

# **Rediscovering Mary Parker Follett: Rare Gem in Public Administration Scholarship in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

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*Mary Parker Follett was a pioneering public administration theorist and one of the few women who braved the male dominated fields of management and organization studies in the United States in the early part of the 1900s. Even though she wrote about management and organization environment and processes a century ago, the concepts and themes she envisioned then such as power and authority, conflict resolution, democratic principles in the organization, and governance now resonate in contemporary fundamentals. Her prolific efforts to define the ideal humane and democratic organization and effective governance make this modernist and valiant social worker, advocate, management scholar and consultant rightly be described as the “prophet of management.”*

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## **Introduction**

In the annotated bibliography *The Guide to the Foundations of Public Administration*, Daniel Martin reviewed books and articles of 1,028 authors on various aspects of management and organization studies, in the fields of government (public) and business administration. Of these thinkers and scholars reviewed, only 42 or four percent were women. Eight of the women authors, including Mary Parker Follett, were published between 1914 and 1940 while the rest of the books or articles written by women got published between 1970 and 1980 (Martin, 1989).

Considering the social, economic, and cultural limitation imposed on women in her time, Follett was not deterred but rather persisted in studying, writing, and lecturing on wide-ranging public administration topics synonymous to many present-day buzzwords, among them:

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