency, and in some cases its loyalty." The tone of their presentations was predominantly negative, and some in the audience viewed it as insulting (GERR, December 7, 1981:9).

In its relationship to federal agencies, OPM began quickly to revoke delegations of personnel authorities, and to eliminate or greatly reduce "its consulting services to the agencies, recruiting activities, and productivity improvement research" (U. S. GAO, 1989:38). These program changes were purported to be necessary in order to enable OPM to concentrate on core functions such as program oversight and monitoring, staffing services, and administration of retirement and health benefit programs (U. S. GAO, 1989:38); however, as subsequent discussion will show, even these most basic of personnel functions were reduced or inadequately performed.
Devine also took steps to sharply limit the role and influence of OPM in the broader national concerns of public personnel administration and merit systems. He announced that in keeping with the administration's doctrine of devolving power to the states, "we at the Office of Personnel Management have moved to end the Intergovernmental Personnel Act programs. In our view, they have imposed inflexible merit protection requirements on the states, which have frequently led to unnecessary spending and conflicts with local needs" (1982:54-55). Thus, OPM abandoned the long tradition of national leadership in merit system development. OPM would henceforth concentrate its efforts only at the federal level. State and local governments were encouraged to dilute merit programs.

The Devine doctrine also required the filling of key operational positions in OPM with political appointees. Later, in response to congressional critics of politicization of the agency, OPM spokesman Patrick Korten "said his agency needed the extra political appointees because it was transformed from the 'mechanical' Civil Service Commission in 1979 to 'an integral part of the management team of the federal government' under President Reagan" (Struck, 1985:A15).
From an early point in the Reagan administration, being "an integral part of the management team" meant being a political appointee not a career civil servant. For example, the point was forcibly made in a White House memorandum (June 11, 1981) from Lyn Nofziger to Interior Secretary James Watt:

I would appreciate it if you could tell me the status of your appointments to regional offices . . . It is urgent that we begin to put the President's appointees and supporters in those jobs as quickly as possible.

As you may well know, many decisions are made out there that directly affect the Administration and I don't think we can afford to leave those decisions in the hands of Carter appointees or longtime bureaucrats.

Further developments of the Devine doctrine included a presentation made in 1984 by Joseph A. Morris, then General Counsel of OPM, to a colloquium on public administration sponsored by Indiana University and the University of Paris, to which Morris bore "the greetings of President Reagan and Director Devine." The presentation was entitled "Toward a Capitalist Civil Service." As later published, it contrasted the vast, permanent, collectivist bureaucracies which "are incompatible with representative democracy" to the personnel system of risk, reward, and performance, which Morris claimed was established by CSRA and implemented by the Reagan administration (1985:35-41). Morris asserted that this system was comparable to the
formula for management success which was developed by Peters and Waterman in their influential book, In Search of Excellence (1982).

Perhaps the ultimate expression of one element of the Devine doctrine appeared in the Wall Street Journal in an article by Terry W. Culler, a former political appointee under Devine in OPM. Culler advanced the theory that the federal government did not need excellence in its employees, only competence. He went further to advocate that the most talented individuals should seek employment in the private sector where it would do the most good (Culler, 1986:32).

B. Attacks on the Public Personnel System

Devine served as Director of OPM for four years, 1981-1985. During this period, the role of OPM and the effects of its policies were almost uniformly adversarial to the short-term interests of the public service. Although Devine denied that there was a war on civil servants, as charged by some in the Washington academic community (Comarow, 1982:8), and on occasion even spoke highly of the dedication and hard work of the federal employees (Devine, 1982:9), nonetheless, the policy record during his tenure
was one of continuous assault on the public personnel system and its employees.


Devine attempted to justify his policies by analogy to a doctor who prescribes unpleasant medicine to a patient, for the ultimate benefit of the patient (GERR, February 21, 1983:383-385). Devine maintained that employee morale would improve with lowered benefits "because current polls show that most Americans think federal workers are overpaid and underworked" (GERR, March 7, 1983:491). These views were not acceptable to members of the federal service who were experiencing threats to their job security, benefits, compensation, and feelings of self-worth. Whether to the detriment or for the benefit of federal employees, OPM undertook the following policy actions which were widely interpreted as hostile to the best interests of the public service:

a. Employee Benefits. Early in 1981, OPM initiated policies in the federal health benefits program to reduce coverage (particularly for abortions) and to increase employee costs for health insurance. Later, retirement benefits were consistently attacked through proposals to reduce or delay cost-of-living adjustments,
and then through advocacy of replacement of the civil service retirement system by a lower cost system incorporating social security coverage. OPM took action to change the combined federal charitable campaign rules, intruding political consideration into the inclusion or exclusion of charitable groups (e.g., for right to work; against planned parenthood). Finally, OPM even controverted its own studies on the effectiveness of flexible work schedules and campaigned in Congress for tighter controls on the practice.

b. **Employee Compensation.** OPM attacked the federal compensation structure by recommending pay freezes, and reduction in the comparability basis for determining pay schedules. Studies were prepared advocating a "market approach" to pay setting and compensation reductions based on specious "quit rate" statistics. An actual 5% reduction in federal pay was proposed for 1986.

c. **Position Classification.** Early in his tenure, Devine began voicing concern over misclassification and overgrading of federal positions. In 1982, OPM proposed new standards which would downgrade librarian and procurement specialist positions; however, the standards were withdrawn after vigorous protests from the librarian
profession and from the Defense Department and NASA which maintained they could not recruit and retain critical procurement personnel under the proposed standards.

In 1984, OPM and OMB announced a program to reduce the "grade bulge," the purported identification of excessive numbers of positions in GS-11 through GS-15. The reduction plan called for the elimination of 40,000 positions in those grade levels. OPM's rationale, procedures, conclusions, and results were later challenged by both GAO and MSPB (GERR, February 17, 1986:207; March 3, 1986:268).

d. Comparable Worth. The comparable worth controversy in 1984 provided another example of OPM's eagerness to engage in partisan political action. Legislation was proposed in the House of Representatives by Representative Oakar to require a study of pay rates for male and female dominated occupations. OPM expressed its opposition to the study and then undertook a political initiative. An internal OPM memorandum by James L. Byrnes, a politically appointed deputy associate director, stated: "The political possibilities of this situation should not be underestimated. . . . Rather than allowing Oakar to manipulate the administration on the gender issue, we could create disorder within the Democratic House
pitting union against union and both against radical feminist groups." (Peterson, 1984:A19).

The strategy laid out in Byrnes' memorandum was followed by Devine who convened a meeting of employee union representatives on May 22, 1984, to warn that pay equity might cause members, particularly males, to suffer financially: "At the OPM briefing, director Donald Devine and top aides explained that the Oakar bill could present 'problems' for blue-collar workers" (Causey, 1984:D2).

e. Reduction In Force and Furloughs. OPM took the lead in encouraging and conducting reductions in force and furloughs of employees. Additionally, OPM consistently proposed and eventually implemented revisions in regulations to put less emphasis on seniority and more on performance ratings in determining retention rights of employees affected by reduction in force. Devine maintained that the changes would help in "making the way we run government credible to the world" particularly given the concern "about the perception among the public that federal employees are lazy, overpaid, underworked bureaucrats" (GERR, March 15, 1982:9-10).
Two months later, Devine returned to the subject of reductions in force in remarks at a Republican party fundraiser. He said that "the issue of RIFs" has been "overblown" because only a few workers had been affected. Further, he called RIFs a "non-problem" which would not be of concern "if people in the press stopped hyping it up" (GERR, May 31, 1982).

f. Temporary Hiring. In late 1984, OPM established a policy to facilitate and emphasize the hiring of employees on temporary appointments. OPM spokesman Patrick Korten said that "the policy, designed to hold down the cost of Government, represented a 'big change, a significant turnaround in this area of personnel policy'" (Pear, 1985:A1). Critics of the program pointed out the possibility of subversion of competitive processes; politicization of the work force; emphasis on short-term vs. long-term work force issues; and fewer rights and benefits for temporary employees. This policy represented a significant change in government hiring from a career commitment process to a hiring-for-the-job concept.

2. Conflict over the Performance Management System. Perhaps the most significant issue which brought OPM into conflict with employee groups, Congress, and the courts
involved OPM's insistence on radical expansion of merit pay and performance appraisal systems. This was grounded in concerns other than a commitment to a conventional notion of management: "Donald J. Devine . . . and other Reagan appointees have not missed the significance of performance evaluation as an instrument of control" (Dillman, 1986: 212).

By the fall of 1983, the Public Administration Times noted the escalation of conflict:

New personnel regulations designed to give greater weight to job performance during projected layoffs have been announced by the Office of Personnel Management. . . . The regulations represent the third attempt in six months by OPM to reform regulations governing employee layoffs. Two previous regulations which gave even greater weight to performance over seniority were blocked by congressional and public employee opposition. Employee resistance to the move has centered around the development of adequate performance standards by which to measure achievements ("RIF Rules Downgrade Seniority Protection," 1983:1).

OPM was intent on expanding the merit pay concept despite preliminary research findings that the system was not accomplishing its stated objectives of motivation and improved performance (Pearce and Perry, 1983:324-325). OPM steadfastly pursued its goal in the face of employee hostility and Congressional opposition. Within the executive branch, OPM demanded statements of unequivocal
agency support, and Devine obtained assurances of support from leading administration officials. When new merit pay regulations were proposed, many agencies attempted to comment, carefully retaining a positive view toward performance management but also noting certain problems, but OPM would accept nothing less than complete agreement.

On this issue, Senator Bingaman noted: "I would like to share with my colleagues information that I have received which suggests the suppression of negative interagency comments on the proposed regulations." He then submitted for the record a copy of a Social Security Administration memorandum which stated in part that the SSA "has been told by the Department of Health and Human Services that, since President Reagan has approved them, no comments will be passed on by the Department . . . or its agencies to OPM" (Congressional Record—Senate, May 26, 1983:S7653). This incident, and others like it, occurred at the same time that OPM representatives were publicly stating that comments on the regulations were welcome and being carefully considered.

3. The Emergence of Institutional Resistance.
The aggressive, arbitrary, and unilateral nature of OPM's policies and actions predictably resulted in reactions and
counteractions from parties interested in public service issues. Early in Devine's tenure, for example, he was called to task by Representative Ford of Michigan in regard to the OPM policy decisions on federal employee health benefits: "I can no longer stand back and allow the Director . . . to blame the current mess in the Federal employees health benefits program . . . on everyone else in this town, when in fact, the responsibility is his, and his alone" (Congressional Record--Extensions of Remarks, November 13, 1981:E5305). Representative Ford went on to note that after first blaming OPM staff, Devine then identified the courts and the Congress as responsible. Devine, instead of working with Congress to resolve the issue, "chose a course of arbitrary action which has thrown the program into turmoil."

a. Congressional Reaction. In the face of the results of merit pay which were appearing to be counterproductive, Congress prevented OPM from administratively extending pay for performance, and then in 1983-84, Congress took charge of changing the program. Republican Senators Trible and Warner and Republican Representative Wolf introduced a new approach, the Performance Management and Recognition System, seeking to eliminate dysfunctions of the merit pay system. Congress
approved the legislation, and the bill was enacted on November 8, 1984 (Perry, Petrakis, and Miller, 1989:29).

Significantly, as Congress took steps to remedy a troubled system, OPM was almost a bystander in the effort.

Another controversy, OPM's compensation and quit rate study, also received Congressional attention. OPM initiatives to reduce federal pay were advanced in late 1984 by an OPM study on federal compensation, using purported quit rates to demonstrate that pay was too high. OPM was challenged by study prepared by the House Post Office and Civil Service Committee (POCS) which charged OPM with propaganda tactics and manipulation of statistics. That Committee report suggested that OPM either was incompetent or was deliberately attempting to mislead the public (Fredell, 1985b:3).

Later in 1985, POCS again challenged OPM on its development of the grade bulge reduction program. Representative Oakar noted that: "it is this faulty, misleading use of data which constitutes a totally inexcusable misrepresentation of the federal grade structure." (Fredell, 1985a:4).

In still another example, the House Subcommittee on Civil Service responded to one of Devine's claims regarding morale of the federal service: "The subcommittee
scrutinized the results of the 1983 Federal Employee Attitude Survey. According to the Director of OPM, Federal employees' morale is good. After reviewing the survey results, the Subcommittee found instead that the Administration had done a great deal to demoralize the workforce" (U. S. House. Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, 1985:81).

In 1983, Senator Bingaman introduced a bill to prevent OPM from implementing its regulations on a new performance management system. In his remarks, Bingaman stated a supportive view of public service:

I strongly believe that the Congress and the administration should be concerned with recruiting and retaining a highly skilled work force necessary to administer the laws and provide vital Government services. These proposed regulatory changes, if allowed to be implemented, will impact negatively on morale of the Federal worker and on personnel management.

The continued erosion of Federal benefits is unfair and unwise from a management standpoint. . . . I believe those of us in Congress who believe in efficient and effective Government should support efforts to resist unfair and counterproductive assaults on Federal workers. By providing recognition, respect, and fair treatment to the Federal worker, we insure professionalism in the work force necessary to carry out the vital missions of Government (Congressional Record--Senate, May 26, 1983:57652).
b. **Judicial Reaction.** The Congress was not OPM's only adversary during this period of institutional warfare. The federal courts were frequently brought into the controversies and repeatedly limited OPM's actions or struck down OPM initiatives. OPM lost court battles over health benefits coverage, and the inclusion or exclusion of organizations from the charity campaigns. The most significant and revealing court action came when a court decision barred the administrative implementation of OPM's performance pay regulations in 1983.

In this case, the Memorandum Opinion of Judge Barrington D. Parker addressed OPM's claims that the court was without jurisdiction and that OPM was not bound in any way by Congressional action. Judge Parker dismissed these claims of administrative independence and ruled that OPM was indeed bound by Congressional action and court jurisdiction (*GERR*, January 9, 1984:87-94). Later, upon appeal the U. S. Court of Appeals also denied OPM claims of unilateral status and authority: "All things considered, we find OPM's position untenable" (*GERR*, May 7, 1984:920).

c. **Employee Organization Reaction.** The Congress and the courts were joined by employee union opposition to OPM and Devine. The American Federation of Government
Employees began calling in 1981 for Devine's resignation. By 1983, the president of the National Federation of Federal Employees was calling Devine "the James Watt of the personnel system" (GERR, June 13, 1983:1233). OPM was even losing credibility with its own employees. In 1982, a MSPB report contained the following assessment:

The Office of Personnel Management--the agency principally charged with improving the quality of management for all federal agencies--has received the lowest 'quality of work' rating by its own mid-level managers, according to a new report on federal agency productivity released by the Merit Systems Protection Board earlier this month (GERR, June 14, 1982:9).

In the political wars engendered by OPM's policies, that organization had become an isolated partisan in the executive branch, surrounded by adversaries in the other institutions of government and losing the credibility of its own work force.

C. The Development of Organizational Incapacity

The Merit Systems Protection Board reported a turbulent situation in 1981 for the merit system and OPM: "Events of the year may be likened to those that might occur after drastic change in the management of a diversified industrial concern, where the new management sets about radically changing the product line, discontinuing some operations and building up others." (1982:4). The new
administration imposed major changes in policy-making procedures, staffing patterns, organization and budget, and functional responsibilities for OPM.

1. The Closing of the Policy Process.

Within OPM, the organizational implications of the shift to "political administration" required the confinement of the policy-making process to an inner circle of political appointees (Devine, 1987:131). Under Devine, OPM continued to ignore the agency personnel community in the development and implementation of policies and in the communication process, preferring to deal substantively with a Personnel Policy Group composed of agency Assistant Secretaries and other political appointees (U. S. GAO, 1984).

Within OPM, Devine's initial high level appointments were made on the basis of political factors. Neither the Deputy Director (Loretta Cornelius), the Associate Director for Executive Personnel and Management Development (George Nesterczuk), nor the Director of Public Affairs (Patrick S. Korten) had any substantial federal organizational management experience (GERR, June 29, 1981:6-7). Devine followed a consistent pattern of placing appointees with primarily political qualifications into key line management positions.
Within OPM, a fortress mentality developed at the leadership level with the political appointees becoming, by choice, isolated from working levels of the organization. Policy initiatives were developed and written in the executive suite with little professional contribution from the specialists in the organization. Professional staff members often were uninformed about initiatives until they read about them in the newspapers. One example was the "quit rate" study which had caught the attention of the Congress. The controversial aspects of the study were prepared by Patrick Korten, whose efforts to associate the report with professional staff were rebuffed by a subsequent House Committee investigation (Fredell, 1985b:3). In summary, Chester Newland reports: "Remaining senior career personnel in OPM's headquarters have felt largely excluded from significant involvement in matters related to policy" (1983:18).

2. Reductions in Budget and Staff Resources.
Internally, OPM's history since 1980 has been marked by deep cuts in career staffing levels. In 1989, the U. S. General Accounting Office reported: "Changes in operating philosophies and organizational structure have been accompanied by declining budget and staffing levels. Since 1979, funding for OPM's S&E activities decreased 45 percent
in constant dollars. Staffing for S&E activities decreased 54 percent during the same years." (U. S. GAO, 1989:38-39).

The exodus of competent career employees began quickly when OPM, under Campbell, approved an early-out retirement offer for its own employees during the initial creation of the organization. In the Devine years, staffing levels of the career work force were driven down significantly. Devine accepted with equanimity, even with enthusiasm, severe budgetary reductions and staff limitations in the years 1981-1984.

When funding and staff levels were announced for Fiscal Year 1982: "Only the Office of Personnel Management--which recently RIFed, downgraded or laterally reassigned 809 persons, and plans a 10-day furlough, for 3,300 more employees beginning this month--claims to be satisfied to continue operating under its reduced funding level of $101 million" (GERR, March 29, 1982:9-10). When the Fiscal Year 1983 funding and staff levels were announced, again Devine did not protest but indicated, according to an OPM spokesman, that "OPM plans to make program cuts in its workforce and effectiveness development office, in its productivity program, staffing services, and to essentially
eliminate its agency relations office" (GERR, February 15, 1982:6-7).

