English for Public Administration

公共管理教学与研究丛书

谈 谭 主编

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内容提要

《公共管理英语》源自编者的授课讲义,所选内容来自 经典的公共管理专业英语原著、最新的国外英文专业报刊或 专著,包括互联网。课文内容围绕公共管理的基本概念、基 本理论、核心功能、危机管理以及趋势与改革五个相关主题 展开,共五个单元十五篇课文,每篇课文后都有进一步阅读 的文献标题、供学生讨论的话题和拓展阅读材料。本教材是 一本适合公共管理高职专业、行政管理和政治学本科专业以 及其他相关专业学生学习的专业英语教材,目的是帮助学生 熟悉、掌握公共管理专业英语基础知识,提高学生阅读理解 专业英语文献的能力。



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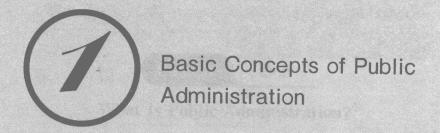
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It is the object of administrative study to discover, first, what government can properly and successfully do, and secondly, how it can do these proper things with the utmost possible efficiency and at the least possible cost either of money or of energy. (From: Wilson, Woodrow, "The Study of Administration," *Political Science Quarterly*, June 1887.)



Lesson One

What Is Public Administration?

Public administration, like many human endeavors, is difficult to define. Nonetheless, we all have a sense of what it is, though we may disagree profoundly about how it should be carried out. In part, this is because public administration covers such a vast amount of activity. Public administrative jobs range from the exploration of outer space to sweeping the streets. Some public administrators are highly educated professionals, who may be at the forefront of their fields of specialization; others possess few skills that differentiate them from the mass of the citizenry. Some public administrators make policies that have a nationwide impact and may benefit millions of people; others have virtually no responsibility for policymaking and simply carry out mundane governmental tasks like word processing, filing, and record keeping. Public administrators are doctors, lawyers, scientists, engineers, accountants, budgeters, policy

[⊕] Source: Excerpt from David H. Rosenbloom, et al. eds., Public Administration: Understanding Management, Politics, and Law in the Public Sector (5th Edition), New York: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., 2002, pp. 4 - 40.

analysts, personnel officers, managers, clerks, keyboarders, manual laborers, and individuals engaged in a host of other occupations and functions. But knowing what public administrators do does not resolve the problem of defining what public administration is.

At first glance, one might be inclined to ignore the problem of defining public administration. It was pointed out some time ago that any one-paragraph or even one-sentence definition of public administration is bound to prove temporarily mind-paralyzing. This is because public administration as a category is so abstract and varied that it can only be described in vague, general, amorphous, and somewhat competing terms. Yet some attention to definition is important. First, it is necessary to establish the general boundaries and to convey the major concerns of the discipline and practice of public administration. Second, the definition of public administration helps to place the field in a broader political, economic, and social context. Third, consideration of the leading definitions of public administration reveals that there are three distinct underlying approaches to the field. For years the tendency of scholars and practitioners to stress one or another of these approaches has promoted confusion, because each approach tends to emphasize different values, different organizational arrangements, different methods of developing information, and radically distinct views of the individual citizen.

One can find a wide variety of definitions of public administration, but the following are among the most serious and influential efforts to define the field.



- 1. "Public administration... is the action part of government, the means by which the purposes and goals of government are realized."
- 2. "Public administration as a field is mainly concerned with the means for implementing political values."
- 3. "... Public administration can be best identified with the executive branch of government."
- 4. "The process of public administration consists of the actions involved in effecting the intent or desire of a government. It is thus the continuously active, 'business' part of government, concerned with carrying out the law, as made by legislative bodies (or other authoritative agents) and interpreted by the courts, through the processes of organization and management."
- 5. Public administration: (a) is a cooperative group effort in a public setting; (b) covers all three branches executive, legislative, and judicial and their interrelationships; (c) has an important role in the formulation of public policy, and is thus part of the political process; (d) is different in significant ways from private administration; and (e) is closely associated with numerous private groups and individuals.

What conclusions can be drawn from the variety of definitions of public administration and their myriad nuances? One is that definitions of public administration are indeed mind-paralyzing. Another conclusion is that there is really no such subject as "public administration", but rather that public administration means different things to different observers and lacks a significant common theoretical or applied meaning.

