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PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND PUBLIC MANAGEMENT ORIGINAL TEXTBOOK SERIES

公共管理英文版教材系列
高等学校公共管理类双语教学推荐教材

Public Sector Economics

The Role of Government in the American Economy

公共经济学

政府在国家经济中的作用

[美] Randall G. Holcombe (林德尔·G·霍尔库姆) 著



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出版说明

21 世纪，我国的公共管理学呈现良好的发展势头，在教育界、理论界、实务界等社会各界的共同努力下，公共管理专业教育正逐渐与世界同步。为了全面深入地反映国外公共行政与公共管理的发展脉络，系统完整地介绍国外公共行政与公共管理专业的经典著作和最新研究成果，让国内读者直接阅读原汁原味的英文原著，提高教学研究和实际工作水平，中国人民大学出版社引进了公共管理英文版系列教材，影印出版。

本系列教材所选书目均系国外公共行政与公共管理领域最权威的专家所著的经典著作，是国外知名大学正在使用的权威教科书，综合反映了当前本领域的理论发展现状与实际操作水平。本系列教材注重理论与实践紧密结合，对于系统培养学生思考和解决实际问题的能力大有裨益。同时，所选教材行文流畅，简洁易懂，便于阅读。

为了使读者对每本教材有一个整体了解，把握该书在公共行政与公共管理学中的地位与价值，我们特别邀请专家对每本书撰写了导读，并把目录翻译成中文，供读者阅读时参考。同时，中国人民大学出版社将于近期陆续推出本系列教材的中文版。

需要特别提及的是，我们出版这套系列教材，并不表明我们赞成这些著作中的每一个观点。这些著作都基于西方特定的行政生态，是西方公共行政与公共管理理论与实践发展的产物，读者在阅读时不应忘记“取其精华，去其糟粕”的原则。

当前，我国的高等教育改革取得了突破性的进展，其中一项切实的举措即是规定有条件的高校实行双语教学，教育部对此也有具体的要求。贯彻这一精神，满足我国高等教育国际化发展的需要，提高学生阅读专业英语资料的能力，也是我们影印出版这套公共管理教材的初衷。

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导 读

自第二次世界大战以来，各国的经济发展表明，尽管市场经济的概念已经成为人们的共识，也得到了较之以往世代前所未有的发展，市场经济无论从广度上还是从深度上，已经全面渗透到人类生活（包括经济生活、文化生活乃至政治生活）的各个方面，但以政府为主的公共部门的经济活动却有增无减，无论是从其绝对数量上看，还是从其占整个经济活动的比重上看，公共部门经济活动的分量都在增加。

经济学应该把人类的各种经济活动均置于其研究范围内，公共部门的经济活动当然也不例外。始自近代西方古典经济学的各经济学派，长久以来都没有把公共部门的经济活动纳入自己的研究视野。当然，我们可以说还有财政学。但是，财政学也没有被很好地纳入整个经济学的研究范畴和体系。在这方面，理论同样远远落后于社会实践。公共部门的经济活动已经远非传统意义上的财政学所能涵盖。能否建立起公共经济学的理论体系，以及这一理论体系如何与现有的经济学理论体系相衔接，将是当代经济学领域值得探讨的重要课题。或许可以认为，本书在这方面具有一定的尝试和探索意义。

本书的副标题是“政府在国家经济中的作用”。可以想见，作者在书中所使用的实例基本上是美国的情况。但是，其中的经济分析以及解决方案，对于各国来说是具有共性的。诸如对政府经济活动分析的原理、实证分析和规范分析的方法、对平等与效率的分析、针对外部性问题提出的碳排放交易的讨论、二次分配的原理等，对于讨论我国的相关实践同样具有很好的参考价值。

本书以平直清晰的文风，为读者阐述了公共部门经济学的基本原理，其丰富的实际案例可以帮助读者很好地理解一些公共经济学原理如何有效地得到应用。书中运用的一些数学图表都不复杂、不难理解，而且有助于读者的专业素质训练。本书可以作为公共管理专业或者经济学专业的基础教材，也可以作为其他专业学生或者公共管理实践者自学相关课程的参考书。

顾建光

于上海交通大学

2012年2月5日

PREFACE

The subject matter of public sector economics evolved a great deal in the last half of the twentieth century. In the first half of the century, when government activity fell more within limited and well-defined boundaries, public sector economics was primarily the study of taxation and went by the more limiting name of public finance. As government grew, public finance economists became increasingly interested in public expenditures, both from the standpoint of analyzing the actual expenditures of governments and from the standpoint of developing a theory of public expenditures. Public expenditure theory provides a rationale for government activity and can help guide policy makers toward the design of more effective public programs. In the decades following World War II, public sector economics was further extended to examine the public sector decision-making process to understand how resources are allocated within political institutions. Public policy, after all, is not the product of policy experts but rather is the result of democratic decision making. A complete understanding of the public sector must incorporate an understanding of those political institutions that actually produce public policy.

This book attempts to integrate the study of the various aspects of public sector economics by viewing all the government's activities as a product of the democratic decision-making process. This theme manifests itself throughout the book. For example, the tax system is examined not only in terms of traditional equity and efficiency criteria but also as a product of a democratic decision-making process. The analysis of public expenditures is also developed within the context of the public sector decision-making process that produces expenditure programs. Likewise, government regulations and intergovernmental relations are viewed as products of collective decision making and are analyzed the same way. To provide a foundation for this approach, the book contains three chapters devoted specifically to an economic analysis of political institutions. Coverage of these chapters is not necessary to understand the rest of the book, but for those who are interested in studying the allocation of resources through political markets in the public sector in the same way that economics analyzes the private sector, these chapters should prove helpful. A distinguishing feature of this book is that it analyzes political institutions in much more detail than do most books in this field and therefore creates a closer tie between economic analysis and public policy.