For the Fiscal Year 1984 budget, the story of OPM leadership's complacency about funding reductions continued:

At OPM, for example, it appears highly unlikely that OPM Director Donald J. Devine will ask for any more--and may even ask for less--than the $102 million the agency ended up receiving this past year for salaries and expenses, after absorbing a 16 percent budget cut imposed by Congress. The agency's staff has gone down, however, from about 8,000 persons to 6,000 persons, one of the largest reductions--through both attrition and RIFs--absorbed by any agency" (GERR, November 29, 1982:7).

At the same time that career positions were being adversely affected and programs reduced, key positions in OPM were increasingly filled by political appointees at program director levels and even in the regional offices. The number of political employees increased from 15 in 1980 (itself a great increase over such appointments in the Civil Service Commission) to a high point in 1983 of 36, then declined somewhat to a total of 27 in 1986 (U. S. General Accounting Office, 1987:52). In December 1988 in a presentation at a National Academy of Public Administration conference, Constance Horner acknowledged the continued existence of at least 30 political appointments in OPM.
3. **Erosion of Staff Competence.**

Of perhaps even greater significance, the number of professional personnel positions in OPM has declined even more drastically than the number of total employees in the organization. This has represented a significant erosion of the technical core of the organization. From 1980 to 1987, the number of personnel specialists declined from 1407 to 748, a reduction of 48.8% (U. S. MSPB, 1989:22-24). This precipitous decline in specialized professional resources provides a strong indication "that OPM's ability to provide overall civil service guidance and leadership may have declined," as reported by the MSPB (1989:24), and it also demonstrates the reduced priority placed by OPM leadership on substantive efforts in personnel program development and operation.

OPM continued the trend begun in the Campbell years to deemphasize oversight, compliance review, and evaluation of agency personnel management programs. The staff years devoted to these activities declined steadily from a total of 238 in Fiscal Year 1980 to 121 in FY 1987 (U. S. GAO, 1989:75), representing a decline of 49.2%. Of course, central agency oversight of agency programs is essential to the assurance of effectiveness of programs in keeping with
merit principles. Merit principles, however, have not been on OPM's priority list.

The most drastic decline in both total employment and numbers of professional personnel specialists occurred after 1981, revealing a continuing attack in the Reagan administration on the technical core of OPM as a human resource management agency. This was not institutional leadership; rather, it was organizational incapacitation. The decline in professional staffing is indicative of the nature of OPM's business as defined by its political leadership. OPM has been and continues to be conceived as a political, not technical, organization.

The erosion of staff competence led to the drastic technical decline of OPM as an institution of human resource management. Even the Grace Commission report commented critically on OPM's loss of technical specialists and the deterioration of staffing services (Goldenberg, 1985:80). Clearly, OPM began to reflect Thompson's observation that "political responsiveness run rampant can mean administration by amateurs where expertise and competence receive short shrift and public agencies fail to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in their operations" (1988:2).
4. Abandoning Research, Productivity, and EEO.

During the Reagan administration, OPM also turned away from its initial commitment to experimentation, research, and analysis of CSRA implementation (Goldenberg, 1985: 83-84). Ultimately, Goldenberg concludes that "Director Devine has politicized the research and evaluation processes in OPM so completely that outsiders no longer accept OPM reports as professional research products." (1985:85).

On another front, Devine's scaling back of the Work Force Effectiveness and Development group meant, among other things, reducing and then abandoning efforts at improvement of federal productivity, which had been a high priority in the Carter administration and which was specifically intended in CSRA. The General Accounting Office reported:

Recently, a major policy shift in OPM, accompanied by several reorganizations and staff cutbacks, has terminated the agency's guidance and assistance efforts in productivity. These activities have not been assumed by OMB or any other agency. . . .

Now these activities have ceased. With the demise of the National Productivity Council [formed in 1978] and OPM's official role as focal point for federal productivity, the current OPM director [Devine] believes the agency should limit its work to traditional personnel areas that do not include assisting agencies in developing productivity efforts. To the extent that productivity improvement should be a function of OPM, the director believes it should be confined to the performance appraisal process and general management development and training (1983: 23-24).
Still another staffing decision indicated a turning away by OPM from equal opportunity and affirmative action programs. In December 1981, Deputy Director Loretta Cornelius announced "extensive staff cuts in affirmative action personnel in all 10 of OPM's regional offices" (GERR, January 4, 1982: 11-12). Additionally, OPM also reduced its efforts to collect data on race, sex, and national origin for the jobs for which it administers examinations.

5. Volatility of Organizational Structure.
Under Devine, basic organizational changes in OPM were made quickly and often. The result was severe organizational volatility. There were three internal reorganizations between November 1981 and November 1982 (U. S. GAO, 1989: 38). These reorganizations moved career staff members out of program areas of their expertise and often required geographic relocation.

Devine's third reorganization, announced in November 1982, clearly established the dominance of political concerns in OPM operations. The functions of personnel policy and communications (including public relations) were combined under the direction of Patrick S. Korten, who had a predominantly public affairs background, but virtually no
prior experience in personnel policy issues. Other prominent operational positions were filled by political appointees with equally slim professional credentials. And finally, the reorganization placed five political appointees in the field in positions of regional representatives of the Director. Of the five regional representatives, only one had any personnel experience (information from OPM press release, 1982).

6. Implications of Internal Organizational Policies. These organizational and staffing changes had significant implications for OPM's governmental role and for its clientele. OPM under Alan Campbell had shifted from the Civil Service Commission clientele of the personnel community to Campbell's four sided clientele of managers, political executives, academics, and minority representatives. Now, in the Reagan administration, the clientele became solely the president's political agenda and his appointees who were charged with carrying it out.

The assault by OPM's leadership on its own technical core of competence and expertise also had significant implications. Technical operations always create a problem for political decisions. The program specialists in any organization, at the working level, operate under values
which stem from the technique and discipline, the art and science, of the technical program and which are therefore not necessarily compatible with political imperatives. In conditions of politicization, an organization's technical core inevitably will come under attack. The history of OPM demonstrates a need for theories of anti-institutional leadership, anti-organizational management, and anti-agency perspective in order to understand and explain the developments and effects of public organizational life under the presidential direction of recent decades.

D. Donald Devine and the Reagan Presidency

The major aim of Devine's policies was to make OPM an instrument of the political agenda of the Reagan administration. At the level of theory, this meant that federal personnel policies must make a contribution to the ideological doctrines of the conservative wing of the Republican party. At the practical level of administrative action, the objective was to create a condition of responsiveness of the public service solely to political direction from within the executive branch (Newland, 1983: 15). Devine used the tools of CSRA as he sought to have OPM assert ideological leadership and to establish a system
of "political administration" throughout the federal sector.

1. The Theory and System of Political Administration. The theoretical basis of the system of political administration was an interpretation of Weberian bureaucracy in its starkest Prussian manifestation, which, in Devine's words, meant: "The skill and technical expertise of the career service must be utilized, but it must be utilized under the direct authority and personal supervision of the political leader who has the moral authority flowing from the people through an election" (1987:129). This represents a clear statement of what Chester Newland calls the "partisan leadership model at OPM" (1983:18).

When Devine adopted Weber's bureaucratic formulation of the responsiveness of administration to politics, he also adopted, perhaps without sufficient reflection, Weber's conception of the democratic state and the charismatic, plebiscitary leader. Weber was influential in the formulation of the German Weimar Republic and the introduction of Article 41 in the Weimar constitution, which provided for direct, popular election of the president of the republic. According to H. P. Secher, in
his introduction to Weber's *Basic Concepts in Sociology*,

this represented:

the culmination of much of Weber's thinking on this subject; he regarded the position of President of the new Reich as the focal point for the development of charismatic leadership which, he felt, could emerge only if that office was open to election by all the people. A popular leader must be the center of any political system and not an institution whose authority was only delegated, i.e., a parliamentary assembly. As the ignominious use of Article 48 (emergency powers) by the popularly elected President later showed, Weber had completely and romantically misread the true meaning of 'plebiscitarian democracy.' (Weber, 1966:11-12).

With a newly elected romantic and charismatic president as his leader, Devine projected his definitive statement of administrative philosophy forcibly on the world of American public administration in the spring of 1981 when he addressed the annual conference of the American Society for Public Administration in Detroit. One interested listener in Detroit, Louis C. Gawthrop, then editor of the *Public Administration Review*, reported and commented as follows (1981:iii):

The newly confirmed director of the United States Office of Personnel Management came before the ASPA assembly and spoke of the demise of the New Deal and the rise of new hope. His remarks included many of the themes of the Reagan campaign drumbeat--family, fortitude, free enterprise, the competitive market--all set in the context of Max Weber's classical bureaucratic model. . . .
But Gawthrop was perplexed:

Is a return to the annals of monocratic hierarchical control, complete with all of its repressive, suppressive coerciveness really the only viable hope for a public administration of the future? Apparently so, at least insofar as the U. S. Office of Personnel Management is concerned, . . . the simple, if not simplistic, invocation of the age-old policy-administration dichotomy in its most classical tradition is the somber expression of a hope made empty by a faith made frozen in a profession made sterile.

Whether empty hope, frozen faith, or sterile profession, the doctrine was enormously useful in the advancement of OPM objectives. This represented a new political attempt, in Golembiewski's words, to "put autocracy in the service of the republic" (1984:242). However, the juxtaposition of authoritarian means in the advancement of democratic objectives was no more a concern to Devine than it had been to Weber because management was given a new political meaning. As Michael Sanera, a onetime OPM political appointee, has later stated: "success in public-sector management is not dependent on good business management of existing government operations, but rather on managing the President's political philosophy and values" (1987:177).

Implementation of this theory has prompted Chester Newland to conclude: "Under Reagan, responsibility of the personnel system to the political system is largely defined
as responsiveness to ideological executive control. That contrasts with the traditionally neutral civil service responsibility to statutory provisions in a constitutional system of separation of powers and a rule of law" (1983:15). In Mark Huddleston's analysis, OPM became "a partisan political organization that has a partisan political function" (1982:620). This approach soon led to OPM's bitter adversarial relationships with Congress, labor unions, and other representatives of public service interests.

2. Putting Theory into Practice.
The theory of political administration required a complementary theory of national government, which Devine was quick to supply (1982:55,57):

The national government is a single organization. In theory, there should not be conflicting goals in any organization. Situations may differ between constituent units but the entity as a whole should have a consistent policy vision, guided by general rules. . . . In my view, it is essential that our institutions be preserved as single organizations, in order that they may be controlled centrally, so that the people and their elected representatives maintain control over them.

The operative word in this formulation is "control," to be understood as presidential control through the intermediacy of appointed officials. The basic ingredients of control are budget and personnel, as an artful practitioner of
political control, Anne Gorsuch Burford, has pointed out: "After those two items there isn't anything else! The only things that count in an agency are the money and the people. If you don't control those, you don't control anything" (1983:37).

The approach of political administration to the control of people was also Weberian, as noted by Robert Cuff: "As a political commentator Weber stressed the need to subordinate bureaucracy to strong political control. Strong leadership was required, he argued, to restrain the bureaucracy's inexorable quest for autonomous power and to reduce its collusion with powerful economic interests" (1978:241). Thus, the power of the bureaucracy could only be broken through imposition of personal charismatic authority. This was supplied by Ronald Reagan and was extended in principle through political appointees, leading of necessity, in Weberian terms of charismatic leadership, to the "selection of administrative staff on the basis of personal devotion, irrespective of technical qualifications or objective standards" (Loewenstein, 1966:83).

President Ronald Reagan has been characterized by David Broder as "a president who flees information" (1985:C7):
Reagan, as everyone must know by now, is the living refutation of Francis Bacon's aphorism that 'knowledge is power.' Reagan has flourished in politics by demonstrating that 'conviction is power.' He knows what he thinks and has the power of his own beliefs. But he treats knowledge as if it were dangerous to his convictions. Often it is.

In the political administration of the Reagan presidency, as the theory was developed by Donald Devine, the emphasis was on policy and people, convictions and action, but not on the requirements of institutions, organizations, administrative processes, or the requirements of effective human resource management. The Reagan years represented a continuation, with a new twist, of the romantic revolt of the 1960's which found its expression in the counterculture and which believed in, among other things, the superiority of subjectivity over expertise, rationality, and professionalism (Beer, 1978:25-27). The Reagan revolution, under the leadership of a genuine romantic figure, captured these elements in a romanticism of the right with its emphasis on ideology and in the basic anti-intellectualism which it fostered (Long, 1988:337).

3. **Jigsaw Puzzle Management.**

Four years into the Reagan administration, the people of government—experts, technocrats, professionals—were still considered the enemy. Throughout his first term, President
Reagan continued to attack the career civil servants. In this he was accompanied by the president of the Heritage Foundation, Edwin J. Feulner, Jr., who could still say in 1984: "Perhaps one of the most formidable and underrated challenges faced by the first Reagan Administration was the reflexive opposition to Reagan policies by the entrenched federal bureaucracy. It soon became apparent that oftentimes 'personnel is policy'" (Butler, Sanera, and Weinrod, 1984:x).

The approach to people management advocated by the Heritage Foundation achieved some notoriety, particularly for its advocacy of "jigsaw puzzle management" in which political objectives are never revealed to the career staff. Gaining support of the bureaucracy is encouraged, but only insofar as career people are assigned a single piece of a project without being given information about the overall objectives (Sanera, 1984:514). Written by a former OPM official, this formula for political administration called for a continuous focus on the political agenda, and it rested on the premise that political legitimacy resided only in the political executive and relied on "the moral authority of the political appointee in his role as the delegated representative of the President" (Sanera, 1984:524).
In Devine's model of politics and administration, demands on professional specialists and analysts changed from requiring analysis and expertise to demanding policy adherence and advocacy. In 1982, Devine addressed a luncheon of the Senior Executives Association and advised the executives that obedience was the prime characteristic of a good federal executive: "The OPM director cited the stability and willingness to carry out orders of the career military service, and social scientist Max Weber's dictum that a civil servant's primary objective is to 'execute conscientiously' the orders of his political superiors, as models of guidance with Senior Executive Service members could follow" (GERR, June 21, 1982:8-9). Thus, neutral competence was to be replaced by passive obedience.

In conditions dominated by political ideology and notions of Weberian political bureaucracy, decision precedes analysis, policy manipulates information, ideology subordinates expertise, and political imperatives subvert professional standards. This formula has been prevalent in the central management agencies of the Reagan presidency, as Tomkin has identified in her study of OMB, where professional work came to be attempts to justify decisions already made by political appointees (1983:48).
4. **Illusions and Reality of Political Administration.** By using the legal tool of CSRA, Devine and OPM "sharply altered the balance of power toward the political side" assisting the Reagan administration in moving "more aggressively than any in modern times to assert its policy control over the top levels of its bureaucracy" (Taylor, January 19, 1983:A1,A8). The demand was for either ideological loyalty or silent compliance. The significance for public personnel administration, as an administrative process, was that it could no longer legitimate personnel decisions on the basis of any value system other than political responsiveness. In a political system, personnel officers become only clerks and record keepers, not public servants with particular expertise in the effective management of the human resources of government.

OPM under Devine played an important role in covering Reagan's commitment to reduce the size of the federal bureaucracy. In reality, the administration programs actually increased the numbers of federal employees and substantially increased the totality of federal expenditures while engaging in a putative war against the purported growth and magnitude of federal bureaucracy. In this, OPM was required to manipulate the statistics of federal employment in order to demonstrate staff
reductions. Hugh Heclo has identified the "paradox of expanding government and stable bureaucracy" (1978:91). Actions of OPM were essential in the deflection of public attention away from this paradox.

Under Devine's leadership, OPM made concrete contributions to Reagan doctrine, but not to the reduction of the size of government (Havemann, 1988:A19). Rather, the contribution was specifically to the weakening of the human resource sinews of the American administrative state. One reporter, reflecting on problems in the Reagan foreign policy establishment, put it bluntly: "The Reagan years have badly tarnished the ideal of public service" (Ignatius, 1987:C5). Charles Goodsell identifies Reagan as a president and politician who has "set in motion the most powerful anti-public-service movement in modern U. S. history" (1985:164). OPM's policies during Devine's tenure were examples of a conscious disinvestment in the human resources of government (Wolf, 1987:231).

By 1985, OPM had become a necessary instrument of the autonomous presidency, at war with other political institutions, disdainful of other opinions, committed to advancing ideology at any cost, and contemptuous of factual reality. In many respects, the leadership of OPM displayed
characteristics of "fanaticism" (Selznick, 1966:210-213). Selznick discussed this phenomenon in reference to a subgroup, the agriculturalists, within TVA; however, in the case of OPM, the application is relevant to the Director and his immediate leadership group. Selznick defines one aspect of "fanaticism" as behavior based on "the persistent espousal of a general doctrine or formula, in such a way that issues are not considered upon their merits. . . . Thus a man with a special doctrinal axe to grind, . . . may squeeze doctrinal implications out of each concrete issue, and take his position on the level of doctrine" (1966:212). In OPM, political doctrine motivated all decisions and programmatic initiatives relative to human resource management.

Clearly, Devine subscribed to a Reagan administration doctrine which was forcefully expressed by Rex E. Lee upon his resignation as U. S. Solicitor General: "Lee said his approach resulted in important victories in the last four years that enhanced the power of the executive over Congress and the discretion of executive branch agencies over the judiciary" (The Washington Post, May 1, 1985:A4).
5. The Fall of an Ideologue: Exit Devine.

Devine viewed OPM as a partisan office and moved it directly into the election campaign of 1984. Devine’s open partisanship and politicization of federal personnel issues left him vulnerable to political attack. His term of office came to an ignominious end, amid threats by his Deputy Director, Loretta Cornelius, whom he had deeply offended during the confirmation process, that she would “tell a committee on the Hill about all the political shenanigans that have been going on here [in OPM] for the last four years” ("Coup Coup at OPM," 1985:4).