However, this perspective has limited appeal because the problem is certainly not that there is no public administration — we not only know it's there, but also are often acutely aware of its contributions or shortcomings. That we cannot neatly define the substance and process of public administration is hardly an excuse for concluding that the phenomenon is nonexistent, especially at a time when almost every society is seeking to improve its public sector operations.

Ironically, another conclusion that can be drawn from the multiplicity of definitions is that, on the contrary, public administration is everywhere. Some have argued that there is no field or discipline of public administration *per se* because the study of public administration overlaps a number of other disciplines, including political science, sociology, economics, psychology, and business administration. Although this approach contains a great deal of truth, in practical terms it is unsatisfactory because it leaves us without the ability to analyze coherently a major aspect of contemporary public life — indeed, one that was clearly a central political development of the twentieth century, namely, the emergence of large and powerful governmental agencies.

We conclude that all the previous definitions are helpful. Public administration does involve activity, it is concerned with politics and policymaking, it tends to be concentrated in the executive branch of government, it does differ from private administration, and it is concerned with implementing the law. But we can be much more specific by offering a definition of our own: Public administration is the use of managerial,



political, and legal theories and processes to fulfill legislative, executive, and judicial mandates for the provision of governmental regulatory and service functions. There are several points that require further elaboration.

Constitution and Public Administration

In the United States, or any other Republics, the federal/ and state/provincial constitutions define environment of public administration and place constraints on it. First, constitutions fragment power and control over public administration. The separation of powers among legislative, executive and judicial branches in many countries places public administration under three "masters". It not only provides each with somewhat different authority over public branch administration but may also frustrate coordination among them. Basic political science tells us that chief executives, legislatures, and courts are responsive to different constituencies, political pressures, and time constraints. All three branches have legitimate interests in public administration. However, they often differ with regard to what they think agencies should do and how they ought to do it. Constitutional concerns are important in another way as well. They establish values in the public sector that frequently run counter to the values embodied in private management. Efficiency in government is often subordinated to political principles such as representativeness, accountability, and transparency. Efficiency is also trumped by legalistic considerations like due process. Further, in most of the public sector, there is no genuine equivalent to the profit motive, so central to private enterprise. It is the obligation of the public administrators to consider the public interest as a general guide for their actions. A central issue presented by public administration is assuring that public administrators represent and respond to the interests of the citizenry. The government should provide services and products that could not profitably be offered by private firms. Some of these services and products are referred to as public goods or quasi-public goods. $^{\odot}$

Regulation and Service

Although we often think of public administration in terms of providing services to the public, it is also true that public administrators are engaged in *regulation* of the public. Political conservatives opposed to governmental administration have long charged that the public service or the civil service is not a "service", but rather an authoritarian regulatory force used to place constraints on the public. In truth, one person's service often turns out to be another's constraint, and it is common to find regulation and service intertwined in governmental

Broadly speaking, public goods are goods, such as nuclear defense or lighthouses, that individuals cannot be excluded from enjoying, that are not exhausted or significantly diminished as more individuals use them, and for which individuals do not compete. Because their cost is usually too much and it is impossible to provide such goods to customers only, individuals lack the incentive to provide or purchase the goods. Much public sector activity is addressed to the production and maintenance of public goods and quasi-public goods, for example, roads, public welfare and public education.



programs. For instance, welfare programs undeniably provide a service, but at the same time they place constraints on the behavior of the recipients. Benefits have been denied to recipients who will not allow social workers to inspect their homes and to a mother who refused to identify her child's father. One could go down the list of government functions and find that service after service turns out also to be a constraint. Occupational licenses serve the public by assuring that doctors, hairdressers, and plumbers are competent, but they also regulate entry into those occupations. Driver's licensing and vehicle inspections promote highway safety, but they also regulate the use of the roads. Food and drug regulations certainly constrain producers and serve consumers. It is sometimes true that agencies with the word "service" in their title are the most directly engaged in regulation. The student of public administration should be continually cognizant of the fact that by exercising public power on behalf of the sovereign people, public servants are also frequently engaged in the business of placing constraints on the behavior of individuals or corporations. The acceptability and constitutionality of these constraints are often a matter to be decided by the courts, which means the bearing of legal process on public administration.

Managerial, Political, and Legal Approaches

Public administration involves a number of complex concerns and functions. Not surprisingly, therefore, as an intellectual discipline or body or theory, public administration