

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

MPA
ENGLISH

公共行政管理 专业英语

主编 胡亦武 朱湘军
编写 姚旻 陈薇

华南理工大学出版社

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内 容 简 介

本书是为公共行政管理专业(MPA)编写的专业英语教材。全书共13篇课文,均选自国外与公共行政管理相关的专业英语文献。为便于读者更好地理解文献的内容,每篇课文后都列出了其中出现的生词、短语和术语,并对课文中的一些难句进行了分析和解释。为巩固对文献的阅读和理解,课后还安排了问题讨论。考虑到国外专业文献阅读有一定难度,编者特意给出了每篇课文的参考译文。

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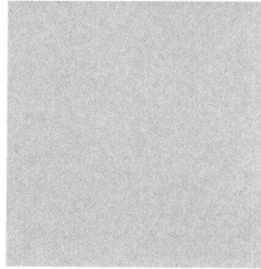
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THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

OVEN E. HUGHES

What government should or should not do needs to be of fundamental concern to public managers. In mixed economies there must be some demarcation between those activities that fall in either the public sector or the private sector. The dividing line varies between different nations at different times, but, in the last two decades of the twentieth century, it definitely moved away from the public sector and towards the private sector. This transfer of resources and functions to the private sector obviously affects those who work in the public sector or rely on it in some way. If a public activity is less valued by the community, if activities historically provided by governments are being marketized, the rationales for doing these things are of obvious interest to public managers.

Since the mid-1970s, most OECD nations have undertaken a reassessment of the roles of the public sectors. Those who believe in the model of the free market as the basis for a more dynamic economy argue that governments are currently involved in activities which are inappropriate and that the size and role of government must be cut back drastically. The current debate on the role of government mainly concerns its economic aspects: should it provide the goods and services it does, or should some be handed to the private sector? Should it subsidize or regulate to the extent it does? Such questions also raise the very political matter of how various members of the community perceive and value the things government does.

Market Failure As the Basis for Public Policy

Although the sale of goods and services is the basis of a capitalist society, there are some circumstances where markets may not provide all the goods and services that are desired, or may do so in ways which adversely affect the society as a whole. The market mechanism alone cannot perform all economic functions; public policy is needed to guide, correct, and supplement it in certain respects. Market failure is one way in which government action can be justified. Theories and models can be developed which state that government action should only occur where market fails, providing governments would do a better job in those particular

circumstances. Some of the goods or services which markets may not provide optimally include: education, law and order, environmental values, national defense, roads and bridges, hospitals and health care, welfare services, public transport and the like. The key kinds of market failure are outline as follows.

Public Goods

Private goods are enjoyed by whoever paid for them. Once someone pays the asking price, the property becomes theirs by the process of exchange and no one else can use it unless the owner gives permission. Public goods are quite different as they benefit all users whether or not they have paid the price. They are “non-excludable”, that is, if provided to one, they are available to all. For example, a lighthouse can not be reserved for the use of only those ships which pay for the service. There are roads and bridges that benefit a particular community, but for which tolls or some other way of charging individual users are not feasible or too costly. It is not possible for citizens to decide what level of national defense they individually want and then pay precisely that amount in their taxes. There seems to be no way except for government to provide such public goods, although the dividing line between public and private goods is often rather blurred. There are now fewer undisputed public goods than once was thought to be the case. Some roads or bridges may be directly charged for by means of tolls. There may be other payment methods such as an annual fee for freeway use. Defense remains the classic public goods, one which, practically, can only be paid for by taxation of the whole society, not merely by those who value being defended by the armed forces.²

The literature also points to merit goods. These are services, such as education and health care, that are socially desirable, but which markets may not provide optimally. The market may provide them in a technical sense — but there are benefits to the whole society by some government involvement. An educated workforce is economically desirable as an educated worker is able to perform more complex tasks; government provision or assistance may improve overall educational outcomes for the benefit of the society as a whole. But how education is funded is a general problem. If education is regarded as a private good there are equity

problems between individually as well as efficiency ones if those with innate ability are not educated.³ On the other hand, if parents wish to spend extra money on education, there is no way of preventing this.