After a contentious reconfirmation process, a Republican Senate refused to reconfirm Devine—a Republican appointee who had impeccable conservative connections and was completely supportive of Reagan’s political ideology (Rosen, 1986:207-210). Devine withdrew as a nominee for a second term, and two weeks later was lionized at a gathering, sponsored by then Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole. At this affair, there gathered what Devine called “the whole right-of-center in the whole U. S. here" (The Washington Post, June 22, 1985:C3).
B. Constance Horner: Program Change and Policy Continuity

As replacement for Donald Devine, the administration nominated Constance J. Horner, an associate director of OMB. Like her predecessors, Horner had no specific personnel management background; however, she had four years of experience in federal management positions. A former school teacher, she had been active in Republican campaign politics and had served briefly as head of VISTA, the federal anti-poverty volunteer program. Her confirmation went smoothly, marked only by senators of both parties urging her to not continue the partisan activities of her predecessor; however, she did maintain her right to engage in political activity: "I think the civil service and the head of the civil service are different matters" (GERR, August 5, 1985:1101).

Shortly after assuming the duties of Director of OPM, Constance Horner evidenced an understanding of some of the basic problems left to her by Donald Devine. In an interview (GERR, October 28, 1985:1555-1558), she noted the need for reconciliation "between the civil service and the current Administration on the one hand, and the civil service and the public on the other hand." She reflected on the responsibility of the government to serve the people, and then demonstrated an understanding of the
institutional implications of American government: "if we
don't have confidence in the civil service it is like
losing confidence in the Congress, or the Presidency, or
the judiciary--one of the major sources of the democratic
system." In her tenure at OPM, Horner brought a new
attitude and some program changes, but the basic values and
institutional relationships of OPM remained the same.

1. New Initiatives and Inadequate Resources.
As director of OPM, Horner began to address the competence
and leadership issues of the organization. Capable,
career-oriented people were assigned to lead critical
program areas such as SES management training and executive
development, and staffing. A career executive from the
Navy Department, James Colvard, was named to be Deputy
Director of OPM (GERR, June 8, 1986:799). Soundly
conceived policy initiatives began to emerge from OPM in
several areas. One example was the development and
issuance of a comprehensive policy on the handling of AIDS
in the work place.

Some specific new OPM program initiatives included a
limited response on staffing issues, which came after
prodding by a National Academy of Public Administration
report on the inadequacies of federal hiring practices
that had developed since 1982 ("NAPA Panel Criticizes Federal Hiring Practice, 1987:1"). This program has consisted of the development of attractive recruiting brochures, and then a hastily considered proposal, of questionable technical validity and credibility (Bretz, 1989:17), to base entrance qualifications on grade point average and biographical evaluation of candidates. More recently, OPM has proposed to allow agencies to use commercial recruiting firms and employment services (The Washington Post, 1989:AG).

Under Horner’s leadership, OPM also began a significant outreach to the federal senior executive service, inaugurated by an important conference in Hunt Valley, Maryland. This effort has involved the participation of career SES members from throughout government in making policy recommendations. In a Director’s Message to all members of the SES, Horner detailed many of OPM’s initiatives to improve the SES. Additionally, new organizational support was provided to the Federal Executive Institute (FEI), after many years of uncertain support.

The FEI provided an opportunity for Horner once again to demonstrate her understanding of some fundamental issues
regarding the public service. In October 1988, she delivered a speech at FEI in Charlottesville, Virginia, in which she addressed the problem of the fragmentation and over-specialization of the governmental service and called for the development of a distinctive sense of common purpose among federal managers (Horner, 1988-89). She reviewed the conflicting values which characterized the public service and pointed to the need for constitutional literacy and discourse as the means of reinvigorating the service. In this well-crafted speech, Horner adopted the ideas of some leading constitutional and public administration scholars. Her interest was instrumental in the initiation of a project to develop a training module on constitutional issues for use in OPM's Executive Seminar Centers; however, her endorsement of these ideas did not materially affect her basic policy direction in OPM.

OPM's new initiatives and Horner's demonstrated comprehension of some fundamental issues were impeded by the overall lack of resources and competence remaining within OPM and by that organization's general loss of credibility in the federal sector. Ten years of value changes, organizational instability, politicization of administrative processes, decline of resources, and hemorrhaging of talent had brought OPM to the point of
institutional incapacity. A comprehensive study of OPM by the General Accounting Office has compellingly documented what is a common perception in Washington--OPM lacks the institutional capacity to exercise leadership and carry out initiatives in public human resource management (U. S. GAO, 1989).

Despite some significant program improvements under Horner, and regardless of her apparent understanding of important issues, OPM still maintained a definite policy continuity. Limitations of organizational capacity are only part of the contemporary OPM problem. The other vital factor is that under Horner's leadership, OPM remained predominantly oriented to political concerns rather than to human resource management as a discipline of principles and techniques. After a comprehensive study of administration-bureaucracy relationships, Elizabeth Sanders concludes: "By the mid-1980's, abrasive radicals [such as Watt, Gorsuch-Burford, and Devine] have mostly been replaced by smoother administrators . . . but the general direction of policy change continued. . . . they have been uniformly loyal to the president's agenda" (1988:394).
This supremacy of political concerns over human resource management issues prevailed from the beginning of Horner's tenure. Her lack of technical experience was accompanied by a continued anti-government reflex. For example, in December 1985, when she addressed an ASPA Conference in Washington, her message was that federal civil service was in trouble because of the negative perceptions of the public, and because government was still attempting to do too much. Her answer for the administrators in the audience was an exhortation to federal workers to seek "excellence in restraint." This conformed to the political doctrine of the administration, but it provided a poor basis for effective human resource management.

Horner's political approach was accompanied by a continuing attack on the personnel system she was charged with administering. Her attack was reminiscent of the rhetoric which had accompanied the passage of CSRA and illustrated the failure of both Carter and Reagan administrations to solve the public personnel administration problem. In her testimony before Congress in May 1986, regarding proposed personnel legislation, Horner said:

These bills testify to the fact that the government's personnel system is not working. Its inflexibilities operate against our top performers and crush managerial initiative. We can find no way to justify a system which protects mediocrity, while being
indifferent to quality, and which puts a premium on 'control' mechanisms, while providing few of the tools managers must have truly to manage. President Reagan came to office with the intention to make government work for the American people. If our desire is to 'make the government work,' it's time to put in place a far more dynamic management system—a system built around people, not around paper (Horner, 1986).

In this line of reasoning, Horner continued Devine's policies of conscious disinvestment in human resources (Wolf, 1987:231). Her emphatic attack on the personnel system and the personnel community was not accompanied by proposals to develop competence in the system. Rather, the emphasis was on simple deregulation, decentralization, and delegation to program managers (Horner, 1988), without consideration of central system concerns for program integrity and equity. In new OPM initiatives for the personnel system, Horner indicated that the plans would enhance managers' authority and "break the 'hold' that personnel offices now have over hiring, firing and promotion. . . . In several recent speeches, Horner said federal personnel offices impede the efficient operation of government and the promotions and advancements of federal employees." (Weekly Federal Employees' News Digest, November 17, 1986:3-4).

Under Horner, OPM continued to be reluctant to implement judicially imposed requirements to develop examination
mechanisms for professional and administrative positions, even after the interim Schedule B examining authority was struck down by the U. S. District Court (The Washington Post, March 24, 1987:A6). OPM’s position in this matter demonstrated a continuing disregard for the requirements of judicial agreements and decisions.

While Horner did encourage the development of new staffing initiatives and a new research agenda for OPM, no significant resources were made available for these efforts. OPM did underwrite a major planning and evaluation effort on the work force of the future (The Hudson Institute, 1988), but even in this case, OPM reluctantly undertook the effort only after requirements to do so were included in OPM’s appropriation act and then only after OMB applied pressure to expend the funds.

Finally, OPM has continued to dispute allegations of excessive use of political appointees. Specifically, Horner took issue with findings of the Volcker Commission regarding problems of the growing number of political appointments in the Reagan administration. Horner continued Devine’s earlier arguments that the numbers are very small as a percentage of total employment (Public Administration Times, November 25, 1988:3). This has been
a standard political defense, but it ignores the significance of attitudes, the key placement of political officials in operating positions, the types of duties assigned, and partisanship in action, all of which have worked to the detriment of management and technical concerns.

3. Defending and Justifying OPM on Political Grounds. During the fall of 1988, the General Accounting Office completed its comprehensive management review of federal human resource management, centering on OPM. By any measure, it is a devastating report, and its findings have been totally rejected by OPM leadership. OPM's response to GAO in this case provides a powerful expression of the dominance of political concerns over human resource issues.

A draft version of the report appeared in the press, giving Horner an opportunity to respond in partisan terms and to charge GAO with political favoritism: "Horner attacked the draft report as a 'feeble, politically inspired critique posing as analysis' that virtually ignored her efforts to tackle the problems." She charged that the release of the draft report to Congress only a week before the presidential election was "another example of political abuse by a Democratically controlled Congress of the
supposedly professional institutions it controls" (The Washington Post, November 4, 1988:A23). Horner’s public attack on the draft report, which had been provided to OPM by GAO for comment, was itself a pre-election political tactic.

In December 1988, OPM Deputy Director Hugh Hewitt appeared at an ASPA conference in Washington to discuss the GAO report (December 13, 1988). His basic approach was to ridicule the report, characterizing it as "a bad joke." He accused GAO of being a politicized and "corrupt agency" which was purveying a "human resource management rote" and which refused to give OPM sufficient credit for the initiatives it had underway and its accomplishments in the past.

The official OPM response to GAO was similar to the arguments enunciated by Hewitt. OPM’s answer was contained in a letter of November 18, 1988, from Constance Horner to the Comptroller General, with a 32 page attachment rebutting GAO findings. The key concepts in OPM’s rebuttal included:

> Among other things, the report reflects a limited, abstract understanding of human resources policy, viewing it in isolation from the broader political, economic, and workplace realities that necessarily affect it. . . .
By way of response to today's shortages, GAO offers little more than a recitation of the rote of human resources management—i.e., more planning, more evaluation, more oversight. These are, of course, important areas of concern, and we have strong policies in all of them—although GAO systematically underestimates their scope and effectiveness.

The OPM rebuttal stands as a political justification of the preceding ten years of organizational and institutional history. It charges GAO with: 1) ignoring the political context of the period which demanded "increased accountability and responsiveness to the people;" 2) ignoring the managerial context of "President Reagan's broader mandate to reduce the size and scope of government," and the inevitable negative effects on employee morale and loyalty; 3) and ignoring the labor market context of shortages of trained labor.

The OPM rebuttal then accuses GAO of misunderstanding the purpose of CSRA which was, in OPM's view:

designed to make Federal personnel management more, not less, responsive to the political will of the people as expressed in presidential elections.... It gives the President more flexibility to manage agencies and personnel, in order to achieve the goals for which he was elected. It was, in short, meant to enhance the democratic responsiveness of the civil service, and to ensure that it served the people, rather than an abstract system of archaic rules.
These arguments echoed the political responsiveness aspect of CSRA but ignored the legislation's intent to establish effective, imaginative, federal personnel programs. In the latter regard, Horner's self-evaluation, as expressed in her letter to the Comptroller General, was quite sanguine:
"By any just assessment, OPM has exercised vigorous and effective leadership in the human resources management field."

In the final version of the GAO report, issued in January 1989, the OPM rebuttal is included in its entirety and is addressed, point by point, by GAO. This is an argument that is very difficult to resolve. As Wildavsky observes (1979:77): "Agencies do not appear to learn because the experiences their critics have in mind are outside their consciousness, not inside their sectors." The consciousness and sectors of OPM and GAO are different. OPM had become a political agency dedicated to issues of responsiveness to ideology and executive authority. GAO is an analytical agency dedicated to principles of management effectiveness. OPM's institutional alignment is to the presidency. GAO's orientation is first to the Congress, and then significantly, to the future of the public service.
It is quite unexceptionable to argue, as Constance Horner has argued, that the public personnel system must be responsive and relevant to the political forces of the society. Public personnel management is inevitably and inextricably a part of the political system (Rosenbloom, 1982:6). It is, however, quite problematic to insist, as the history of OPM has insisted, that the principal organization of the public personnel system should be exclusively an instrument of the president and his partisan political agenda and that the president is solely in charge of running the country (Seidman and Gilmour, 1986:35).

It is also quite unexceptionable for the General Accounting Office to maintain, as it has maintained, that organizational effectiveness and principles of human resource management are essential factors in the administration of public personnel programs. It would have been another matter entirely had GAO insisted on technical personnel measures in isolation from politics, as Constance Horner charged. Instead, GAO maintained an appropriate balance:
OPM argues that political and other environmental issues preclude priority attention to human resource management concerns. We do not subscribe to this view . . . Our recommendations postulate a much more strategic and proactive role for OPM because we believe that the breadth and rapidity of changes taking place . . . are the reasons why greater OPM leadership and active attention to human resource policies and programs are needed now more than ever (U. S. GAO, 1989:102).

In the American political system, the requirements of management and merit values are equally as relevant as those of responsiveness; and the need for responsiveness is always complicated by the multiplicity of institutions which can legitimately demand the allegiance of the administrative establishment. The assessment of OPM's record is made difficult because of the legitimacy of all of the claims that are imposed on the public personnel process. Competent analysis requires the creation of an evaluational framework which assesses organizational performance against each legitimate requirement.

In the following pages, OPM will be evaluated first on administrative management grounds: What has it produced and what difference has it made? Secondly, OPM will be judged on grounds of normative political and public administration theory: What is the nature of OPM as an organization of a democratic polity, and has OPM served the public interest both in terms of what it produces and what
it is? Such a framework will be a useful evaluational tool which will contribute to a determination of the appropriate place in the political and institutional system for the central public personnel agency.

A. Criteria for Evaluation

Individuals who participated in the origins of CSRA and OPM are naturally defensive of their creation. As Kaufman notes: "Any legislation enacted becomes a vested interest of those who fought for it, and they will inevitably rise to its defense" (1976:4). Just as naturally, other individuals who have been associated with OPM during its ten-year history will find ways to justify and celebrate the organizational experience and contribution. Conversely, OPM's critics have ample facts and logic to denigrate the accomplishments and decry the results of the past ten years.

In an historical frame of reference, it is perhaps far too early to approach an objective assessment. Additionally, any evaluation in the area of federal human resources is confronted by a considerable body of anecdotal evidence, opinions, and attitude studies but a startling lack of
empirical data. As the head of GAO's program evaluation and methodology division has said (U. S. GAO, 1986):

As in so many areas of policy these days, significant actions have been taken affecting the federal workforce, and there is wide discussion of consequences, but with little solid data to allow us to link cause and effect or to model the system so that we can weigh alternative interventions and predict effects even reasonably well.

This powerful cautionary point has applicability to policy makers and analysts alike. Nonetheless, it is perhaps not too early to attempt an evaluation which at least references all relevant factors of the organizational and institutional experience and which draws on such data as are available.

An approach to evaluation of OPM requires the development of criteria of performance objectives and of evaluational standards by which organizational performance can be judged. This is done in the full recognition of the problems identified by Frederick Mosher:

Perhaps the greatest difficulty in appraising the success of reorganization efforts is the fuzziness and controversy of the criteria, the yardsticks, against which to measure. . . . One may accept the goals of the initiators and sponsors of reorganization, . . . as the criteria against which to judge . . . Or one may substitute his own criteria, his own view of the public interest in the functional area of the agency studied. The former seems the wiser course in so far as the goals may be reliably determined (1965:149-150)
In the case of OPM, there are three categories of expectations and objectives which were enunciated in the founding of the organization and which have been announced through the years as administration policy goals. These criteria may be categorized as legislative intent, executive and managerial policy objectives, and political objectives. These criteria for evaluation and their accompanying evaluational standards are summarized and described in the following paragraphs and are displayed in Figure 3.

1. **Legislative Intent.**

As noted in detail in Chapter 3, the intent of the civil service reform legislation in 1978 was to create a public service personnel system in which merit would be protected, managerial flexibility would be increased, governmental productivity would be improved, and political responsiveness would be enhanced. The law gives OPM responsibility in each of these areas.

The specific intent of the legislation was for OPM to achieve a significant decentralization of operational personnel programs. The delegation of authorities was intended to be contingent on the maintenance of vigorous oversight and compliance review by OPM of agency
activities, in order to assure the adherence to merit principles. The legislation provided flexibilities for the modernization of federal personnel practices through research, development, and experimentation. Finally, the CSRA specifically intended that OPM exercise vigorous and innovative leadership over the personnel programs of government.

2. **Executive and Managerial Policy Objectives.**

During the Carter administration, the policy objectives closely tracked most of the legislative intent, but with significant differences, as noted in Chapter 4. To Alan Campbell, the legislative changes and the new organizational thrust of OPM were to improve and modernize personnel management practices, but Campbell's vision also looked beyond personnel to the transformation of broader federal management practices. The policies of the Campbell years stressed delegation of authorities and the seeds of an emphasis on research and development. In technical areas, OPM policy stressed improved productivity, performance appraisal, merit pay, and implementation of the senior executive service.

With the change of administrations, as seen in Chapter 5, the executive and managerial policy emphasis was placed on
organizational control, which required strengthening of hierarchical authority systems through extension of performance appraisal and merit pay programs. Control of personnel system costs and reduction of numbers of employees in the federal work force were also policy objectives of the Reagan administration. Other OPM objectives included, first under Devine, a recentralization of personnel authorities, and later under Horner, new initiatives to delegate authorities and to simplify the federal personnel system.

3. Political Objectives.

At its inception, OPM was founded on the objective of making the bureaucracy responsive to the American people, through the mechanism of increased responsiveness to the president and his political executives. In the Carter administration, this stated objective was intended to secure political support for the management initiatives of CSRA and its implementation. In the Reagan administration, OPM sharpened the objective and attempted to utilize management techniques as tools of political control.

In terms of political institutions, the overall objective was the strengthening of the presidency in relationship to other institutions of governance. One careful observer
Source of Evaluation Criteria:  

**Evaluation Elements**

**LEGISLATIVE INTENT**
- Delegation of personnel authorities.
- Oversight of agency activities.
- Assurance of merit principles.
- Improvement of personnel practices.
- Fostering of research and development.
- Technical leadership for human resources.

**EXECUTIVE AND MANAGEMENT POLICY OBJECTIVES**
- Managerial effectiveness.
- Modernized personnel management system.
- Campbell—Delegation and decentralization.
- Motivation and incentives.
- Research and development.
- Performance appraisal and merit pay.
- Executive authority.
- Devine—Organizational control.
- Cost control of personnel system.
- Reduction of number of federal employees.
- Recentralization of personnel authorities.
- Horner—Redelegation and decentralization.
- System simplification

**POLITICAL OBJECTIVES**
- Responsiveness to the people.
- Responsiveness to the president.
- Strengthening the presidency.
- Furtherance of political ideology.

