



# **In Defense of Politics in Public Administration: A Value Pluralist Perspective (Public Admin: Criticism and Creativity)**

*Michael W. Spicer*

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Scholars of public administration have historically too often been disdainful towards politics in the field, viewing political activities and interests as opportunities for corruption, mismanagement, and skewed priorities. Supporters of this anti-political stance have become even more strident in recent years, many of them advancing scientific models for the study and practice of public administration and governance.

Michael Spicer argues that politics deserves to be defended as a vital facet of public administration on the grounds that it can promote moral conduct in government and in public administration, principally by bringing to the foreground the role of values in administrative practice. Politics can facilitate the resolution of conflicts that naturally arise from competing values, or conceptions of the good, while minimizing the use of force or violence. Drawing on the writings of Isaiah Berlin, Bernard Crick, and Stuart Hampshire, *In Defense of Politics in Public Administration* argues that value conflict is an integral part of our moral experience, both in making our own moral choices and in dealing with those whose values conflict with our own. This book is a spirited declaration of principles and a timely contribution to a dialogue that is redefining public administration, both in theory and in practice.

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