Health care is another difficult merit good issue. While the delivery of health services by doctors and hospitals is broadly consistent across developed countries, there are varying mechanisms of financing with some countries seeing health care essentially as a private good (US), others as a public good (UK), and others as a mix of both (Canada). Private health insurance markets may not provide adequate cover when individuals assess their risk as being lower than it actually is. As a result, there tends to be chronic under insurance and eventual demands for government involvement. Most countries have an uneasy mix of private and public provision of these merit goods, without there being a definitive answer as to the most desirable point on the public-private continuum.

Externalities

Market transactions often have effects on third parties, or on the environment, that only government action can alleviate. For example, it is possible to buy a car and its fuel through the market, but the externality or “spill-over” effects on air quality or vehicle accidents are not captured by the price paid for the items causing the problem. Environmental effects are usually seen as requiring some kind of government action, as there is no market way of coping with these effects. There are market approaches to government action, such as tradable pollution permits, but these still take place firmly within a framework of government regulation.

Natural Monopoly

There are some goods which are characterized by declining marginal cost, that is, when supplied to one customer it becomes cheaper to provide to the next.⁴ The installation of water supply or electricity to one household makes the cost to the next household cheaper once the distribution network is in place. It is in utilities with networks telephone, electricity, gas and water—that the problem of natural

monopoly is most prevalent. The beneficial effects of competition are not likely to occur when there is a tendency towards a monopoly supplier. The existence of natural monopoly has been used as a rationale for some form of government involvement or even ownership, although there few industries or parts of industries now universally regarded as natural monopolies. More recently, any natural monopoly in telecommunications and electricity supply is seen as only applying to local distribution. In any case, there are examples, particularly in the United States, where such utilities are privately owned but government regulated. In other words, government involvement need not mean direct government provision, and there is now a worldwide trend to privatization of such services but with some form of government regulation attached.

Imperfect Information

There is a case for poor information, or “asymmetric information”, being considered an example of market failure. Market theory does assume perfect information for buyers and sellers. To the extent that information is not gained, especially by the buyer, market can be less than optimal. Consumer protection or packaging information might be examples where, through government action, information can be provided so that market function better. Regulation imposed on blatantly unsafe products may be seen as providing information to those unable or willing to gather it for themselves.

Other kinds of imperfect information may arise with respect to “adverse selection”. Where for example, the unhealthy are more likely to be buyers of health insurance and “moral hazard” where information can persistently be ignored in, for example, that the self-assessment of risk by cigarette smokers or motorcycle riders is far less than the actual risk. Both these can cause market failure due to failure of information.

Basic Function of Government

There are some things government should or should not do, some that it does well

and some that it does badly. Even during the time of laissez-faire economics, there was some role for government. In its 1997 report on development, the World Bank argued that there were five fundamental tasks which “lie at the core of every government’s mission”. These were: ①establishing a foundation of law; ②maintaining a non-distortionary policy environment, including macroeconomic stability; ③investing in basic social services and infrastructure; ④protecting the vulnerable and ⑤protecting the environment.

Another relatively pragmatic set of government roles is set out by Anderson, who sees seven basic functions of government, which he claims are general role. Some of these are examples of market failure, but he sees a wider role for government, as the following shows:

- (1) Providing economic infrastructure. Government provide the basic institutions, rules and arrangements necessary for the satisfactory operation of a modern capitalist system. These include the definition and protection of property rights, the enforcement of contracts, the provision of a standard currency, weights and measures, corporate charts, bankruptcy, patents, copyright, the maintenance of law and order and the tariff system. Modern economic societies are political ones as well; it would not be possible for the economic system to operate without the rules of the game and the framework for economic life being provided by the political system. Contracts are legally binding because of the laws established by the state and backed, in the last resort, by state sanction.
- (2) Provision of various collective goods and services. There are some public goods which, while valuable to the whole society, are difficult for individuals to pay for according to the amount of good used. Once provided for one, they are available for all. These include such items as national defense, roads and bridges, aids to navigation, flood control, sewage disposal, traffic control systems and other infrastructure. Many are characterized by their broad use, indivisibility and non-excludability and are, therefore, public goods.
- (3) The resolution and adjustment of group conflicts. A basic reason for the existence of government is the need to resolve or ameliorate conflict in a society in pursuance of justice, order and stability. This may include actions to protect the economically weak against the economically strong. Government