---

The Office of Personnel Management  

EVALUATION CRITERIA AND ELEMENTS

---

Figure 3
notes that "the creation of OPM represented a culmination of, not a departure from, the persistent efforts of the previous decades to find a suitable means of improving the president's ability to manage the personnel resources of the executive branch" (Mackenzie, 1981:139).

B. OPM Performance--the Criteria of Intent and Objectives
Two comprehensive ten-year evaluations of OPM's record have been completed and issued in 1989, one by the Merit Systems Protection Board and the other by the General Accounting Office. These evaluations are particularly directed at OPM's implementation of legislative intent and of personnel management improvement initiatives. Both reports draw on a substantial body of prior evaluations of specific aspects of civil service reform and on competent surveys of events, conditions, and opinions. The results of these studies, and of many others conducted during the first ten years of OPM's life, are remarkably consistent and form the basis of an assessment of the organization's policy and management performance, as judged against the criteria of legislative intent and policy objectives.
1. **Performance Relative to Legislative Intent.**

OPM was charged by the law to decentralize personnel operations and delegate authority, to maintain effective oversight of agency activities in order to assure merit principles, to foster innovation, and to exercise leadership in federal personnel management. During OPM's first ten years, none of these legal requirements received consistent attention or competent execution.

a. **Decentralization and Delegation.** The legislative mandate for the decentralization of the personnel system and the delegation of personnel authorities is clear; however, the OPM effort has been inconsistent. According to the MSPB evaluation: "OPM initially made a concerted effort to delegate authority to agencies--then retreated from this position for an extended period of time--and now is again making an effort to maximize delegations" (1989:13). This inconsistency has caused confusion in the federal agencies which have generally welcomed delegations.

Throughout the ten-year period, OPM has been unable to develop successful legislative initiatives which would revise the voluminous body of law and regulation which governs personnel programs. As a consequence, no
fundamental revisions to the system have been made. The unilateral administrative attempts of OPM, during the Devine years, to revise some personnel system elements only created adversarial relationships with Congress and employee organizations and resulted in court battles.

b. **Oversight and Merit Assurance.** The legislative emphasis on delegation of authorities was predicated on a requirement of vigorous oversight by OPM of the use of the delegated authorities. As noted in Chapters 4 and 5, the oversight function was significantly and progressively curtailed by OPM despite occasional assurances by organizational leadership of the importance of this function (MSPB, 1989:14-21). The GAO report documents a decade of inconsistent leadership, changing program structure, declining compliance resources, and increasing reliance on basically inadequate agency self-evaluations (1989:73-81).

In the area of assurance of merit in public personnel programs, Bernard Rosen's assessment is that OPM has "proven to be inherently incapable of meeting [its] legal obligations concerning the most basic merit principle—appointment and advancement based on 'relative ability, knowledge, and skills, after fair and open competition'"
(1983:390). This assessment is supported by the consistent actions of OPM during its first ten years to disregard considerations of merit in planning and developing programs and policies (U. S. MSPB, 1981:19).

c. **Innovation.** Over the ten-year period, OPM has given only limited and inconsistent attention to research and demonstration projects. By the end of 1988, "OPM had approved and agencies had implemented only four demonstration projects and four research programs in the nearly 10-year history of the CSRA" (U. S. MSPB, 1989:25); and one of the demonstration projects (National Bureau of Standards) was forced by Congress in specific legislation.

In addition to its reluctance to sponsor or facilitate research and demonstration projects (other than the Navy project in California), OPM has repeatedly ignored the considerable body of research findings which has challenged the basic assumptions of CSRA (e.g., Godwin and Needham, 1981; Pearce and Perry, 1983). Interestingly, some of this ignored research was sponsored by OPM funding under contracts established in the first two years of OPM's history.
d. **Personnel Program Leadership.** By the spring of 1985, during Donald Devine's reconfirmation process, the Senior Executives Association called attention to the inadequacies of OPM's performance: "The federal workforce is badly in need of a central personnel office which can provide support and leadership" (Senior Executive Action, April/May 1985:3). These leadership inadequacies have manifested themselves in several program areas of CSRA implementation.

Both the MSPB and GAO reports in 1989 document OPM's shortcomings and inconsistencies of program leadership in a wide variety of programs including: performance appraisal and pay for performance issues; equal employment opportunity and minority recruitment; work force planning; personnel management evaluation; recruitment, selection, and staffing; and Senior Executive Service candidate development. Additionally, the report of the National Commission on the Public Service notes that OPM has not met its early expectations and has not recovered from the "political approach" followed during the tenure of Donald Devine (1989b:92-93). The Commission report cautiously concludes: "Unfortunately, there has been a sense that OPM may have become more of an obstacle to effective personnel management than a leader" (1989a:39).
Perhaps the most serious leadership problems involve OPM's internal management and human resource capability. The GAO report summarizes as follows (1989:82):

A decade of fundamental policy redirection and reorganizations has prevented OPM from sustaining a consistent and effective human resource management agenda. Additionally, agency resources have declined significantly, and many more staff are planning to leave. Compounding these problems are employees' perceptions of poor communication with higher levels of the organization, low morale, and beliefs that the agency is ineffective. Collectively, these problems are undermining OPM's capacity to implement new initiatives and fulfill its CSRA leadership role.

2. Performance Relative to Policy Objectives.

The executive and management objectives of OPM have been directed to increasing managerial effectiveness and organizational productivity, modernizing public personnel management practices, implementing motivational and incentive systems of performance appraisal and merit pay, strengthening organizational control, and reducing personnel system costs and numbers of federal employees. During OPM's first decade, none of these objectives has been achieved.

a. Managerial Effectiveness and Productivity.

The initial goals of improved federal managerial practices and productivity were abandoned early in OPM's history. Whether CSRA provided the right tools for such improvements
is open to question: however, there was no consistent and coherent attempt to build genuinely effective management practices. The continuing emphasis on performance appraisal and merit pay disregarded mounting evidence of the failure of these programs to act as an incentive to improved performance (Perry, 1988). In the area of productivity programs, the initial developments which showed promise and agency support were terminated in 1983 (U. S. GAO, 1989:63).

The negative perceptions created during the selling of civil service reform were never overcome. The specific features of the reform, when taken together with the managerial and political doctrines espoused by OPM, perpetuated the perceptions that CSRA was an adversarial system designed to support arbitrary management action. Under CSRA, the provisions for SES and merit pay specifically sought to reward risk-taking. OPM's assault on the working environment and conditions of executives and managers, as noted in Chapter 5, has led to a condition in which, as Charles Levine reports (1988:58):

> the confidence of federal managers is eroding. Risk aversion is now their dominant norm. Federal managers may never have had a reputation as risk-takers, but earlier generations could at least find some certainty in administrative procedures, principles of management, and later, in proven techniques like project and matrix management. Today, federal
managers often express a gnawing feeling that neither career managers nor political appointees know for sure what's going on.

b. Modernized Personnel System. Apart from the specific management devices in CSRA, OPM has undertaken virtually no efforts to design or develop improved personnel management practices in the federal sector. The assaults on OPM's technical core, noted in Chapter 5, have led to a reduction of internal OPM technical capacity. This has been accompanied by a continuing denigration of the personnel system and its practitioners. In 1986, after almost eight years under CSRA, more than five of which were under a Republican administration, Constance Horner admitted systemic shortcomings and charged, as though holding no personal responsibility, "that the government's personnel system is not working" (Horner, 1986).

c. Performance Appraisal and Merit Pay. Competent assistance to agencies in these programs has been provided by OPM in a number of ways, but serious problems have continued. Despite some OPM initiatives, the GAO report states: "More aggressive leadership is needed to resolve . . . governmentwide problems" (1989:70). Academic researchers state the case bluntly: "PMRS has not demonstrably achieved its ultimate objective--improving
performance in the federal sector" (Perry, Petrakis, and Miller, 1989:35).

When early problems developed in the merit pay system, OPM maintained an inflexible position and lost control of the agenda as Congress stepped in to adjust the program. Since that time, OPM has been unable to develop a credible technical approach to the continuing problems of the system. Outside research efforts have continued to document the problems (e.g., Gabris, 1987), but OPM's reaction has consistently been merely to advocate extension of the system.

d. Organizational Control. The concepts of CSRA and the subsequent policies and initiatives of OPM clearly contributed to the assertion of greater control by political appointees over the administrative establishment. Whether increased control has been meaningful in an operational sense is open to question. Numerous studies and surveys have indicated undesirable consequences of increased political control, leading Patricia Ingraham to conclude "that increased efforts at presidential control do make a difference and that, even in the presence of other, management-oriented reforms, that difference in recent years has been negative" (1987:426, emphasis in original).
Hugh Heclo cites one large survey on executive attitudes through December 1983 showing a marked negative trend from 1981 regarding the effect of the political career interface on managerial effectiveness. Heclo concludes: "These are not the signs of a successfully operating executive system. If a personnel director produced these kinds of results among a company's employees in the private sector he would be summarily fired. And he would deserve to be" (1984:12).

It is apparent that concerted emphasis on control of administrative agencies has led to managerial centralization and rigidity, declining feelings of organizational commitment, reduced employee participation and job satisfaction, and other indicators of organizational problems throughout the federal sector (Goodsell, 1985:165; Gaertner and Gaertner, 1984:236-237). Within OPM, patterns of political control have contributed to severe management problems, breakdowns in communication, and employee disaffection and demotivation at middle and upper management levels (U. S. GAO, 1989:82-93).

e. Reduced Employment and Costs. No policy in the Reagan administration had higher priority than reduction in the size and cost of the federal bureaucracy.
Yet, during the Reagan administration, according to The Washington Post's federal columnist (Causey, 1988:D2):

* The number of white-collar federal employees has risen by 102,000;

* Almost all the increase has been in higher paying jobs. The four lowest pay grades have declined in numbers, while the upper grades have increased dramatically.

* The average salary of white-collar federal employees has risen from $20,072 in 1979 to $28,092 in 1988, an increase of almost 40 percent.

* The cost of the white-collar federal payroll, exclusive of fringe benefits has increased 50 percent from $27.6 billion to $41.5 billion in eight years.

Clearly, the most that could be claimed for the objective of reducing costs and numbers of employees is that OPM policies slowed what would have been larger increases. However, as far as numbers are concerned, the record of the Reagan administration has not significantly altered the stability of the size of the federal work force which has been constant since the 1950's.
3. **Performance Relative to Political Objectives.**

Despite the amply documented record of OPM performance inadequacies and lack of accomplishment, as measured against criteria of intent and objectives, Constance Horner has claimed organizational success. Clearly, her claim that OPM "has exercised vigorous and effective leadership in the human resources management field" will not bear close examination, even factoring in recent OPM policy initiatives at their face value and most optimistic construction. However, claims of success can be made on political grounds, as Horner implied in her letter to the Comptroller General, on the basis that OPM has enhanced "the democratic responsiveness of the civil service . . . ."

This claim requires evaluation of OPM's performance as an agency engaged in the struggles for power, influence, and partisan advantage within American politics and government.

At the mid-point of President Reagan's first term, a careful observer gave this appraisal: "CSRA has been highly successful in facilitating partisan presidential control of personnel management: Ideological politics and politicians now clearly control OPM and effectively dominate the federal government's personnel system" (Newland, 1983:16). This assessment undoubtedly was at the heart of Donald Devine's endorsement of CSRA when he was asked for his
assessment of the Act: "It has been positive. I think it will go down as Jimmy Carter's major accomplishment" (The Washington Times, March 28, 1983).

Control by ideology and ideological politicians, however, does not assure the responsiveness of the personnel system to the people, who are represented by a wide variety of institutions and organizations and people. One test of responsiveness would be improved performance of federal activities in the delivery of service to the people. Improved performance, however, cannot be documented. The findings of the National Commission on the Public Service, indicate that politicization of the work force is counter-productive:

Typically, the increase in presidential appointments has been justified as a way to prod or control reluctant bureaucrats, and to speed implementation of the president's agenda. Thus the operative question is not whether the current number of appointees is large or small, in absolute terms or compared to the total number of civilian employees. The real question is whether the proliferation [of political appointees] has in fact made government more effective and more responsive to presidential leadership. The Commission concludes that the answer is 'no' (National Commission on the Public Service, 1989a:17; The Washington Post, March 30, 1989:A21).

OPM's only apparent "success" in the past ten years has been its contribution to the political responsiveness of the public service to the political executives and the
ideology of the administration in power. Even in this, however, responsiveness implies a need for capacity to carry out political directives. In the case of OPM, responsiveness to the political executive has been purchased at the high price of work force passivity, lowered commitment, and a spreading sense of malaise and crisis in the public service (see Levine and Kleeman, 1986; and Clark and Wachtel, 1988).

Another test of OPM's contribution to responsiveness would be its influence within the governmental structure; however, after 1979, the policy and program impact of OPM within the government has steadily weakened. As OPM's programmatic initiatives failed and its technical competence eroded, its credibility with the operating agencies of government virtually disappeared. By the mid-1980's, OPM lost control of the governmental personnel agenda. The Grace Commission noted OPM's inadequate leadership on major issues (McGregor, 1985: 47). The most meaningful personnel program initiatives originated and were developed in the Congress, the General Accounting Office, individual governmental agencies (e.g., EPA and the Department of the Army), and outside groups (e.g., the Volcker Commission and the National Academy of Public Administration).
4. **A Summary Evaluation.**

By any measure of performance against legislative intent and its own objectives in both the Carter and Reagan administrations, OPM in its first ten years has been largely an organizational failure in the conduct of its programs and the achievement of its goals. OPM has not become the primary management office for the president, as envisioned by Alan Campbell. OPM has not succeeded in transforming public personnel management at the federal level into a modern system of human resource management. The regulatory and procedural barriers of the federal personnel system have continued to inhibit managerial action. The technical innovations of CSRA have not made any significantly positive contribution to the overall efficiency or effectiveness of government, and it can be argued that the innovations as implemented have detracted from the capacity of agencies to perform their tasks.

Despite Reagan administration objectives of controlling costs and reducing governmental employment, the employment total, payroll and benefits cost, and average grade and salary of the federal public service all increased significantly. The political successes of OPM and its policies, in terms of instituting systems of political control, have had serious organizational implications in
terms of effectiveness. As an organization of government, OPM has seen its influence decline and its control over the human resource policies of government diminish. In summary, the most striking results of OPM's policies and actions have been negative—making the personnel system and the public service "increasingly marginal to the activities of government" (Ingraham and Peters, 1988:3).

Clearly, the effects of political administration have diminished the human capacity of the American government. In the view of an OPM political appointee, Loretta Cornelius, Deputy Director under Devine, who was marked for political extinction after her testimony in Devine's confirmation hearings: "OPM is the one agency that should not be politicized by anyone. Either side should not politicize. It is the personnel system of the federal government and it should not be politicized" (Federal Times, February 17, 1988:4).

C. OPM, High Politics, and the Public Interest

A deeper analysis of OPM performance, at the normative level of political theory, needs to look beyond legislative intent and immediate policy and political objectives. In that regard, it is useful to make a distinction between low
politics (election success and power maximization) and high politics (governance in a democratic polity). This difference is the distance that separates Lasswell's definition of politics as "who gets what" and John Rohr's definition of politics as "the process by which a civil society achieves its common good through the agency of the state" (1978:27). Rohr's definition conjures the classical notions of the moral dimension of governing, the promotion of excellence in the people, and the achievement of the common good (1978:27). Rohr's conclusion is: "In a regime of separation of powers, administrators must do the work of governance." (1978:4).

The public service is inescapably involved in the high politics of democratic governance but not necessarily in the partisan politics of power maximization. As Rohr puts it, "through their administrative discretion bureaucrats, who are nonelected officials, participate in the governing process of a democratic regime" (1978:4). Mark Huddleston characterizes the responsibility of the public service as "political in the classic sense of translating broad public purposes—especially (though not solely) as articulated by elected officials—into governmental action" (1988:9).
1. **Considerations of Democratic Ideals.**

At the normative and moral level of political theory, Richard Hofferbert has observed: "The deep structure of political science seems to hold that one determines the worth of a people by the quality of their political life. . . Politics is not a game played for goals other than the game itself. Nor is it a piece of theater, with actors scaled by audience preferences. Political life is not to be scaled by what it produces, but by what it is" (1986a: 234). Hofferbert has also noted that public policies affect democratic institutions and "the viability of polities" and, therefore, it is reasonable to "investigate the consequences of public policies for people's political lives" (1986b:512-513). These provocative thoughts provide an additional basis for evaluation of OPM's impact on American political theory and experience.

As an organization of democratic governance, OPM was intended to facilitate control of the government by the people, but only through a narrow concept of bonding the public service in servitude to the president as representative of all the people. Writing even before the passage of CSRA in 1978, David Beam provided a cautionary suggestion "that the discipline needs to reconsider its wholehearted commitment to a doctrine of presidential
supremacy in the administrative domain . . . A case might be made that this has proven to be poor constitutional history, worse practical politics, and ineffectual reform" (1978:76).

Although Beam's case has largely been demonstrated in the history of OPM, his suggestion has been ignored. The political leadership of OPM has demonstrated a preference for the dominant "administrative presidency" theory of Richard Nathan which holds that "management tasks can and should be performed by partisans" and that political executives "should organize their office . . . in a way that penetrates the administrative process" (1983:7,82, emphasis in original). This, however, is an incomplete formulation in American politics and constitutional structure. The constitutional inadequacies of this perspective have led inevitably to operational inadequacies and failures of OPM as a functioning part of democratic governance. By the mid-1980's, OPM had become isolated from all political influences other than the political ideology of the administration in power.

Early in the history of CSRA, David Nachmias identified an important evaluation element: "One critical measure of the reorganization success would be whether the end result of
the formation stages would be an open system. That is, a system with close and constant contacts with its political, social and economic environments, with input and output across system boundaries" (1979:183). In its development as an organization dominated by partisan and ideological political considerations, OPM became a closed policy system which resisted professional and technical concerns as well as political influences from outside the executive branch. By its inherent operational nature, OPM forfeited the qualities of democratic political life: openness of process, constructive resolution of conflict, and effective representation and participation of all relevant interests. OPM's arbitrary and closed policy system had an influence beyond its internal organizational character and established the tone of the relationship of public employees to their agencies and to administrative issues of the time.

