



Program Budgeting and the Performance Movement: The Elusive Quest for Efficiency in Government (Public Management and Change)

William F. West

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Formal systems of comprehensive planning and performance-based management have a long if disappointing history in American government. This is illustrated most dramatically by the failure of program budgeting (PPB) in the 1960s and resurrection of that management technique in a handful of agencies over the past decade. Beyond its present application, the significance of PPB lies in its relationship to the goals and assumptions of popular reforms associated with the performance movement.

Program Budgeting and the Performance Movement examines PPB from its inception in the Department of Defense under Robert McNamara to its limited resurgence in recent years. It includes an in-depth case study of the adoption and effects of PPB at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The fact that program budgeting is subject to the same limitations today that led to its demise four decades ago speaks to the viability of requirements, such as those imposed by the Government Performance and Results Act, that are designed to make government more businesslike in its operations.

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