- may seek to replace exploitation with equity through child labor laws, minimum wage legislation, or workers' compensation programs.
- (4) The maintenance of competition. Competition does not always maintain itself in the private sector and government action is often required to ensure that business do compete. Without government monitoring, the benefits of the free enterprise system would not necessarily appear. In the absence of suitable regulation, companies would be able to form cartels, restrict access to their products and fix prices.
- (5) Protection of natural resources. Competitive forces cannot be relied on to prevent the wasteful use of natural resources, to protect against degradation of the natural environment, or to care for the interests of future generations. Damage to the environment from market activity is the textbook example of externality and market failure. Only government can alleviate environment damages.
- (6) Minimum access by individuals to the goods and services of the economy. The operation of the market sometimes produces results that are cruel or socially unacceptable: poverty, unemployment, malnutrition—in their impact on people. Others because of illness, old age, illiteracy, or whatever, may simply exist outside the market economy. There is often disagreement over the level of assistance, the aggregate cost and particular programs which may have some social costs.
- (7) Stabilization of the economy. There have always been fluctuations in the business cycle of the economy where boom conditions are followed by recessions. Government action may be able to alleviate these through the budget, or monetary policy or control over wages or prices. Although government action is often imperfect and sometimes wrong, the community regards the government as being responsible for the state of the economy and there is a public expectation that government should act to try to solve any problems.

New Words 生词:

- demarcation *n.* 划分
drastically *adv.* 激烈地, 彻底地

- subsidize *v.* 资助, 津贴
- perceive *vt.* 察觉 *v.* 感知, 感到, 认识到
- adverse *adj.* 不利的, 敌对的, 相反的
- justify *v.* 证明……是正当的
- optimal *adj.* 最佳的, 最理想的
- non-excludable *n.* (对协议等的) 不遵守
- lighthouse *n.* 灯塔
- reserve *n.* 储备(物), 储藏量, 预备队
vt. 储备, 保存, 保留, 预定, 预约
- merit *n.* 优点, 价值 *v.* 有益于
- workforce *n.* 劳动力, 工人总数, 职工总数
- provision *n.* 供应, (一批) 供应品, 预备, 防备, 规定
- equity *n.* 公平, 公正, 公平的事物, 资产净值, [律] 平衡法
- continuum *n.* 连续统一体, 连续统, 闭联集
- tradable *adj.* 可贸易的, 可买卖的
- utility *n.* 效用, 有用
- asymmetric *adj.* 不均匀的, 不对称的
- blatantly *adv.* 喧闹地, 看穿了地
- maintenance *n.* 维护, 保持, 生活费用, 扶养
- bankruptcy *n.* 破产
- sanction *n.* 批准, 同意, 支持, 制裁, 认可
v. 批准, 同意, 支持, 鼓励, 认可
- sewage *n.* 下水道, 污水 *v.* 用污水灌溉, 装下水道于
- navigation *n.* 航海, 航空, 导航, 领航, 航行
- ameliorate *v.* 改善, 改进
- degradation *n.* 降级, 降格, 退化
- cartel *n.* 企业联合, 交战国间交换俘虏的协议
- alleviate *vt.* 使(痛苦等)易于忍受, 减轻
- malnutrition *n.* 营养失调, 营养不良
- illiteracy *n.* 文盲
- aggregate *n.* 合计, 总计, 集合体
adj. 合计的, 集合的, 聚合的
v. 聚集, 集合, 合计

- fluctuation *n.* 波动, 起伏
- recession *n.* 撤回, 退回, 退后, 工商业之衰退, 不景气
- definitely *adv.* 明确地, 干脆地
- obvious *adj.* 明显的, 显而易见的
- undertake *vt.* 承担, 担任, 许诺, 保证
- dynamic *adj.* 动力的, 动力学的, 动态的
- appropriate *adj.* 适当的
- regulate *vt.* 管制, 控制, 调节, 校准
- perceive *v.* 感知, 感到, 认识到
- circumstance *n.* 环境, 详情, 境况
- mechanism *n.* 机械装置, 机构, 机制
- supplement *n.* 补遗, 补充, 附录, 增刊 *v.* 补充
- particular *adj.* 特殊的, 特别的
- property *n.* 财产, 所有物
- permission *n.* 许可, 允许
- involvement *n.* 连累, 包含
- innate *adj.* 先天的, 天生的
- uneasy *adj.* 心神不安的, 不自在的, 不稳定的
- chronic *adj.* 慢性的, 延续很长的
- consistent *adj.* 一致的, 调和的
- fuel *n.* 燃料
- vehicle *n.* 交通工具, 车辆, 媒介物
- capture *vt.* 俘获, 捕获, 夺取
- installation *n.* 安装, 装置
- laissez-faire *adj.* 自由的
- non-distortionary *adj.* 没有被歪曲的
- vulnerable *adj.* 易受攻击的, 易受……的攻击
- pragmatic *adj.* 实际的, 注重实效的
- enforcement *n.* 执行, 强制
- disposal *n.* 处理, 处置, 布置, 安排
- patent *n.* 专利权, 执照, 专利品
- chart *n.* 海图, 图表
- corporate *adj.* 社团的, 法人的, 共同的

