



# Ethics for Public Managers

*Harold F Gortner*

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## **Ethics for Public Managers** Harold F Gortner

Interest in ethics within the field of public administration has grown steadily since the late 1970s. Harold Gortner focuses on public administration ethics theory and how it applies to the lives of managers operating in the middle ranges of public bureaucracy. Using a general review of the literature on public administration ethics and a comparison of that literature to the real-life experiences of civil service managers, he categorizes the literature and measures its relevance to the thought processes, decisions, and actions of individuals within a bureaucracy.

According to Gortner, the literature on public administration can be divided into five meaningful categories: philosophical discussions of ethics; professional aspects of ethics; personal characteristics and their influence on ethics; organizational dynamics and their influence on ethics; and legal aspects of ethics. Because an understanding of these five approaches to public administration is helpful in understanding the arguments that are presented, each is discussed at some length within the volume. Gortner then examines these categories in light of the real-life experiences of public managers, thereby helping the reader to understand which of the various ethical arguments are most meaningful to practicing managers, and why those particular approaches are useful or applicable to their ethical dilemmas. Gortner's effort to balance theory and practice will interest scholars and practitioners of public administration alike.

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