Rosenson does not avoid using the traditional scenario-based instructional objectives, and she analyzes approaches to make her case. In the second and third sections of the book, she uses case studies and the Watergate scandal to show how states have attempted to address the conduct of executive branch employees. She believes, however, that these studies serve as a predication for the failures and successes of ethical reform. The discussion is rounded out by an examination of the contributions to success or failure made by scandal, compensation, party competition, legislative leaders, and governors.

The fourth and fifth sections focus on a twenty-four-year period that begins after Watergate and again address unethical conduct in the state government area. The last part of the book addresses ethical self-regulation and its limitations. According to Rosenson, below the surface appearance of comprehensive and strong ethics laws, there are important limits on the extent to which legislators are willing to self-regulate in the domain of conflict-of-interest law. Whereas they are willing, under certain circumstances, to enact ethics measures that challenge the perks of power and their own economic self-interest, they do so in a constrained manner. In other words, objectivity in ethical self-regulation is still an issue despite the steps taken by the states to form ethics commissions.

This book can be used by politicians as well as the general public. It is “citizen friendly” in that the lay reader can comprehend the conceptual views and relate them to real-world issues. For legislators, political integrity is an essential requirement. To serve the public as an elected official is to honestly uphold the laws and moral grain of society.

The theoretical approach that Rosenson takes is the main reason why this book is suited for the classroom. It allows the undergraduate student to develop a deep and rich understanding of the ethical constructs that form the nation’s values system and the motivation to make it better. The topics are clearly presented and should not confuse students. In a democratic society, there is no room for unethical behavior by those in power, for it can lead to a breakdown of societal values. This book’s objective in highlighting the main problems of ethics in state politics is not just to provide genuine information, but also to effect change.

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In *Ethics in Public Management*, George Frederickson and Richard Ghere bring together twenty-three different authors in seventeen chapters that examine the intersection of administrative ethics and public management. The locus of this volume is derived from *Ethics and Administration*, a 1993 publication edited by Frederickson, which was a compilation of papers presented at the 1991 Conference for the Study of Government Ethics in Park City, Utah. Several questions were discussed at that groundbreaking meeting. One that Frederickson raised there—and that is addressed here—is whether the study of administrative ethics is ephemeral or has “staying power” to become a researchable mainstay in public administration for years to come. Let it be stated that the study of administrative ethics, especially from an empirical and theory-building perspective, is alive and well.

Ghere points out in the introduction that national and international events since 1993, such as global economic activities, the Clinton impeachment, the passage of the Patriot Act in 2001, the tragic events of 9/11, the Enron and other accounting scandals, the Abu Ghraib prison abuse, and other cases of immoral or unethical behavior, have raised the bar for defining and instigating empirical theory-building research by continuing to keep the focus on the normative dimensions of governmental action. Ultimately, this book has two major purposes: (1) to assess the diversity of ethical issues from an empirical vantage point, arguing that such research will advance understanding and appreciation of the complexity and diversity of administrative ethical issues that affect the field of public management, and (2) to demonstrate that the research field of public sector ethics is “ripe for the picking.” In other words, because of the variety and number of incidents in the United States and throughout the world involving administrative ethics and public management, there is ample opportunity for solid empirical research and theory-building.

The book consists of seventeen chapters, many of which were previously published as articles in *Public Integrity*, and is divided into five parts. In Part 1, “Ethics and Public Administration in the Twenty-first Century,” the authors focus on the increased empirical research emphasis on administrative ethics over the last fifteen years or so. Donald C. Menzel, for example, demonstrates through a solid literature review of several mainline public administration journals that (1) there are consistent themes to empirical ethical research, (2) there is a reciprocal and positive relationship between empirical research and ethics theory, and vice versa, (3) there is some movement, although still in its infancy, toward building solid empirical research in administrative ethics, and (4) there are new areas of research opportunity (e.g., globalization) and areas that have been neglected (e.g., educational ethics and pedagogy, ethics and the onslaught of information technology). Menzel is quick to point out, however, that unlike its companion field of business administration, public administration has a long way to go to produce the solid and consistent empirical ethical research necessary.
Part 2, “Organization Designs That Support Ethical Behavior,” examines the role organizational design plays in the development and support of ethical behavior, countering, or at least questioning, the claim that the individual public administrator assumes the primary role as moral agent. For example, Dennis E. Wittmer suggests that moral decision-making is as much (if not more) influenced by a coalition of individual behavior, top-management advice, and the existence of (and hopefully obedience to) organizational rules as by the individual’s moral compass. In a penetrating but disturbing empirical analysis of the role of political power in administrative ethics, Carole L. Jurkiewicz contends that exercising political power is not altogether unprincipled, and may even, in fact, promote an ethical organizational environment, simply because exercising power is associated with executive effectiveness. So, whereas Lord Acton stated that “power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely,” Jurkiewicz contends that this simply is not necessarily so.