One result of the climate of federal government after CSRA and OPM politicization is revealed by Charles Goodsell's experience when he attempted to obtain, for publication, the views of career employees on the Grace Commission efforts to analyze and critique federal operations: "I was unable to recruit such individuals, however, the reason was not lack of time or interest, but, interestingly enough,
all but a few of those approached pointed out quite candidly that if they commented honestly in print about the survey's activities and recommendations, their future careers could easily be in jeopardy" (1984:196).

2. Considerations of the Public Interest.
Discussion of a political organization in terms of the quality of "what it is" leads naturally to a consideration of what contribution the organization makes to the public interest, that great amalgam of political and administrative experience which although abstract is nonetheless essential for the justification of administrative action. The concept of the public interest has been subjected to contentious argument as to its nature, validity, viability, and simple definition. Yet, through all the disputation, the notion of the public interest remains fundamental to a political system which places government at the service of the people.

The public interest is at once an ideal, a process, and the central source of ethics and values for public administration (Lovrich, 1981; Gunn, 1981). In Gary Wamsley's formulation, the public interest cannot be defined as a specific, tangible, quantifiable "thing." It is rather a composite symbolic concept which encompasses
constitutional regime values, statutory mandates, agency histories and traditions, processes of compromise and consensus formulation, and dialogue and discourse within a policy subsystem (Wamsley, 1988:32-41).

An intelligible concept of the public interest provides an ultimate criterion for effective public organizational performance. Norton Long is calling for a public administration ethic which can be utilized to evaluate organizational or program success and failure (1988b:116-117):

Clearly, one needs some other standpoint than that of the interested actors from which to evaluate the success or failure of a case. The standpoint public administration must adopt is a conception of the public interest. . . .

The public interest . . . is an evaluatory instrument, a tool of thought, created in action for the purposes of action, and itself evaluated and improved as the consequences of its use in action are observed.

Viewed from this perspective, the postulation of the public interest as an evaluatory instrument eschews the hopeless search for a Platonic essence or a measurable entity, and it avoids Glendon Schubert's devastating critique that the public interest is a spook or a ghost which lacks any possibility of valid meaning (Long, 1988b:117).
As an evaluational tool, the public interest comprises a number of specific elements and values which have been identified by contemporary analysts. The following evaluational framework is developed by drawing on the recent work of Norton Long (1981; 1988a; 1988b), Charles Goodsell (1987), and Orion White and Cynthia McSwain (1988). The framework is summarized in Figure 4. To the extent that administrative action contributes to the following aspects of public life, the action may be determined to be in the public interest.

a. Cognitively Competent Procedures. In his recent work, Norton Long has considered the breakdown of established procedures as inherently problematic for the public interest (1988a:334-335). Certainly, orderly process and equality of treatment are touchstones for a government of laws which is intended to serve all the people impartially. Aspects of orderly procedures include the utility of experience, continuity of operations, and institutional memory. Additionally, competent procedures in a democratic polity must have characteristics of public verifiability of administrative integrity. This formulation is enriched by Goodsell's identification of the key values of adherence to requirements of
legality/morality (ethical and legal standards) and logic (rational analysis and decision-making) (1988:18-21).

In this category of public interest determination, OPM's performance did not contribute to orderly operation of the personnel system but was instead disruptive of established patterns created in law and regulation. The traditional functions of recruitment, examining, and position classification were virtually ignored. The new programs of CSRA were inadequately guided and developed by OPM staff. The internal staff competence and institutional memory of OPM were deliberately disregarded through most of the decade, as policy decisions were singularly uninformed by technical considerations. For OPM leadership, the dominance of political ideology did not permit policy analysis and rational, subject-matter based decision-making.

b. Impact on Relevant Populations. A second criterion for the public interest is the determination of the impact of administrative action on all of the relevant populations (Long, 1988a:340-341). This involves the relationship of actions to principal values of affected parties and "an assessment of the policy's impact on the lives of the individuals making up the relevant population"
In policy formulation, the determination of the impacts of administrative initiatives requires administrative experience, knowledge, and expertise, which Goodsell calls the "concern for effects" (1988:21-22).

In this area, OPM's actions have neither considered nor valued the impact on relevant populations—other than the political executives of the federal government. Through most of the history of OPM, the federal agency personnel community was excluded from policy deliberations and disregarded in implementation strategies. The markedly adverse impact of OPM policies on employees in general and career managers in particular was disregarded. OPM consistently subordinated the effects of its policies on the work force to the requirements of political doctrine.

c. Political Responsiveness. In his values framework for the public interest, Goodsell identifies three specific areas of political concern: responsiveness, consensus, and agenda awareness (1987:19-20,22-23). In this context, responsiveness is broadly construed as referring to the political society as a whole, citizen participation, and a continuity of implementation which continues the responsiveness to the law after the initial
enthusiasm of legislative enactment. Consensus means the function of binding the community together in concrete and visible administrative ways to achieve what Norton Long has called "a sense of community and common purpose that transcends . . . special purposes and special interest constituencies" (1981:310). Agenda awareness means the pro-active role of administrative agencies in defining problems and mobilizing resources to allow "needs to be represented as well as demands" (Goodsell, 1987:23).

In addition, grounding in Constitutional principles is fundamental to any concept of the public interest. As John Rohr says:

For public administrators, the Constitution is the cause above causes. In exercising discretionary authority to support this policy or that one, their judgment should be informed by the constitutional needs of the time, as well as by the needs of the poor, the environment, the Air Force, the housing industry, the economy, the Third World, and the myriad other matters that clamor for the attention of the Public Administration (1986:183).

Despite Constance Horner's rhetorical endorsement of constitutionalism, OPM's record in this area of public interest determination has been exclusively fastened to the idea of a narrow responsiveness to the political executive, not a broader responsiveness to system requirements and needs, or to constitutional principles. Rather than
seeking consensus, OPM has engendered institutional controversy. Although CSRA specifically implied the increased responsiveness of the public service to the president, it did not intend the politicization of the service. The agenda awareness of OPM has been exclusively oriented to the partisan political agenda of the administration in power. In this, the regime values which attach to the separation of powers, checks and balances, and the legitimate requirements of other political institutions have been disregarded.

d. The Public Interest as Mode of Consciousness. Considered as a process, the public interest requires the construction of a relevant social reality "out of the specific life worlds represented in the agency's arena of action ... this amounts to a problem in creating a common language out of the material of all the specific languages spoken in the specific life worlds. Metaphorically speaking, the public interest would serve as the grammar, or methodological rules, for the common language" (White and McSwain, 1988:53).

The methodological challenge here lies in the creation of a mode of discourse within which the public interest imposes a conceptual requirement for the explication and
Source of Evaluation Criteria

**Evaluation Elements**

**Cognitively Competent Procedures**
- Orderly administrative processes.
- Impartiality of treatment.
- Public verifiability.
- Legality/morality.
- Logic.

**Impact on Relevant Populations**
- Effect on principal values.
- Policy effects on lives of individuals.
- Experience, knowledge, expertise.
- Concern for effects.

**Political Responsiveness**
- Responsiveness to all elements in polity.
- Citizen participation.
- Continuity of implementation.
- Community and common purpose.
- Agenda awareness.
- Constitutional grounding.

**Mode of Consciousness and Discourse**
- Common language.
- Methodological rules.
- Discourse.
- Participation in policy formulation.

**The Public Interest**

**Evaluation Criteria and Elements**

Figure 4
justification of administrative action (Flathman, 1966). This is related to the requirement of consideration of the impact of an action on all relevant populations. The key to a mode of consciousness and discourse is expressed by Wamsley and his co-authors in these words: "The key to legitimacy of any criterion, including the public interest, is not whether it is subjective but whether all those who have a stake in the matter at hand have had the opportunity to share in defining it" (1987:305).

It is in this important area that OPM has least served the public interest. A closed policy system has been characteristic of OPM virtually from its inception. Significant stakeholders in the public personnel system have been consistently excluded from deliberations about policy directions for the system. Unilateral and arbitrary decisions have been imposed on career managers, employees, employee organizations, and members of the federal personnel community. The relentlessly adversarial position adopted by OPM has consistently inhibited analysis and open debate among interested parties, including those legislative committees which have specific charters of responsibility.
3. **Normative Structure of Politics and Administration.** If the quality of an organization's political life is to be scaled by what it is in reference to democratic norms and the public interest, then the quality of an administrative organization must also be scaled by standards of its programmatic effectiveness. Thus, the normative structure of administrative technology must conclude that organizational life is not judged by what it is, but rather by what it produces. The political and administrative normative structures taken together provide a division of labor in the governance process which can be useful for evaluative purposes. Accordingly, in the measurement scales of political theory (particularly democratic political theory), OPM has failed because the quality of its existential political life has not been in conformance with democratic norms or concepts of the public interest. Similarly, in the scales of administrative performance, OPM has failed because it has not produced in quantity or quality the human resource management delivery mechanisms which are essential for effective governmental operations.

Conceptually, when political theory and administrative science are joined, the result is a normative structure of public administration which requires attention simultaneously to democratic norms of political theory and
to effective instrumental techniques of administrative management. The scale of measurement—and the continuing challenge—in public administration demands the difficult reconciliation of politics and administration in a democratic polity. OPM, by converting itself into an instrument of ideological political persuasion, lost its administrative capacity as well as its political morality in the context of democratic governance. OPM has thus been a failure by the normative standards of political theory, of administrative management, and of the comprehensive ideational structure of public administration.

D. Implications for Political Institutions

In terms of values, the major impact of OPM's disproportionate emphasis on political responsiveness and partisan ideology has been to ignore the historical construct of merit, to reduce the concept of management to an unsubstantiated faith in largely ineffective techniques, and to diminish the ethic of professional and technical competence. OPM has made no attempt to maintain the balance of competing values which is fundamental to the American political system of separation of powers and representation of multiple interests.
A truly successful model of public service responsiveness to the presidency would have to be predicated on enlisting the positive support of the career employees for the agenda of the administration, as indicated in Edie Goldenberg's perspectives on the role of the public service (1984:385-388). OPM's insistence on treating the public service as a passive and obedient extension of the presidency (Goldenberg, 1984:383-384) failed to meet the institutional requirements of the American political system. As Goldenberg points out: "Because of the fragmentation of authority that is built into our political system, cooperation within and across agencies is . . . essential to accomplish most important tasks. Such cooperation depends upon trust that is established over time in relatively stable working relationships" (1984:385).

The brief history of OPM demonstrates that a subjugated public service cannot perform effectively in a plebiscitary political environment. This supports the point forcefully made by Gaertner and Gaertner in their discussion of the contradictions between organizational and democratic theory: "In a basic sense, these contradictions suggest that the conditions for an effective democratic regime that responds quickly to shifting electoral mandates are not the
conditions that support effective operation of the large organizations designed to implement that mandate" (1984: 221).

The making of OPM into an ideological instrument struck at what Selznick has referred to as "the institutional basis of the political order" (1957:7). Selznick's discussion addressed attempts to change American political parties into ideological instruments, thereby destroying their utility "in accommodating diverse interests, in blunting the edge of ideological conflicts" (1957:7). In the case of OPM, its organizational actions and impact were designed to be contemptuous of diverse governmental and political interests and to sharpen ideological conflict. In this, OPM leadership ignored the reality of American politics that "the presidency is just one of several representative institutions in American government" (Salamon, 1981:289).

OPM has also contributed to what Hugh Heclo calls the "estrangement" which increasingly marks the relationship of the presidency, the Congress, the bureaucracy, and the courts. Heclo uses the word estrangement "to indicate, not a breakdown of once harmonious relations, but a diminishing sense of mutual needs between the presidency and these other major political institutions" (1983:38). The OPM
experience has fed the unilateral perspective of the presidency, intensifying the quest for arbitrary executive authority. Writing before civil service reform, Wildavsky captured the Nixonian essence which was brought to fruition in later administrations (1976:68):

To the White House staff the separation of powers is anathema. They have wonderful ideas, apparently, only to see them sabotaged in the bureaucratic labyrinth. . . . The notion that the departments might owe something to Congress or that there is more to policy than what the President and his men want flickers only occasionally across their minds. It is as if the Presidency were THE government. The President's men tend to see themselves not as part of a larger system, but as the system itself.

By 1988, political responsiveness had no effective competitor in the value mix of the public service. Neither merit nor technical competence in human resource management had an operationally viable institutional representative. The Merit Systems Protection Board, relevant Congressional committees, the General Accounting Office, and the academic and public-interest communities certainly continued to represent some part of these values and exert policy influence, but these organizations operate on the periphery of administrative action.

In a peculiar sense, the organizational incapacity of OPM has had its societal effects, many of which may detract from a capacity for governance. Public sector incapacity
gives further support and rationale to privatization of public program development and delivery. As personnel policy and leadership have become politicized, the federal civil service has increasingly become an organized political force to protect its pay and benefits (Peters, 1985:33-34). Within government, budgetary and financial management values have become more significant and increasingly dominate human resource policies. Within OPM, the leadership patterns since 1980 have promulgated concepts of political responsiveness and ideological advancement to the exclusion of, or even the abandonment of the technical requirements of the public personnel system. OPM's record abundantly demonstrates that an assault on technical competency in the name of political advantage is a formula for failure, both in terms of political and administrative criteria.

In institutional terms, the public service has not been subjugated so much as it has been driven to other sources of support. Hugh Heclo has observed: "Like all the other participants, officialdom supports presidential leadership in the executive branch when there is some net advantage to itself in doing so. . . . Otherwise, there are opportunities aplenty for the bureaucracy to go its own way" (1983:40). The influence of federal professional and
executive associations has increased as they have become more vocal and aggressive in representing public service issues (Lorentzen, 1939). Charles Bingman has noted: "Unions and professional associations turned to Congress, which willingly took on the role of protector of the civil service, enacting a new retirement system and needed pay increases over the resistance or indifference of the Reagan White House" (1938:14).

Of necessity, the public service has developed new allies and supporters. The Office of Policy Evaluation in MSPB is one such ally. The most significant support for the public service, however, has come from Congressional organizations—particularly the relevant committees and the General Accounting Office. These legislatively oriented bodies have maintained oversight, performed research, and insisted that OPM be held accountable for its actions. They have sought to protect the public service against the full effect of executive assault. As a result, new institutional and value relationships have been formed, requiring the redrawing of the institution/value/organization map (Figure 5). These developments tend to confirm Kaufman's theory of the shifting nature of the core values of public administration.
Political Institutions: PRESIDENCY, CONGRESS, PUBLIC SERVICE

Value Clusters: Responsiveness to: President, Congress, Management, Merit

Organizations: OPM-2 (1981-88), (COMMITTEES; GAO), MSPB

Primary relationship is indicated by a solid line and secondary relationship by a dotted line.

INSTITUTIONS, VALUES, AND ORGANIZATIONS (1980 CONSTELLATION)

Figure 5
CHAPTER 7: THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE OPM EXPERIENCE

After ten years of OPM's personnel system leadership, the state of human resources in the federal government reached a critical point of incipient breakdown. Clearly, CSRA did not work as intended. Just as clearly, the actions and policies of OPM did not foster the development of a personnel system which would be responsive not only to executive direction but, more importantly, to the human resource requirements of government. This record of institutional, organizational, and technical failures contains lessons and insights which contribute to understanding and also to consideration of future needs.

A. Unanticipated and Unintended Consequences

Activities associated with major change and reform are particularly susceptible to surprising results. In the specific context of CSRA, James Bowman has noted that "our history is riddled with the unintended, frequently ironic, consequences of reform" (1982:2). Or, as Samuel Beer has observed: "History has a way of tripping up the reformer not only by often defeating his reforms but also by sometimes fulfilling them in unexpected ways and under
unlikely auspices” (quoted in Herbers, 1989:73). Writing during the reform debate and even before passage of CSRA, Francis Rourke noted prophetically:

> Although the ultimate benefits to be obtained from this new drive to reform bureaucracy are still uncertain, it is apparent that like earlier attempts to de-politicize the administrative process, the current effort to re-establish political control over American administrative institutions may have quite unanticipated consequences” (1978:xii).

The reality of unanticipated consequences has not been lost on some of the principal actors in the creation of CSRA. Speaking within two years of the passage of the act, Representative Morris K. Udall noted: "I learned a long time ago that reform is difficult and causes problems. If you reform something, you're going to have some side effects that you didn't want and didn't expect. The test there is not to give up, but to fine-tune and correct" (1982:52). After ten years of fine-tuning, Senator Ted Stevens testified to the persistent reality of unanticipated consequences when he said: "But, clearly, in my judgement, we have some problems now that are even greater than we faced 10 years ago" (U. S. GAO, 1988:6).

The emergence of unintended and unexpected consequences is the inevitable result of rationally devised measures in the creation, development, and operation of large-scale
organizations. In Philip Selznick's work, he verified his hypothesis that "the channeling of administrative responsibilities through previously existing institutions result in consequences for the role and character of the initiator which were not anticipated by the formal theory or doctrine" (1966:184). The complexity of organizational arrangements and human behavior assures that results of action will differ from expectations. Compromise and modification of original intentions result from the need to reconcile value conflicts and contradictions in system design.

The fundamental institutional problem is identified in theory by Selznick: "The institutional context of organizational decision, when not taken into account, will result in unanticipated consequences" (1966:257). In terms of the institutional reality, OPM became an instrument solely of presidency, thereby abandoning the representation and sustaining of the public service. This neglect of a fundamentally important aspect of the institutional context within which it operated led OPM to actions which not only deviated from the original objectives of CSRA but also became consequential in a perceptible decline of governmental human resource capacity.
B. Consequences: The Crisis of the Public Service

The historical experience of OPM demonstrates that choices regarding institutional relationships, values to be maximized, and policies to be followed have consequences for organizations, institutions, and the public interest. In the case of OPM, the shift in relationship of the central personnel office from the institution of the public service to the institution of the presidency was accompanied by value shifts first to a limited and traditional conception of management and then to political responsiveness. The consequences have included the decline of technical capacity of the personnel system and an amply documented crisis of the public service.