minimum *adj.* 最小的, 最低的 *n.* 最小值, 最小化
legislation *n.* 立法, 法律的制定 (或通过)
exploitation *n.* 开发, 开采, 剥削
indivisibility *n.* 不可分割, 除不尽

Useful Phrases 短语:

cut back 修剪, 削减, 急忙返回, 倒叙
to the extent 到……的程度
by means of 依靠
be likely to 可能
with respect to 关于, 至于
be characterized by ……的特点在于, ……的特点是
in the absence of 缺乏……时 当……不在时
mixed economies 混合企业经济
market failure 市场失灵
market mechanism 市场机制
government involvement 政府参与
market transaction 市场交易
marginal cost 边际成本

Difficult Sentences 难句分析:

1. Those who believe in the model of the free market as the basis for a more dynamic economy argue that governments are currently involved in activities which are inappropriate and that the size and role of government must be cut back drastically.

(那些相信自由市场模式可以促进经济更加具有活力的人士认为政府目前参与的一些行为是不恰当的, 政府的规模和角色必须大规模缩减。)

评析: 这个句子是典型的从句套从句结构。第一个是 *those who* 引导的定语从句, 指明对象是那些认为自由市场模式是更具活力经济之基础的人, 这些人的观点由 *argue that* 引导的宾语从句的形式出现, 他们认为政府目前从事的一些行为不太恰当, 此处, 作者又用了一个定语从句 *which are inappropriate* 对政府所从事的行为作了评价, 最令人费解的是最后一个 *that*

从句 “that the size and role of government must be cut back drastically”, 其实该 that 从句与前面的 that 从句构成两个并列内容, 都是 argue 引导的宾语从句, 表明观点。

argue: 争论, 争吵, 争辩。

Example: They argued the case for a non-nuclear defence policy.

(他们为无核防务政策辩护。)

We could argue this point for hours without reaching any conclusion.

(我们为这一点可以辩上几个小时而得不出结论。)

2. Defense remains the classic public goods, one which, practically, can only be paid for by taxation of the whole society, not merely by those who value being defended by the armed forces.

(防卫一直都是传统的公共产品, 只能通过社会税收的方式收费, 而不是仅仅由那些受到武装保护的人付费。)

评析: 这句话被逗号隔开形成了三个意义群, 逗号的频繁使用, 容易造成理解的障碍。这种情况下, 抓住句子的主干是最重要的, 只有抓住了主干才能把握本质, 不会被枝蔓挡住眼睛。这里的主干就是 “Defense remains the classic public goods”。至于这种公共产品的特点, 我们可以从 which 引导的定语从句中得到答案: ① can only be paid for by taxation of the whole society; ② not merely by those who value being defended by the armed forces.

value: 估价, 重视。

Example: If you want to sell your collection of stamps you ought to have it valued.

(如果你想出售你收藏的邮票, 你应该请人先估估价。)

I've valued your friendship.

(我一向看重你的友谊。)

3. If education is regarded as a private good there are equity problems between individually as well as efficiency ones if those with innate ability are not educated.

(如果教育仅被看做私有产品, 必然在个体之间出现公平问题; 如果有先天天赋的人不接受教育, 必然出现效率问题。)

评析: 该句理解的关键是 as well as 和 efficiency ones。As well as 相当于 and, 作为并列连词使用; efficiency ones, 这里 ones 指代的是 problems。英语中为了避免重复, 经常用 it, one 指代前面出现的单数名词, 用 ones 指代前面出现的复数名词。