Part 3, “Market Forces That Compromise Administrative Ethics,” shifts gears by attempting to explain how market forces can lead to compromises of administrative ethics generally and of both individual and organizational ethical thinking and behavior. Each of the four chapters addresses some aspect of “new governance” strategies, as found in the New Public Management (NPM) literature. All four suggest that such strategies—for instance, greater accountability of decision-making attained through principal-agent relations—do not produce less corruption, but may in fact lead to more corrupt behavior by the principal agents than would otherwise be the case. Critics of NPM contend that organizational advancement of greater efficiency and effectiveness may pose an ethical price, one that sacrifices moral rectitude and ethical action at the altar of the administrative gods: efficiency, economy, and accountability. H. George Frederickson, for instance, engages the reader in what he terms an “axiomatic argument,” maintaining that the use of NPM principles, such as cutting red tape, increasing privatization and contracting-out, and downsizing, leads to greater opportunities—if not outright action—for unethical behavior, largely because each principle or action assumes that too much government is the problem and not the solution. Frederickson contends that the public interest as a primary goal of administrative ethics is far better pursued, and perhaps attained, via governmental checks and balances than solely by market mechanisms. Further, Lisa A. Dicke and Pitima Boonyarak claim that “downsizing, devolution, diffusion, and empowerment movements” associated with the NPM are lax in sustaining necessary administrative accountability, largely because of the weakness of solid performance-measurement standards and technology. The authors believe that more governments will adopt performance measurements, but for “ideological reasons” and not necessarily for greater government accountability and higher ethical standards.

In Part 4, “Unintended Outcomes of Anticorruption Reforms,” the theme is that anticorruption reforms, such as stricter rules and regulations governing individual behavior, may be instituted for the right reason, but may be accompanied by unintended consequences. Frank Anechiarico’s piece shows that when New York City mayors softened bureaucratic rules to promote competition in city contracting, companies with Mafia links got in on the action of bidding for municipal services, including the cleanup efforts after 9/11. Other unintended outcomes
of anticorruption reforms are discussed in Kathryn G. Denhardt and Stuart C. Gilman’s examination of the stifling effect of the no-gift policy. They hint that such a remedy—which certainly has good intentions—when taken to the extreme may actually be worse than the disease. Thus, they argue that federal agencies should adopt the “bright-line” de minimus policy already successful at the state and local levels.

Finally, Part 5, “Administrative Ethics in Global Perspective,” examines how administrative ethics are played out on the world stage. It focuses on the organizational and systemic forms of unethical behavior, and how, if at all, there is an intersection between the demonstration of personal integrity and the organizational corrective of instigating rules and regulations covering what not to do, rather than promoting what to do. This is aptly demonstrated in Gerald E. Caiden’s analysis of how to deal with institutional corruption, where he concedes that it is difficult to deal with corruption because it is often “elusive.” And according to Diane E. Yoder and Terry L. Cooper, there is a “transnational” world effort at establishing an “ethics principles framework” while moving away from the dogged and rigid scientific principles that governed public administration from the early twentieth century. Richard K. Ghere, too, focuses on the “globalization” and legal value concepts for future research and on the political and administrative implications of ethics and ethical behavior, particularly at the international level. What is fascinating, but also somewhat concerning, is to envision global virtues, or “global values,” being projected onto the world administrative and political screen through a variety of international, global, or transnational organizations. The authors take the reader into a world of ethics that is yet to be explored, especially from an empirical standpoint.

The reader should beware: Ethics in Public Management is really mistitled. This anthology is much more than the intersection of administrative ethics and public management. It is much more concerned about the substantial impact of empirical research and decision-making upon administrative ethical behavior, both individually and institutionally, in the organizational, national, and global venues. But even while there is much concern with focusing, directing, and re-directing the student and scholar toward a better appreciation of ethical empirical theory-building, this volume still places a strong emphasis on the continued development of normative theory. This is no more apparent than in the conclusion, where Ghere highlights several places that normative inquiry might venture: (1) discussing whether or how a shift in organizational stability or instability affects public-sector ethics, (2) tracing the meaning of the public good or public interest, particularly from a global perspective, (3) considering what roles public administrators should assume in promoting public dialogue on the global stage, and (4) assessing how and whether administrative ethics that follow regime values can incorporate humanitarian obligations to groups affected by organizational actions. The book really just states the obvious: Empirical and normative theories of administrative ethics—whether focused nationally, internationally, transnationally, or globally, or directed individually, organizationally, or institutionally—are essential when it comes to understanding the breadth and depth of administrative ethics.