1. The Quiet Crisis.

The specific consequences of CSRA and its subsequent implementation by OPM and other agencies have been, if not the proximate cause, then certainly contributory and influential in affecting the condition of the public service in the late 1980's. Whether or not it was a causative agent of the problems of the contemporary public service, OPM has not created a capacity to deal with the problems, either internally or throughout the federal personnel sector. OPM has failed to develop plans and programs which would contribute to the solutions of the
serious demographic and labor market conditions which confront the government as an employer.


A conference in late 1986, jointly sponsored by the Brookings Institution and the American Enterprise Institute defined the public service "crisis" as follows:

This term was used to refer to a combination of factors including pay, recruitment and retention problems, low morale, eroding management capacity, pressures to do more with less, inadequate education and in-career training, and inadequate attention to modern personnel practices and methods of career development" ("The Quiet Crisis in Federal Public Service", 1986:10).

b. National Commission on the Public Service. The Brookings/AEI conference led directly to the formation of the National Commission on the Public Service, under the
The Commission has engaged in a thorough two-year effort to gather information, to analyze the human resource problems facing the federal government, and to make recommendations regarding system improvements. Chairman Volcker and others on the Commission have conducted meetings and have made numerous public statements around the country which have outlined the essence of the problems. These statements of Volcker and others have testified to the crisis of the government's inability to attract, retain, and motivate employees; to the "crumbling" and "deterioration in the civil service that threatens the government's ability to do its job;" and to the "thinning of talent" in the service at a time when issues are getting more difficult (The Washington Post, December 4, 1987:A25, and March 25, 1988:A23; Public Administration Times, April 8, 1988:12).
The Commission presented its findings and recommendations to the President and the Congress on March 29, 1989. In its report, the Commission identifies "a short-term problem with pay and a long-term problem with nearly every other aspect of the government's personnel system" (The Washington Post, March 30, 1989:A21). The report is critical of OPM for failing to achieve its potential for providing "efficient, responsive personnel leadership on behalf of the President" (1989a:40). The Commission report identifies the critical state of federal human resources:

One need not search far to see grounds for concern. Crippled nuclear weapons plants, defense procurement scandals, leaking hazardous waste dumps, near-misses in air traffic control, and the costly collapse of so many savings and loans have multiple causes. But each such story carries some similar refrains about government's inability to recruit and retain a talented work force: the Department of Defense is losing its top procurement specialists to contractors who can pay much more; the Federal Aviation Administration is unable to hold skilled traffic controllers because of stress and working conditions, the Environmental Protection Agency is unable to fill key engineering jobs because the brightest students are simply not interested; the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation (FSLIC) simply cannot hire and pay able executives (1989a:3).

The reaction of President Bush to the report was confined to the narrow issues of federal compensation, and he gave no indication of his intentions regarding any implementing administrative action. Conversely, Representative Vic Fazio noted that "the report has great credibility with the

c. The Hudson Institute Report. The conditions of public service crisis have been fully documented by the Hudson Institute report, Civil Service 2000, commissioned by OPM at the direct instigation of Congress (1988:29):

The Federal government faces a slowly emerging crisis of competence.... as labor markets become tighter during the early 1990's, hiring qualified workers will become much more difficult. Unless steps are taken now to address the problem, the average qualifications and competence of many segments of the Federal workforce will deteriorate, perhaps so much as to impair the ability of some agencies to function.

Specific problems identified in the Hudson Institute report included (1988:17-32):

* Federal compensation is non-competitive for high skill jobs.
* Prestige of government jobs has been declining.
* Low pay and low prestige have been exacerbated by outdated management practices and needless aggravations.
* Competition for well-qualified workers will become more intense as numbers of young workers decline.
* A growing share of Federal jobs will fall in highest skill and most competitive categories.
* The average age of the workforce will rise as most of the government's workers in the year 2000 are already working for it today.
* The new, portable retirement system will reduce the "golden handcuffs" which have tied senior employees to government service.

* More women, minorities, and immigrants will enter the labor force.

2. The OPM Response.
Throughout its history, OPM has demonstrated either an unwillingness or an inability to plan, develop and implement programs to deal with the kinds of problems outlined above. OPM made no immediate public response to the report of the National Commission on the Public Service. The Volcker Commission report, like the Hudson Institute report, contained no surprises and little new data that had not been reported earlier by others, but OPM had no concrete response.

When Constance Horner delivered the Hudson Institute report to the Congress, which had required it, she said it should "stimulate the sort of thought and conversation we will need to build support for significant changes in our personnel policy," but she was not ready to propose any programs or actions. Her primary reaction was another attack on "the over-centralized, overregulated, cumbersome, inflexible personnel procedures now in place" (The Washington Post, September 28, 1988:A12).
C. The Decline of the Federal Personnel System

The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 specifically charged OPM with the responsibility for leadership of the federal personnel system. The law, in itself, changed some specific aspects of the system but did not make fundamental changes in much of the legal, regulatory, and procedural basis of federal personnel administration. The Act, together with the subsequent implementing actions of OPM, did challenge and substantially alter the values, assumptions, myths, ethics, and institutional identification which had nurtured the field of public personnel administration since the late nineteenth century. The program leadership of OPM was instrumental in effecting these changes and, concurrently, in fragmenting the federal personnel system.

1. The Problem of Values and Assumptions.

The future of the personnel field became uncertain because an adequate replacement for the old array of values and assumptions was not provided. The assumptions of CSRA were open to question, particularly in light of implementation problems; and the politicization of OPM and other agencies struck at the heart of professional personnel norms; but the procedures as established in law and regulation continued. Accordingly, the public personnel apparatus
became largely a set of administrative techniques without a generally accepted normative base, without an institutional connection, without a hero or champion, and without a sense of purpose beyond day-to-day operations and survival (Lane, 1987:7).

In the development of OPM, technical competence was devalued at the same time that the principal institution of civil service reform became an instrument of political persuasion. In the process, OPM lost its technical capacity—its primary organizational reason for being. The creation and development of OPM has coincided with a perceptible deterioration of the federal personnel system and its ability to assure the human resource capability of the government (e.g., U. S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 1988).

2. The Problem of System Leadership.
In terms of modern personnel techniques and the fostering of employee productivity, the system changes which occurred after 1980 "left the federal personnel system 'rudderless'" (Levine and Kleeman, 1986:20). The Brookings/AEI project found in 1986 an absence of direction: "No particular organization is exercising leadership in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the public service, and needs
for the future" (1986:5). This analytical assessment was finally taken up by non-governmental organizations (Volcker Commission, Twentieth Century Fund, National Academy of Public Administration) and by the General Accounting Office and the Merit Systems Protection Board, culminating in their reports in early 1989.

During its first ten years, OPM demonstrated a continuing inability to meet CSRA objectives or to deal with the implementation problems that quickly became apparent. As early as 1982, voices were being heard disputing the assumptions, effects, and theory behind CSRA. Specific research findings were identifying problems. In 1982, the research evaluation report of the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan observed: "A person so inclined could write a rather grim scenario, at this stage of implementation, about the future of CSRA and its organizational effects" (1982:44).

Yet OPM did not react to the problems in a technically constructive manner. This amounted to what Mark Huddleston characterized at the time as "a kind of administrative malpractice" on the part of OPM (and much of the academic community), which continued to support initiatives in which the meaning of "public" in public administration was
evaporating and OPM partisanship was damaging administration in the public interest (1982:607-620).

3. The Trend toward Balkanization.
The unwillingness and inability of OPM to deal with federal human resource problems has led to advocacy by many interested parties to deregulate and decentralize the personnel system. Since 1985, OPM itself has supported major trends toward "splintering" the system into separate pay systems; privatization of functions; and acquiescence in special legislative treatment for individual agencies. These trends detract from the idea of a national unified civil service (Levine and Kleeman, 1986:30).

OPM's approach has been to advocate a "simplification" strategy which would reduce the scale and scope of personnel regulations and would advocate much greater agency authority and autonomy (Levine and Kleeman, 1986:21). Perhaps this strategy has reflected OPM's inadequacy of resources and organizational capacity as well as a policy preference. Decentralization, of course, was one of the original objectives of CSRA and OPM in its first two years; however, in that formulation, delegation and decentralization of personnel operations were to be
accomplished under the effective leadership, policies, and oversight of the central personnel agency.

In the latter part of the 1980's, agency frustration particularly in regard to pay inadequacy has led to the introduction of specific agency legislation which would in some cases attempt to resolve recruitment and retention problems by exempting certain agencies from specific aspects of the central personnel system. In 1986, the Advisory Committee on Federal Pay noted the problem:

> Although the advisory committee believes that experimentation and demonstration projects are desirable on a controlled basis, it now appears that a balkanization of the general schedule may start, and the problems of internal pay equity within the system should be raised and addressed (*Federal Times*, September 22, 1986:9).

In 1988, legislation was introduced in Congress to remove substantial numbers of Defense Department employees, particularly scientists and engineers, from the general federal pay system: "The Defense Department's battle to break away from the federal personnel system provides fresh evidence of what some characterize as a quiet crisis in the civil service that is leading to fragmentation of federal pay and benefits" (*The Washington Post*, April 12, 1988:A6). However, the proposal met with immediate resistance in Congress. Senator Pryor was reported to have "concerns
about the size of the project and its Balkanization" of the system; while Representative Patricia Schroeder referred to the bill as a "full-scale attack on the merit system" (*The Washington Post*, April 12, 1988:A6). Proposed solutions to the federal pay problem, whether creating special rates for certain categories of employees or basing compensation on locality wage rates, strike at the concept of the public service as an institution of democratic governance.

The advocacy of greater agency autonomy is founded partly in specific problems of attraction and retention of critical skills. The trend also reflects the spirit of "letting managers manage" which found its most forceful expression in a report on revitalization of federal management by a Panel of the National Academy of Public Administration (1983). Recently, the President of the Academy, Ray Kline, has stressed the reality that the federal government is not a monolith but rather a collection of separate organizational cultures, each with its own specific personnel requirements and problems. The Hudson Institute report advocates a complete recognition of this reality (1988: 31-32):

In terms of mission, organization, and skills, there is no such thing as 'the Federal government.' There is only an aggregation of different agencies, each of which has different goals, different structures, and
different employee needs. If these highly diverse organizations are to accomplish their objectives during the labor-short 1990s, individual Federal agencies must be given far more flexibility and freedom in personnel matters. Standardized recruitment, testing, competition, classification, and pay should give way to decentralized personnel management, giving agency managers full responsibility not only for their missions, but for the human resources they need to accomplish them.

Ironically, the calls for greater agency autonomy in the personnel field have achieved greater force and promise of success because of the failures of the central personnel office to assert leadership and oversight. After ten years of drift and confusion, there is the beginning of a resurgence of personnel administration vitality in some agencies (e.g., the Department of the Army's comprehensive review and overhaul of its internal civilian personnel system). Additionally, a number of federal personnel directors are beginning to make their ideas known through the medium of the federal section of the International Personnel Management Association. The original goal of CSRA to decentralize and deregulate public personnel administration may in the long run be achieved because of the incapacity of its central institution.
D. Organizational Pathologies

The evolutionary development of OPM has demonstrated that the narrow political management values of accountability and control are inadequate for the achievement of modern human resource management objectives. Also, the politicization, in partisan terms, of the central personnel agency has contributed to internal organizational incapacity. In a recent survey conducted by the periodical Government Executive, only nine percent of the respondents identified OPM as an effective agency, giving it the second lowest rating among all agencies. Interestingly, the other two agencies of CSRA, the Federal Labor Relations Authority and the Merit Systems Protection Board, also ranked very low with only 13 percent of respondents identifying them as effective (Clark and Wachtel, 1988:17). The response for OPM was consistent with the low regard for the agency that was reported by OPM's own mid-level managers (U. S. GAO, 1989:82-93).

1. The Pathologies of Political Administration.

The Carter and Reagan administrations utilized CSRA and OPM in an attempt to bring the public service under the control of an administrative doctrine of hierarchy, authority, centralization, politicization, and unquestioning obedience to political executives (Aberbach and Rockman, 1988:603).
In such a doctrine, as Victor Thompson has observed, "there is no room for employee rights . . . Administration is harsh and replete with pathologies" (1965:207). Thompson goes on to identify the source of administrative pathology: "It is my belief that this pathology results from the personal insecurity of officials in the authoritarian, monocratic organization" (1965:224).

Pathological organizational patterns of behavior have moved federal operations in a direction diametrically opposed to current theories of organizational excellence, as noted by Hugh Heclo when he points out that "public management excellence would require something like the following:

* those responsible for implementation would be in on the action of helping decide policies . . .

* any presumption of a we-versus-they relationship . . . would be obliterated; and

* topside staff would be lean and composed of persons with a long-term commitment to the organization's core values.

"The fact is that our current nonsystem of public management, embracing political and career executives, is roughly the negative image of these stipulations" (1984: 14).

One possible result of the pathologies of political administration has been that career officials are beginning
to be perceived as failing to do the public's business. In two major incidents of recent political history, one reporter raises the possibility that:

career government officials who might have stopped the Iran scandal, and who might have prevented the risky 'reinterpretation' of the 1972 ABM treaty, were too cowed or too demoralized to speak out. . . . The point isn't that the bureaucrats should run the country, or that they should leak to the press whenever they disagree with a policy. Obviously they shouldn't. But they shouldn't be so afraid of political reprisals that they fail to do the public's business" (The Washington Post, February 15, 1987:C5).

2. **Leadership and Program Discontinuity.**

OPM fostered and encouraged, both in theory and practice, the concentration of policy-making in the hands of political appointees and the concomitant exclusion of career employees from the policy process. In 1980, before the full impact of CSRA, OPM, and political administration had been felt, James Sundquist addressed the issue of "the gradual deterioration of administrative capability," which he believed stemmed from the increasing politicization of management jobs in the federal government: "No business organization operates that way, or could survive if it did. But management-by-amateurs is now generally accepted as the right way to run the government, taken for granted by politicians and by the general public" (1980:540,557).
In times of rapid and fundamental policy change, this approach has created specific organizational problems due not only to shallow qualifications and lack of identification with agency missions but also to the shortness of tenure of the political executives (Ingraham, 1987:428-430). Before CSRA, this problem was ameliorated by the existence of a layer of career officials very near the top of the organizational hierarchies which provided continuity, institutional memory, programmatic knowledge, and continuing expertise for government organizations (Lane, 1937:7).

With the emphasis on exclusion of career officials from the major decision processes of government, the cumulative effects of major program changes and rapid turnover of political executives have led to growing centralization, organizational formalization and timidity, and impaired communications through all levels of public organizations. The final result has been increasing organizational problems and decreasing organizational capacity for dealing with those problems (Gaertner and Gaertner, 1984:218). The problems of leadership discontinuity have been particularly intensified in times of declining resources and severe budgetary and personnel cutbacks (Levine, 1984).
The dysfunctions inherent in excluding career expertise from the decision-making process have been recently documented in the area of the development of national policy toward Nicaragua. In a review of a book by Anthony Lake, "Somoga Falling," Roy Gutman makes a cogent observation about the message of the book (1989:5):

there have been, over time, enough experiments, enough quick fixes and enough indulgence of political whims. The voice of experts in the policy process has steadily diminished to the benefit of political appointees, and it is time to right the balance. As Lake puts it: 'Sooner or later, presidents and the nation they serve pay a serious price when the voices of the government's middle-level experts are either unclear or ignored.'

The point is really made by the title of Gutman's review: "How We Blew It in Nicaragua."

The problems of discontinuity in politicized organizations and administrative processes has been addressed by T. Alexander Smith in his new book, *Time and Public Policy* (1988). Smith makes the point that politicization has created a fundamental shift in time horizons. Under such conditions, demand for short-run gratification, at the expense of long-run goals, undermines the values and institutions that support a stable and democratic political order.
D. The Weakening of Political Institutions

Aaron Wildavsky has observed: "The people need the vigor of all their institutions" (1976:74); however, the conceptual formula of CSRA and the policies of OPM have drained the vigor of American governance. Adversarial relationships have been created between the presidency and the public service, and between the values of management, responsiveness, and merit. The result has been deinstitutionalization, the breakdown of mutual dependencies, and the weakening of both the presidency and the public service. These errors of concept, policy, and implementation have had adverse effects on the national capacity for governance.

1. Deinstitutionalization.

The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 legitimated and fostered the politicization and deinstitutionalization of the civil service and resulted in the fragmentation of the federal personnel system (Newland, 1984:29; 1987:49). This condition was furthered by the actions of OPM which focused on immediate political policy issues to the detriment of the building of organizational capacity in OPM and throughout the federal sector. Here, OPM was following and contributing to a major political trend, which is described by Heclo in these terms (1983:49):
To value discontinuity, to discount the long term, to elevate specific policy preferences over the maintenance of enduring relationships, to prize content over process—these are the obverse of what might be called institutional thinking. To think institutionally is to be sensitive to the idea that there is an organizational life and value that is larger than the preferences of any individual or policies of the passing moment. Of course an excess of institutional sensitivity can lead to mindless routine and stagnation. But that is hardly the direction the forces of our political environment are now pushing. These forces point toward deinstitutional thinking and politics, and it is difficult to foresee anything that might counteract that tendency.

The diminution of institutional capacity has been accelerated by OPM policies leading to work force demoralization. Deinstitutionalization is reinforced by human resource policies which have stressed short term objectives (temporary hiring, contracting out) and have given low priority to the long term issues of career enhancement, employee training, executive development, and the maintenance and utilization of a human resource statistical data base (Goodsell, 1985:172-173).

2. The Breakdown of Mutual Dependencies.

Hugh Heclo has pointed out the mutual dependency of political institutions:

In any survey of the history of presidential management of the executive branch, one proposition seems unexceptionable. Presidential capacities to coordinate the executive branch have been created and countenanced because they meet the needs of
institutions other than the presidential office. Any managerial device that fails to meet this test, however much desired by the president, is doomed to extinction" (1983:38).

In the case of CSRA and OPM, the administrative devices of presidential control have served no other political institutions but rather have placed the presidency in an adversarial position regarding the Congress, the public service, and in some cases the courts.