The unifying theme of this text—that government activity is the result of a democratic decision-making process—is significant for two reasons. First, one's understanding of the public sector will be incomplete unless one understands the process by which democratic decision making has created the existing public sector institutions. Second, unlike the invisible hand of the market that is the result of human action but not of human design, the public sector of the economy is the result of conscious human design, and in a democratic government every voter plays a part in the process. The better the process is understood by citizens and by public sector decision makers, the more likely we are to design public sector institutions that behave as we intended. By analyzing government revenues and expenditures in the American economy as a product of the democratic decision-making process, the many aspects of public sector economics can be presented as a unified body of knowledge rather than as a collection of different models of the public sector.

TEACHING FROM THIS BOOK

There is more material in this book than many public sector economics courses would cover in one term. Although I would not want to discourage anyone from moving at a pace quick enough to cover the entire book, in my own courses I typically cover certain areas more intensively at the expense of skimming over (or leaving out) some material. The chapters follow in a logical order, but at the same time there is no reason they could not be taught in a different order, and there is no reason not to skip some chapters to emphasize others.

For instructors who want to emphasize a public choice approach to the study of the public sector, Chapters 7 through 9 offer the most complete coverage of public choice material available in a textbook on public sector economics, but the book is written so that those interested in teaching a more traditional public finance course can omit these chapters with no problem. The chapters are ordered to cover the more theoretical material first, including public expenditure theory and the theory of taxation, and then Part V of the book uses that theoretical foundation to analyze actual government expenditure programs. However, there is no reason not to cover the material in Part V right after the material in Part II, for those who want to emphasize public expenditures, or for teachers who have a preference for covering public expenditure programs directly after covering public expenditure theory.

Some people like to teach a course by closely following the outline of a textbook, while others like to rearrange material to better suit their course needs. I have tried to organize the book to facilitate changing the order of the chapters, and to facilitate omitting chapters that are of less interest to some users, as much as is feasible. I view a textbook as raw material to use as input into designing a course and invite those who use the book to rearrange the material to best suit their desires.

STUDYING FROM THIS BOOK

My overriding goal in writing for students has been to unify the material into a single body of knowledge rather than to present it as a collection of theories. I have tried to do this in several ways. First, I try to keep the exposition as simple as possible so as not to overwhelm the reader with a complicated technical explanation of concepts when a simple explanation can convey the ideas just as well. Second, I explicitly note related concepts at the time a concept is introduced, which means sometimes referring ahead to material not yet covered and at other times referring back to material previously presented. Third, the unifying principle of the public sector as a product of a democratic decision-making process underlies all the material.

The conclusions to each chapter provide summaries of important points in the chapter. These conclusions not only review the key material in the chapter but also help reinforce how that material is related to material in other chapters. The questions at the ends of the chapters are also intended as an aid to review. Sometimes the questions ask the reader to restate an argument made in the chapter, and other times they ask the reader's opinion on a subject for which there are arguments on both sides. Sometimes a question is used to draw together ideas that at first may not appear to be related. As such, some questions have specific "correct" answers, while others are meant to stimulate thought rather than suggest one right answer.

The appendix to Chapter 1 reviews indifference curve analysis, which traditionally is taught as a part of microeconomic theory. The appendix provides enough information to get a student started, but someone wanting a more thorough understanding should consult a microeconomic theory textbook. Indifference curve analysis is used heavily in Chapter 2 and also in Parts IV and V. When it is practical to do so, points that are made using indifference curve analysis are also made using other tools of analysis, such as supply and demand diagrams, both to facilitate understanding and to help out students who may not be familiar with these tools of microeconomics.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have taught public sector economics for three decades and have learned a great deal from colleagues and from students over the years. I am grateful to all of them and am afraid that any attempt to list them at this point would inevitably leave out more people deserving of my thanks than it would include, so with some misgivings I will forego trying. I am also grateful to a number of people at Prentice Hall for helping to bring this project to fruition, including Rod Banister, who signed me up to do the book; David Alexander, Executive Editor; Jon Axelrod, Acquisitions Editor and Katy Rank, who cheerfully and efficiently kept the flow of materials (including chapters, reviews, proofs, and more) organized as the book moved toward publication.

A number of reviewers have read all or parts of the manuscript and offered helpful and insightful comments. They deserve a special mention of thanks. They are Rebecca Campbell (Mississippi State University), Steven Craig (University of Houston), David Gay (University of Arkansas), Harry Greenbaum (University of North Dakota), Mehdi Haririan (Bloomsburg University), Wei-Te Hsieh (California State University, Los Angeles), Joshua Lewer (West Texas A&M University), Steve Lile (Western Kentucky University), Magnus Lofstrom (University of Texas at Dallas), Paul Rothstein (Washington University, St. Louis), Russell Sobel (West Virginia University), and John Spry (Ball State University).

My largest debt is to my family. My wife, Lora, is also an economist and has been a constant source of support, and I could not have written this book without her. My three children had to make occasional sacrifices when my working into the evenings or on weekends kept me from spending time with them. The future direction of the public policies analyzed in this book rest with them and their generation (including the students who will use this book), and so I dedicate this book to my children, Ross, Mark, and Connor.

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