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Morals Under the Gun: The Cardinal Virtues, Military Ethics, and American Society

BY JAMES H. TONER
Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000

Given the continuing reports of torture and abuse of prisoners in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and at Guantanamo Bay, it is worth the time to examine a book published in 2000, *Morals Under the Gun: The Cardinal Virtues, Military Ethics, and American Society*, by James H. Toner. His central premise is that military personnel should be taught virtue ethics, because teleological and deontological approaches simply will not work under the vagaries and extreme pressure of combat.

Toner’s position stands in stark contrast to recent efforts in Congress, led by Senator John McCain, to ban the mistreatment of prisoners. The position of McCain and others seems to be that more legislation would prevent such abuse, even though McCain’s proposal is actually based on an already existing Army field manual (FM 3–19.4, 2001). Moreover, as pointed out in an article by the present author elsewhere in this issue, the stress of combat can induce immoral behavior. As noted in the article, and in Toner’s book, good training is one of the best ways to prevent atrocities.

*Morals Under the Gun* opens with a truly provocative, outrageous chapter (“The Necessary Immorality of the Military Profession”) that proposes that “ethical instruction is too absolute and disconnected with reality” for military personnel. Since they are expected to kill, they should also reasonably be expected to lie, cheat, and steal for their country. Society at large should not condemn this behavior, since it is all done for the ultimate good of the nation.

In the next chapter, Toner confesses that the first chapter was written solely to get the reader’s attention—and to point out the fallacies in the ethical thinking of some people, including some in uniform, such as Marine Lieutenant Colonel (retired) Oliver North. Toner then directly challenges the “accommodationists” who claim that military ethics should be based on or very similar to civilian ethical practices. In their view, adapting military ethics to civilian practice is “enlightened” and “progressive.” Toner argues that this is detrimental to military effectiveness. His position is supported in a wide array of other publications, including classic works (Huntington 1957), more recent scholarly studies (Miller 1995), and official military documents (AFDD 1–1, 2004; FM 22–100, 1999; MCWP 6–11, 2002).

Toner believes that ethics is ultimately about “owing,” that is, responsibly fulfilling our gift of life. With this in mind, he claims that virtue ethics is indispensable. While military ethics may be teleological in the sense that its approach is utilitarian and consequentialist, to rely solely on this approach is to open the door to the commission of any number of atrocities for the sake of victory or even survival. By the same token, military ethics is deontological
because soldiers are taught basic rules and principles of conduct. However, no set of rules can ever adequately capture all the possibilities inherent in combat. Therefore, neither approach is sufficient.

Virtue ethics, with its reliance on the development of character, is better suited to the military profession, Toner claims. In his view, its eclectic nature is its great strength. Virtue ethics “wishes people to attempt to bring about the best possible outcome by fulfilling, reasonably and well, the duties they have” (p. 157). Since the essence of professionalism is responsible choice, Toner argues, military personnel need character development more than rules or an approach that emphasizes results.

Toner devotes chapters 5 through 8 to a discussion of how the traditional cardinal virtues can contribute to the development of character. He claims that without character, without chivalry, the military is just a bunch of “armed thugs, mercenaries without morals” (p. 161). Thus, he proposes that the military abandon what he claims is its current approach—teaching “ethics by slogan”—in favor of one that encourages character development through more introspective thinking about values, ethics, and character. He also proposes that military personnel should spend time reading such classic works as Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Interestingly, the services’ official publications on leadership echo Toner’s preference for a virtue ethics approach, but without calling it that. For example, “Army leadership begins with what the leader must BE, the values and attributes that shape a leader’s character” (FM 22–100, 1999, p. 1). The Marine Corps proclaims, “The moral courage of leaders is the key to keeping effective combat units from becoming armed mobs” (MCWP 6–11, 2002, p. 61). All the services have a set of values they claim to be the “core,” or principal, values the service holds up as essential for combat effectiveness. The lists are different from the cardinal virtues, and from each other, but they cover much of the same ground. It is the constant reiteration of these lists of values, however, that Toner criticizes as amounting to nothing more than teaching ethics “by slogan.”

Despite this area of agreement, it is doubtful that the services will heed Toner’s call for a more “introspective” approach that includes reading more of the classic works. As Huntington (1957) so ably pointed out, the military mind is highly pragmatic. Convincing military professionals, who already work long hours under highly stressful conditions to spend time reading and thinking is a tough challenge, especially when the rewards cannot be easily measured or related to combat effectiveness. Nonetheless, Toner’s approach may be far better at preventing ethical lapses than teaching ethics “by slogan.” Certainly, the military’s own documents and the research on combat stress conclude that training and education can be very effective in preventing incidents of abuse and misconduct like the ones that occurred in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Guantanamo Bay (Reinke 2006).

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