Heclo has also observed: "The client for strengthening presidential management in the executive branch has not been and probably cannot be simply the president, his staff, or his view of the public good" (1983:39). The effort to make the president the sole client of the personnel process involved emphasis on political control of the administrative establishment. Control, as conceived by the president's partisans, was intended to overcome the barriers to political direction which were supported by concepts of institutional, organizational, and occupational integrity. As Theodore Lowi points out, the achievement of control requires the destruction of the integrity "of the separate bureaus, the integrity of professional specialties, and the integrity of careers that begin with advanced training and end in a lifetime of dedication" to a particular public service program or problem (1976:492).
3. Decline of the Public Service and the Presidency. After ten years of experience, it appears that the most striking unanticipated consequence of CSRA and OPM has been the weakening of both the institutions of the presidency and the public service. The extra-legal interventions of the Nixon administration, the civil service initiatives of the Carter administration, and the "strong" presidency of Ronald Reagan have created, perpetuated and widened the schism between the presidency and the public service and have brought the nation to the beginning of a new period of incapacity for effective governance.

OPM played a major role in attempts to increase public service responsiveness to the presidency. In so doing, it contributed to the trend toward presidential political aggrandizement. This is a fundamentally irrational trend toward governmental ineffectiveness, as Aberbach and Rockman conclude (1988:609):

Efforts to achieve that level of aggrandizement are ruinous for governance in the American system; that is, they are collectively irrational. They also are ultimately ruinous for presidents whose political well-being probably is essential for effective governance and are thus likely to be individually irrational as well. . . .

The model proposed for more presidential aggrandizement, ironically, is a prescription to rob government of its capability for reality testing, and it is without doubt a model for demoralization of the career service.
The consequences of the institutional and value orientations of OPM, while not intended, should not have been surprising. Ample historical precedent exists for the expectation that politicization of the administrative process will result in organizational incapacity. The reform of 1978, with eerie irony, seems destined to repeat the unhappy results of Andrew Jackson's civil service reform of 1829. President Jackson's strong executive gave way to the weak executive of the mid-nineteenth century, to congressional government and administrative ineffectiveness; and there are signs that the same course is being repeated in the late twentieth century.

The historical lesson to be learned is that the politicization of public personnel administration weakens, rather than strengthens, the institutions of governance. Conversely, in the American historical experience, the development in 1883 of a merit and competence-based public personnel system strengthened both the presidency and the public service, as evidenced in the history of the modern presidency until 1969 and Richard Nixon.

4. **Implications for the Bush Presidency.**

The importance of the relationship between the presidency and the public service is again being recognized in the
light of the consequences of the Reagan years. Paul Volcker makes a very practical point when he says:

the very ethic of the civil service has to be to respond to the priorities, the agenda and policies of the president. . . . My own bias is that if the civil service is running right, it will be more protective in helping the government and administration in power implement its agenda than many politically appointed officials with their own constituents, their own lobbies and their own goals (1986:10).

Inevitably, presidents after Reagan will find it necessary and expedient to recognize the critical need for competence and to draw strength from the resources of the agencies of government. This point was effectively made recently by Stuart Eizenstat, former domestic policy adviser to President Carter: "We are not electing a chief manager. we're electing a leader who will choose competent people, reward them for good performance, and use the bureaucracy as an important corporate resource" (The Washington Post, January 21, 1988:A21). The alternative to establishing effective relationships with the public service will be ultimately for the chief executive to fall into the historical pattern of the weak presidency.

During the election campaign in 1988 and then immediately after assuming the presidency, George Bush has begun to reach out to the public service. This is understandable,
given President Bush's weak political position, the control of Congress by the Democratic party, his own past experience as a government insider, and his relative lack of charismatic appeal to the people. Clearly, Bush will have difficulty in marshaling and deploying the resources of the personal presidency. These factors demand the re-establishment of links to the public service.

Within a week of his inauguration, President Bush convened a meeting in Constitution Hall in Washington, D. C., of 3000 career senior executives of government. This was a significant occasion—the first group to be addressed by President Bush outside the White House—and his words provided assurance of a new appreciation of the public service. Even more significant was the reaction of the audience which gave the president a two-minute standing ovation. Unquestionably, the public service needs the president as much as the president needs the public service.

In his address to these senior executives, Bush touched on themes of the importance of the public service as "a noble calling and a public trust." He advised that he was "urging all my appointees to build a spirit of teamwork between the political and career officials." The new
The president also identified his commitment to removing "unnecessary and counterproductive regulation of the federal workers and senior executives... to release the Federal manager from bureaucratic bondage..." (White House Press Release, January 26, 1989).

Despite the encouraging language, the Bush administration has been very slow in taking specific steps to give substance to rhetoric. The central management thrust at the federal level is still dominated by the budget process and the overwhelming impact of the federal deficit. The new director of OMB, Richard Darman, has indicated that budgetary savings will still have to come out of federal employee benefits and pensions (The Washington Post, January 24, 1989:A21). In the critical early policy deliberations of the Bush administration, public service issues were not given high priority and have had no effective representation in the inner circles of the White House. The OPM director designate, Constance Newman, was announced on January 18, 1989, but her official nomination lagged for four months. Hearings on her confirmation were finally held in June 1989, which meant that the single most influential governmental personnel position was vacant during the critical first months of the new administration.
By mid-1989, the public service was still at a crossroads, a time of transition and crisis. The post-Reagan presidency also was seeking new directions in troubled times. The relationship of the institutions was troubled and uncertain because OPM as designed and directed has not made a positive contribution to the resolution of the dilemmas of politics and administration. The question remains whether the central personnel agency can be so designed and directed. The task of the next, and final, chapter is to seek an affirmative answer to that question.
CHAPTER 8: OPM AND THE FUTURE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE

The history of OPM in the ten years from 1978 to 1988 has forcibly highlighted the key problems of executive direction, politics, and administration in a democratic government. The attempt of OPM to foster maximum responsiveness to the political executive has led directly to organizational and policy failures because it has ignored the realities of the democratic political world. As Victor Thompson has said: "Regardless of formal administrative doctrine, the actual patterns of administration in democratic industrial countries are pluralistic. . . . The bureaucracy, therefore, is not a monolithic tool of a single owner but a highly fragmented set of institutions, replete with conflict and often working at cross purposes" (1985:208).

In a pluralistic polity, the reconciliation of the role of the executive with republican principles of control is a continuing constitutional issue (Salamon, 1981:289). Since the beginning of the republic, energy in the executive has been necessary for effective governance, but a partisan presidency can become a threat to the faithful execution of the law. From a governmental human resource perspective,
Hugh Heclo captures the essence of the problem when he says: "When it comes to the personnel process, we would like to help the president-as-executive manage but stop the president-as-politician from interfering with good government" (1981:15).

A. The Need for a New OPM
A contribution to the solution of the problem of executive energy in a pluralistic administrative world requires addressing the basic issue of the true nature of the business of public personnel administration. During OPM's history, the answer to this difficult but fundamental question has not been consistent or empirically satisfactory, thus accounting for organizational and institutional dysfunctions. The importance of the question as a central managerial issue is pointed out by Peter Drucker when he notes: "Common vision, common understanding, and unity of direction and effort of the entire organization require definition of 'what our business is and what it should be'" (1974:77).

1. The Nature of OPM's Business.
For most of its history, OPM's answer to the question of the nature of its business has been a tool of the
pr0¤id0nt·¤¤-politician. This answer has resulted in organizational failure as measured against any conceivable standard of performance. The lesson of failure in this case is that OPM's business should be conceived as the provision of assistance to the president-as-executive through the exercise of human resource system leadership throughout the federal sector.

Exercise of such leadership, however, raises a principal dilemma of public personnel systems: "Personnel policy decisions that make good administrative sense often make no political sense" (Mackenzie, 1981:115). This implies that there will inevitably be resistance in the system to the president-as-politician. This resistance can be positive, in the sense of implementing principles of effective human resource management; it can also be negative, in the sense of the protection of employees from legitimate supervision. Mark Huddleston has provided the necessary formula in these words: "What is needed is not a strengthened Merit Systems Protection Board, but a professionalized Office of Personnel Management" (1982:620). This does not require invention of something new--only a return to the CSRA intention that OPM serve as an agency for the promotion of "modern methods of personnel management, human resource
planning, and productivity improvement throughout the federal government" (Levine and Kleeman, 1986:20).

2. Future Challenges for Public Personnel Management.
A reconstituted and revitalized OPM is needed for a variety of compelling reasons beyond the fact that the old OPM has not been successful in its principal function of human resource management. Even the recent program innovations and improvements under the direction of Constance Horner are fragmentary and inadequate to the needs of the government's future capability. In David Rosenbloom's view, what is needed as "a prerequisite for success would seem to be a solid, long-term commitment to a coherent personnel program as a whole, rather than just a temporary aggregation of diverse interests in the personnel field" (1986:368).

OPM, as the central personnel agency, must face the challenges, obstacles, and requirements of the government's need for a post-industrial work force which must produce, in Eugene McGregor's formulation, "'smart' products and complex, knowledge intensive services," in work systems within which "productivity is increasingly based on the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the trained human intellect" (1988:941). For McGregor, the implication of
post-industrial work systems is that highly skilled people become a strategic resource "rather than simple production inputs" (1988:944). Further implications include the need for emphasis on human resource planning, flexible personnel policies and experimentation, the combination of human assets with technological innovation, and organizational investment in human learning and adaptation. McGregor concludes: "The informed management of people as a strategic resource is at the center of today's post-industrial transformation" (1988:947).

OPM, in its present form and with its present resources, is not prepared to deal with these kinds of issues. A conceptual reorientation is needed, along with a rebuilding of the organization's technical capacity to deal with human resource management issues. In part, this involves looking to the private sector for ideas and practices. For example, Peter Drucker has bidden "Goodbye to the Old Personnel Department" and has advocated personnel office concentration on issues of job-design, work flow, job relations, changing career ladders, and response to the demographics of the labor force. Drucker concludes that most employees already "do highly differentiated and, in most cases, specialized work. They are not 'labor'; they
are 'resources'--and resources have to be managed for optimum yield rather than for minimum cost" (1986:30).

Human resource planning is a key concept in the new and creative approach of personnel management. Again, the private sector perspective is useful. For example, in 1985, McManis Associates, Inc. provided a study of private sector practices. Interestingly enough, the study was under the direction not of OPM but of the President's Council on Management Improvement and was managed by the Department of Health and Human Services (which may account for why OPM has resisted involvement in planning). The recommendations of the study were emphatic in regard to the importance of human resource planning:

In most large corporations, human resource planning is done in tandem with the business planning of the company. Often, they are inseparable. In the Federal government, the major emphasis is on budget allocation and program planning, with the understanding that the reallocation of human resources to meet new program needs will automatically occur. In that way, the Federal personnel function reacts to change rather than being an agent of change. The planning practices of non-Federal organizations are applicable and should be adopted by the Federal government (McManis Associates, 1985:vi, emphasis in original).

While private sector techniques and concepts are important, the management of human resources in the public sector places additional and quite specialized responsibilities on the personnel system. Again, these are functions which
have been neglected by OPM. The first of these is the importance of oversight of decentralized personnel operations to assure compliance with public law, policy, and ethical practice. Without oversight, decentralization and delegation of personnel authorities in the public sector is tantamount to abdication. A recent deputy director of OPM, James Colvard, recognizes this in retrospect when he says: "In the long term, OPM and the agencies must find a way to observe and evaluate effectiveness of personnel activity in a system that has discretionary authority and allows managers to manage" (1988:4).

A second public-sector issue, which has received only marginal attention, is the importance of the central personnel agency at the level of symbols, ceremonials, rituals, and the legitimation of administrative action (Trice, Belasco, and Alutto, 1969;Goodsell, 1989). Before CSRA, the Civil Service Commission stood as a powerful symbol of the merit system, even though it may have had feet of clay. The Commission’s procedures legitimated selection and advancement decisions. With the development of OPM as an instrument of political ideology, the operative symbol became political responsiveness, and the legitimating force of the personnel system was lost.
3. The Future Role of OPM.

The central personnel office of government has inescapable responsibilities for the provision of policies and programs to assure that the human resource requirements of the government are met. The nature of those responsibilities has been outlined by the Standing Panel on the Public Service of the National Academy of Public Administration which has issued a statement on the future role of OPM (NAPA, 1988; Zuck, 1989). This significant statement was developed following a full year of consideration and debate, and it represents the recommendations of a substantial number of extremely well-qualified academicians and practitioners. The statement has been delivered to the new OPM director, Constance Newman, and is available for her consideration as she assumes the duties of the office.

The Panel Statement begins with a commitment to the conceptual division of labor between policy leadership (OPM) and the operational role (federal agencies). The leadership role for OPM is envisioned as follows:

* Provision of advice and counsel to the President on issues of the public service.

* Leadership on planning and developing the workforce of the future.

* Technical and functional leadership of the human resource management community in federal agencies.
* Leadership in promoting the quality and status of the federal civil service.

The Panel Statement also contains recommendations regarding the following additional responsibilities of OPM:

* Establishment of basic policies and standards to guide human resource management throughout the government.

* Undertaking a program of research and development to improve human resource management practices.

* Establishment of a strong program of oversight and evaluation in order to permit operational decentralization.

* Competent central operation of those activities and programs which are inappropriate to be delegated (retirement and insurance; compensation system; executive management).

The Panel Statement provides a blueprint for changing OPM into a true human resource management agency at the policy level. In this formula, OPM’s alignment would still be to the presidency, but it would also be the principal organizational support for the institution of the public service. The values represented in the Panel proposals would be primarily professional and technical human resource values which would operate in a managerial framework. The Statement concludes with recommendations that priority attention be given to: 1) developing and implementing a program to promote the value of public service and to encourage employment of quality candidates;
2) designing a revised, market-based compensation system; and 3) developing the capacity of OPM "to perform as the central human resource agency of the federal government."

B. The Need for Consensus on Institutions and Values
The proposals of the Standing Panel on the Public Service, together with recent reports by GAO, MSPB, the Hudson Institute, and the recommendations of the National Commission on the Public Service, could well form the basis for development of a consensus on the direction to be followed in attacking human resource issues in the federal government; however, there is no assurance that agreement on any of the proposals will lead to necessary administrative actions. The problems of the public personnel system have been "enormous and unyielding" while solutions have been "ephemeral or elusive" (Mackenzie, 1981:114).

The abundant problems of public personnel administration are resisting administrative solutions because there has been no political consensus as to the appropriate remedies for the documented problems (Levine, 1985:1-11). This lack of agreement on specific aspects of policy and programs reflects a fundamental lack of agreement regarding the
societal and political values to be maximized. Thus, the paramount requirement for achieving improvements in public personnel management is the development of a consensus on values. This would make a significant contribution to the need for a "refocused American dialogue" on public administration and governance, which is called for by Wamsley and his Blacksburg associates (1987).

1. **Core Values of Human Resource Management.**

All the principal values that bear on OPM's responsibilities are important in the American political system. In order for OPM to become a viable institution of democratic governance, it must find the proper mix of values to be supported and promulgated in carrying out its responsibilities under the law. The initial thrust of CSRA was in the value sector of management, but this was a limited and conventional expression of managerial doctrine. For OPM, the unmistakable implication is that it needs to adopt a more creative view of management values than the narrow construct initially conceived.

Specifically, OPM is, by the nature of its legal founding, the only governmental institution with a charter for the development and promulgation of policies and techniques of human resource management. OPM need not attempt to reform
broad federal management practice—it need only stay within its professional province and advance the values and techniques of human resource utilization in large scale organizations. This implies a commitment to strategic planning, the linking of human resources to organizational objectives, analysis and evaluation, participation and cooperation, training and development, meaningful public sector motivation, and human purposes and values within the public employment system.

Human resource management values require support from the traditional and historically important ideal of merit, defined as principles rather than as protective regulations. These principles are reflected in the specific language of CSRA with reference both to OPM and MSPB. Beyond the legal requirement, effective management is dependent on merit principles of selection, advancement and reward in public organizations. This does not preclude the substantive revision of cumbersome procedures, regulations, and protections; nor does this require uniformity, orthodoxy and centralization of processes. Instead, advocacy of merit requires constant reinforcement of principle, constant encouragement, and meaningful review. The goal, in Jerzy Hauptman's words, is a return
to "public service ideas which could again place professionalism in a proper context" (1982:124).

The appropriate value model for OPM consists of the primacy of human resource management with the support of the merit ideal. This value mix represents a combination which certainly was contemplated in the drafting of CSRA but which has been ignored in its implementation. The regeneration of OPM requires attention to a long list of specific initiatives. The first requirement is a statement of organizational objectives which would include a public commitment to the ideals and symbols of human resource management and to merit principles in federal personnel operations. OPM's commitment to these principles should be accompanied by resource allocation to the oversight and compliance function. In this way, OPM can begin to serve as an institutional anchor for public service values throughout the federal government.

At the program leadership levels of OPM, an emphasis on appropriate professional and managerial qualifications is required and should be included as a statement of OPM policy. The personnel policy-making process should be opened to a broad spectrum of interested parties, including specifically a reestablishment of the monthly meetings of
agency personnel directors in the Interagency Advisory Group. OPM also needs to establish meaningful coordination of program and policy initiatives with appropriate committees of Congress, and to develop an internal capacity for influencing legislative initiatives.

2. Organizational Alternatives.

Some observers have viewed the inadequacies of OPM's character and performance and have proposed different organizational remedies. Both Chester Newland (1983-84) and Bernard Rosen (1986) have suggested that effective governmental human resource management requires political protection which could be provided by a bipartisan organization reminiscent of the old Civil Service Commission. There seems to be little political support or interest in this kind of solution; yet, the problems and inadequacies of a presidentially dominated personnel system have been amply documented in the past two decades. Even before CSRA, Rosen questioned whether "there can be a Presidential personnel system based on merit which can be adequately protected from personal and political patronage;" and he identified the need for "an organization and system with characteristics uniquely suited to the primacy of the public interest" (1975:39).
Another close observer of the public service scene, Hugh Heclo, has despaired of the ability of a politicized executive branch to manage effectively the necessary business of public personnel administration. Heclo's proposed solution recognizes the "shared interest between Congress and the presidency in a nonpartisan system of public management" and believes "we should consider the establishment of a permanent Public Service Commission to serve as an agent of Congress in overseeing the management of federal personnel systems" (1984:14, emphasis in original). However, in the five years since Heclo made the suggestion, the Congress has expressed no substantive interest in the idea.

Another prevalent view, which comes from individuals oriented to program management, diminishes the significance of the central personnel agency and advocates a large-scale decentralization, if not dismantling, of the centralized personnel system. This view sees federal organizations and the public service as a "cluster of cultures" which, if freed from suffocating central systems, could develop excellence in human resource management (Kline, 1988:52-53). As might be expected, critics of the decentralization movement refer to it as "fragmentation" and "balkanization" and predict chaos in the federal work
place if separatism prevails (Tanner, 1988:53-54). Robert Golembiewski has proposed an alternative model, the essence of which "is a balance at the highest organization levels--the centralization of policy and oversight, and the decentralization of implementation--with the key facilitator being the enhanced ability to measure performance" (1984:219).

There is obviously no consensus on the issue of the proper organizational approach to the central personnel management office. Realistically, however, administrative action is ultimately the responsibility of the executive branch. The maintenance of an effective central personnel agency in that branch is essential at a symbolic level as well as in the creation of meaningful policy and execution. The central issue is finding ways to make that organization into a sustaining representative of the public service and a professionalized proponent of human resource management--and to convince political leadership of the necessity of the maintenance of a competent, nonpartisan work force.

3. Democratic Policy Process: A Way to Consensus. Because the public personnel field is marked by tension which exists among important and legitimate goals and values, a process for forging consensus is extraordinarily
important. As Lester Salamon says: "Such processes . . . must be broadly collaborative . . . to insure outcomes that a critical mass of participants can tolerate without serious damage to the public weal" (1981:293). This means that a democratic policy formulation process is essential for the resolution of public personnel management issues and policies.

During the first ten years of OPM's history, personnel policy was largely generated in closed-door decisions arrived at by the Director of OPM and his or her immediate advisers. This has meant that all parties at interest have not been heard or represented in a meaningful way. Such parties should include political officials of both parties in both the institutions of the presidency and the Congress, agency directors of personnel and staff specialists, spokespersons of employee organizations, practitioners from the private sector, and public administration academics. In this way, an appropriate consensus can be achieved for a national government which is predicated on the principle that every interested person has a right to be heard from in the political process (Lane, 1986-87:25).
The assembly of interested parties in a policy formulation process requires an institutional and organizational base which brings interest and expertise together in the design of flexible and effective human resource mechanisms. For this purpose, OPM needs to be reconstituted as a viable agency endowed with technical competence and infused with values of human resource management and merit. This implies the creation and fostering of an agency perspective to serve as the basis of the forging of consensus (Wamsley, 1998:16).

Such an approach reaches back to the foundations of traditional American public administration doctrine. For example, Roscoe Martin has pointed out that "the politics with which [Paul] Appleby associated administration was the politics of policy negotiation and accommodation rather than 'lot of raw partisanship'" and that Appleby concluded "that the heart of administration lay in the processes of negotiation and accommodation" (Martin, 1965:11).

Following Appleby's lead, the objective for a public personnel management system involves "the structuring of a network of intelligence and communication which provides a matrix of abundantly diverse and catholic values and influences for the decisions of a pluralistic society" (Egger, 1965:307). This approach looks forward to the
creation of an agency perspective for OPM that represents key values and sustains appropriate institutions (Wamsley, 1983:4-7).

C. The Need for a New Public Service Model
There is every likelihood that the human resource crises and political exigencies of governance will coincide, sooner rather than later, to demand resolution of the problems of federal human resource management. Attempts will then be made to apply the lessons learned from past failures in the creation of new solutions. But time is short, and the need is urgent for comprehensive action. The federal human resource base is deteriorating, and replacements are not in sight. Rather than waiting for some ultimate crisis of demonstrated incapacity to govern, it should be possible to utilize the analytical framework of institutions/values/organizations to prescribe constructive and remedial interventions.

1. Toward a Comprehensive Public Service Model.
The utilization of a merit-management-responsiveness value model, as inspired by Kaufman and further developed by others, for analysis and interpretation of political and administrative developments has a serious limitation. In
such a model, the value sectors are placed on a one-dimensional continuum. This implies that a shift in balance or emphasis toward one value necessarily means movement must be away from another value. This limited dynamic has been characterized by James Pfiffner as "a trade-off in efficiency and effectiveness for responsiveness" (1987:62).

The one-dimension continuum problem is only partly resolved by thinking in terms of shifting combinations of values, but the conceptual goal--and the normative challenge of public administration--of realizing all relevant and desirable values is prevented. Thus, a combination of human resource management and merit is essential but not alone sufficient in the public sector. The issue of political responsiveness is still urgent and real. OPM and the public service, as an organization of governance and a political institution, are inevitably in and of politics. Further, as Frank Thompson states: "Public personnel administration cannot be 'neutral' or value free; it is inescapably political in that if affects who gets what from government" (1986:337).

The issue that must be resolved by any model of politics and administration is the nature of the accommodation or
linkage of management/merit to democratic politics. The objective of this resolution, as Dwight Waldo has said, "is to maximize utilities and minimize disutilities while weaving democracy and bureaucracy together. It is a problem in social dynamics" (quoted in Brown and Stillman, 1986:140). This requires an expansion of the horizons and dimensions of consideration, going beyond the basic linear continuum of merit, management, and politics. A multi-dimensional model is required in order to conceptualize the simultaneous achievement of merit, management, and political responsiveness in politics and administration.

The most promising conceptual work in this direction is being done by Patricia Ingraham and Carolyn Ban in the development of a public service model which attempts to link management, career service, and political responsiveness (1986; 1988). In this model, Ingraham and Ban attempt to provide a concept of political and career relationships which moves "away from the insularity of both neutral competence and partisan responsiveness to a common ground where goals and priorities are informed by systematic consideration of the public good and the public interest" (1986:159).
This public service model is developed on a foundation of analysis which categorizes three complex dimensions of political-career relationships (Ingraham and Ban, 1988: 9-12). Management models of neutral competence, responsive competence, and management competence form the first dimension. The second dimension is provided by moral/ethical models. The third dimension is provided by policy models which deal specifically with functions of political appointees and career managers. Ingraham and Ban follow this analysis by development of specific characteristics of the public service model "in which both political and career executives view their task and function in terms of overarching societal purpose" (1988:14-15). The principal characteristics of the model include:

1. A consistent awareness of the public service as a democratic institution for political appointees and career managers.

2. A joint commitment to management competency which also recognizes the unique qualities and demands of public management.

3. A mutual respect for the skills, perspectives and values each set of managers brings to the organization.

4. A consistent awareness of, and active concern for, the public interest, broadly defined.

In the public service model, OPM can be visualized as a creative organizational catalyst which bridges and
harmonizes conflicting values through the development of specific administrative policies and programs. Although Ingraham and Ban look to institution building, particularly within the senior executive service, as the means for fostering both political and career awareness and commitment to the public service as a democratic institution (1988:15-16), it is necessary to look more broadly to the entire spectrum of human resource management, centering on OPM as an institutionally sustaining organization, to actualize the public service model. From this, it is only a short step to the development of management and personnel system characteristics and programs which would fit the model and bring it to life (Lane, 1987-88:28-27).

2. Institutional and Value Relationships.
Ultimately, an OPM at the center of the public service model would be a political institution in the sense of a politics that transcends mere partisanship. This is what Patricia Ingraham and B. Guy Peters envision when they discuss the importance of a "loftier politics" in the achievement of administrative reform (1988:15). This is what John Rohr works toward when he presents a constitutional theory of public administration in which "administration can be seen both as subordinate to the
political leadership of the day and as professionally exempt from political interference" (1986:183-184). These concepts are representative of the high politics of governance in a democratic polity.

The goal to be sought, in terms of values and relationships, is clearly identified by Elmer Staats when he tells a story from his early career:

A former budget director under whom I served as a career staff member used to say that we should be 'politically aware,' not 'politically active.' Political awareness has to be a part of the required knowledge of the career civil servant, just as the policy official has to understand the great value of professional judgment and experience of the career service in carrying out policies. This is the essence of participative management" (1982:31).

The primary role of OPM in furthering this conception would be to provide institutional representation of human resource competence in a political world (Penn, 1979:179). The principal duty of a new, regenerated OPM in this model would be to restore the viability of the public service, its ideals, its institutions, and to contribute to the reconciliation of a value system of human resource management, merit, and responsiveness within the total spectrum of the American political system. As Dwight Waldo has said: "The objective might be stated as making the
D. Conclusion: Governance, OPM, and the Public Service

Laws and policies are not self-executing. The work of governance commences after elections, after the enactment of laws, and after the development of administration policy. Ideology and rhetoric stir the emotions, but nothing tangible and meaningful happens until governance—the action arm of the political process—is mobilized. If politics is the authoritative allocation of values, it is governance that carries out the specific measures of that allocation.

Effective governance requires viable political institutions, competent public organizations, the representation of critical values, and the applied skills and talent of people to carry out policies and programs within the context of a democratic polity. The objective is a governance which mirrors, fosters, maximizes and utilizes basic democratic values. The central personnel agency of government is an important part of such governance. Although the history of OPM has unveiled the inadequacies of its contribution, it has also provided
lessons which point the way for strengthened institutional support and improved organizational responses.

1. The Requirement of People in Service to the State.

As an action process, governance requires the same factors of production as any enterprise—money, material, and labor. The people of government—the human side of the governance enterprise—are particularly important because it is people in managed organizations who govern. Actions require actors. There can be no governance without people—millions of people implementing policy, interpreting and executing law, exercising administrative discretion, using and applying resources, and delivering services.

The quality of the people in government is particularly critical in a normative sense, as Robert Denhardt has observed: "Even more important is the implicit philosophical directive contained in the Constitution, the idea that the public service is a special calling in a democracy, and that those who participate in the public service, regardless of their background or occupation, are guardians of a public trust" (1988:5). This concept reaches back to ancient times when Pericles declared that "when a citizen is in any way distinguished, he is
preferred to the public service, not as a matter of privilege, but as the reward of merit" (Good, 1947:23-24).

In democratic governance, the processes of acquiring, deploying, and utilizing people have special constraints, requirements, and normative considerations. In the governance process of a democratic polity, the people in service to the community and the common interest always present serious problems and conflicts of politics, management, and values. Whether regarded as selfless civil servants or bureaucratic drones, the public service lives in a perpetual conflict between administrative effectiveness and political responsiveness.

Bernard Crick has summed up the essential requirement of people in service to government: "The idea of a rational bureaucracy of skill, merit, and consistency is essential to all modern states" (1964:143). The challenge for the central personnel agency of American government has been and continues to be the resolution of conflicting roles and expectations about people in the political system, and in this vital area, OPM has not been adequately constructive. Heightening of conflict has taken precedence over resolution, and the ideas of skill, merit, and consistency have been diminished. Democratic governance requires a
return to its essential ingredient of a competent public service.

2. The Organizational and Institutional Requirements. Any theory of the public service and of governmental capacity will have utility insofar as it serves to foster a critical linking of management and organizational behavior, technical personnel processes, and the political imperatives of governance. This linking is essential to resolve old conflicts which are still hampering the effective provision of the human resources for the operation of a democratic government. In this regard, Robert Golembiewski calls for a "move toward a unity of purposes rather than acting in terms of a unity of command," which in his view would be consistent with the American constitutional heritage (1984:265, emphasis in original).

A system of merit and nonpartisan expertise is a necessary but not sufficient condition of democratic governance. An effective process of management is a necessary but not sufficient factor in seeking and obtaining competent organizational performance for the accomplishment of democratically determined objectives. Political responsiveness is a necessary but still not sufficient
linkage to the will of the people. The condition, process, and linkage are all essential to democratic governance.

Ultimately, the role of OPM in the American governance process is to facilitate the blending, balancing, checking, and interaction of three value systems and sustaining all the principal political institutions. Dwight Waldo has observed: "The administrative process or function is, paradoxically, legitimated by the constitutional structure. The threefold separation of powers makes a union of powers necessary at the administrative level, a union without which government cannot govern" (quoted in Brown and Stillman, 1988:179). Eugene McGregor phrased it differently but to the same effect when he cautioned that "it is one thing to bait bureaucrats and another thing to take actions whose practical effect is to drive needed talent from career administrative service. . . . the trick is to enhance the reputation and talent associated with public administration at the same time that democratic community is nurtured" (quoted in Newland, 1984:36).

The democratic governance process requires the representation of merit and nonpolitical competence. This is peculiarly and solely the province of the central governmental human resource agency. If OPM does not
represent the public service, no other agency will be in position to do so effectively. The values of responsiveness are well represented in other institutions and organizations of the governmental process. The values of management are inadequately supported and can be strengthened by concentration on the human resource aspects of management—on the creation and maintenance of human skills, the release of energy in service to the nation, and the fostering and nourishing of commitment to the public interest. These are the conclusions drawn from OPM's brief history and the unmistakable lessons to be learned from the unanticipated consequences of abandoning the vital political institution of the public service.

The people of government represent critical factors of expertise, competence, and the reality of facts and data. Such representation is vital in democratic governance, as Walter Lippmann long ago noted:

I argue that representative government . . . cannot be worked successfully, no matter what the basis of the election, unless there is an independent, expert organization for making the unseen facts intelligible to those who have to make the decisions. . . . personal representation must be supplemented by representation of the unseen facts . . . (1960:36).
3. The Standard of Performance for OPM.

Governance in the public interest is the appropriate job specification and performance standard for OPM. This requires the creative support of institutions and the building of appropriate administrative personnel systems. Wildavsky puts it this way: "The national objective should be to increase total systemic capacity in relation to emerging problems" (1976:75). For the human resource system of government, this would mean the creation and implementation of meaningful motivation, not managerial jargon and rubrics. This would mean true political responsiveness, not just to the person of the political appointee but to the entire spectrum of political institutions and values in the operation of a democratic government under the Constitution. Elmer Staats says it well: "Public service is more than an occupational category. It is the discovery, as Harold Laski put it long ago, that men serve themselves only as they serve others" (1982:33).

The responsibility of the central personnel agency for the system of human resource utilization is of particular normative significance in a time of deinstitutionalization. As Wildavsky has observed: "What morality is to man, so system is to politics. Men need restraints from
within—that is the task of the moral code in their heart. Men need restraint from without—that is the task of institutions that check and systems that balance" (1975: 535). The objective of a properly functioning human resource system is simply the establishment of a continuing process of working toward the constructive resolution of the policy-administration dichotomy.

The term resolution does not imply a solution. There can be no permanent solution in the American political environment. There can be a continuing resolution, in the sense of a framework within which the public interest is discovered and secured. Such a framework requires viable institutions, effective support of critical values, and organizational representation.

The principal problem in this approach is the weakness of the public service as an institution. It has no formal Constitutional charter, and no effective sustaining organization; however, institutional weakness does not imply institutional irrelevance. As Justice Frankfurter once pointed out:

Without a permanent and professional public service, highly trained, imaginative, and courageously disinterested, the democratic aims of our society cannot be achieved. Such a body of public servants is indispensable, no matter what social and economic
policies may express the popular will in the executive and legislative branches of the Government" (1965: 300).

Thus, an effective central personnel agency fulfills a critical role and an essential function in democratic governance. OPM is necessary to sustain the public service, to support the presidency, and to institutionalize and revitalize the values of merit, management, and responsiveness.
Appendix

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AEI - American Enterprise Inst. for Public Policy Research
ASPA - American Society for Public Administration
CSC - U. S. Civil Service Commission
CSRA - Civil Service Reform Act of 1978
EEOC - Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
EPA - Environmental Protection Agency
FEI - Federal Executive Institute
FLRA - Federal Labor Relations Authority
GAO - U. S. General Accounting Office
GERR - Government Employee Relations Report
MSPB - U. S. Merit Systems Protection Board
NAPA - National Academy of Public Administration
OMB - U. S. Office of Management and Budget
OPM - U. S. Office of Personnel Management
OSC - Office of Special Counsel
PMP - President's Personnel Management Project
PMRS - Performance Management and Recognition System
POCS - House Post Office and Civil Service Committee
S&E - Salary and Expenses
SES - Senior Executive Service
SSA - Social Security Administration
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Appleby, Paul H. 1949. Policy and Administration (University, AL: University of Alabama Press).


316


Hofferbert, Richard I. 1988. Statement of Honorable Constance Horner, Director, Office of Personnel Management, before the Subcommittee on Civil Service, Post Office, and General Services, Committee on Governmental Affairs, United States Senate (May 14).


National Academy of Public Administration, Panel on the

National Academy of Public Administration, Panel on the


National Academy of Public Administration, Panel on the


Tulis, Jeffrey K. 1988b. "The Two Constitutional
Presidencies." Pp. 85-113 in Michael Nelson, ed., The
Presidency and the Political System. Second edition

Pp. 52-54 in Bruce L. R. Smith and James D. Carroll,
eds., Improving the Accountability and Performance of

U. S. Congress. House. Committee on Post Office and Civil
of the Committee on H.R. 11280 To Reform the Civil
95-1403, July 31.

U. S. Congress. House. Committee on Post Office and Civil
Service. 1978b. Civil Service Reform: Hearings before
the Committee. 95th Cong., 2d sess., Serial No. 95-85.

U. S. Congress. House. Committee on Post Office and Civil
Service. 1978. History of the Civil Service Merit
Systems of the United States and Selected Foreign
Countries. Together with Executive Reorganization
Studies and Personnel Recommendations. Committee Print
No. 94-29. 94th Cong., 2d sess., December 31.

U. S. Congress. House. Committee on Post Office and Civil

U. S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Governmental Affairs.
1978. Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 and
Reorganization Plan No. 2 of 1978: Hearings before the
Committee. 95th Cong., 2d sess.

Reform: Development of 1978 Civil Service Reform
Proposals (GAO/GGD-89-18).

U. S. General Accounting Office. 1987. Federal Employees:
Trends in Career and Noncareer Employee Appointments in
the Executive Branch (GAO/GGD-87-96FS).

U. S. General Accounting Office. 1983. Increased Use of
Productivity Management Can Help Control Government Costs
(GAO/AFMD-84-11).


The vita has been removed from the scanned document