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FREDERICK S. LANE, Editor

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FOURTH EDITION

Frederick S. Lane



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To

Madeleine

PREFACE

ABOUT THE BOOK

There are 19 million public employees in some 80,000 units of government in the United States today. Governmental expenditures add up to about one-third of the nation's total of goods and services. It is hard to imagine any aspect of contemporary life in which government and especially its administrative agencies are not involved. Public bureaucracies deliver most of our educational and health care services, fight fires and crime, protect the air and water, and regulate business practices—just to list a few public functions. No matter what the contemporary challenge—AIDS, drugs, homelessness, political change in Eastern Europe—public administration is central to the response.

As important as public bureaucracies are, Americans have shown concern about the bureaucratization of modern society. Many claim that government is too big and tries to do too much, that bureaucracy only means red tape and inefficiency, and that public administrators are too powerful in American life. Yet there are others who claim that government needs to provide even more services, especially for the poor and disadvantaged; these Americans often view public organizations more favorably, although they are still interested in making government work better. These concerns are as current as today's newspaper headlines or TV news stories. And the background for much of this discussion can be found in this volume, *Current Issues in Public Administration*.

This fourth edition of *Current Issues* has five main objectives:

1. To *introduce and survey* the workings of public organizations and public administrators for students without any previous coursework in this field.
2. To present articles that are *interesting, readable, and thought-*

- provoking*, involving and challenging the student to learn how these bureaucracies actually work.
3. To provide a *comprehensive* set of readings, blending material about the political environment in which public agencies operate, the organizational and managerial aspects of work inside bureaucracies, and analytical approaches to improving public administration.
 4. To focus on *state, local, and intergovernmental aspects* of modern public administration in addition to the *national* scene, even when it is the federal government that sets the tone for much public administrative activity in our country.
 5. In all this, to emphasize the *current dimensions* of the many important issues facing governmental administrative agencies in the 1990s.

All of these have been carefully placed into the thirty-two articles in this volume. In terms of student reading, this means two or three articles a week during a typical academic term.

NEW TO THE FOURTH EDITION

Looking forward to the decade of the 1990s, twenty-two of the thirty-two articles included here are new to this edition of *Current Issues in Public Administration*. To begin with, a new chapter has been added dealing with the relations between business and public administration. While this subject has been treated in previous editions, a separate chapter brings greater attention and depth to a topic of increasing significance. Two topics receive article-length treatment for the first time in this edition: relations between the bureaucracy and the media, and ethics in public administration. The article on computers and technology takes a unique approach, projecting the impact of these dramatic changes on management in the future.

Two articles appearing in the previous edition have been revised and updated: Peter M. Blau and Marshall W. Meyer, "Why Study Bureaucracy?" and Louis Fisher, "Congress as Administrator." James Q. Wilson's "The Rise of the Bureaucratic State" appeared in both the first and second editions of *Current Issues*. It returns here by popular demand.

There is a quiet crisis in public administration today. It has to do with the people attracted to and serving in the administrative branch of government. For this reason, Chapter 11, "The Future of Public Administration," is devoted completely to the report of the National Commission on the Public Service, chaired by Paul Volker, former chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In preparing the fourth edition of this collection, we sought the advice of three faculty members who regularly teach the introductory course in public administration: David L. Dillman, Abilene Christian University; Karen

R. Mangelsdorf, Florida State University; and Donald B. Rosenthal, State University of New York at Buffalo. Their many suggestions helped to improve this new edition. The work of Don Reisman, Heidi Schmidt, Abigail Scherer, and others at St. Martin's Press as well as Linda Daly and the staff of Editing, Design, & Production, Inc. is also greatly appreciated.

For the fourth edition of *Current Issues*, several libraries have provided important assistance. The library staff at Bernard M. Baruch College, City University of New York, continues to provide outstanding support, and their work is hereby gratefully acknowledged. Other helpful academic libraries for this edition included those at Hunter College, City University of New York; Framingham State College, Framingham, Massachusetts; and Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Worcester, Massachusetts.

In this and so many other things, I often chat with three very special college students: Cary Lane, Rand Lane, and J. Peter Adler. They make me clarify concepts and explanations, especially because they don't "have to" listen.

For her caring and support and for her example, this volume is dedicated to an exceptional public executive, my wife, Madeleine Wing Adler.

INTRODUCTION

Public administration is an ancient activity common to just about all countries and all levels of government.¹ But public administrative traditions, structures, and processes vary widely from one country to another. This volume concerns public administration in the United States.

The term *public administration* combines two words. *Administration* is easier to define: organizing and maintaining human and fiscal resources to attain a group's goals. The group might be a small social club or a large automobile manufacturer. It might also be your local police department or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Public is harder to define. Public has to do with people, a community, or a society. Most of us went to public schools. We play in public parks. Your state's governor and others hold public office.

Public has another meaning. It also suggests that public administration is open to general knowledge, scrutiny, and review.

A variety of other terms are closely associated with the field of public administration. Higher education for public administration takes place in a wide range of settings: political science departments; schools and programs called public affairs, public policy, public service, government, or public administration; and schools of business and public administration, where public administration is sometimes called public management. Closely related courses can also be found in programs dealing with criminal justice, health care, social work, education, and recreation administration. All of these terms and activities are closely related. The traditional, most widely accepted, and most meaningful label, however, remains *public administration*.

THE PUBLIC POLICY SYSTEM

For the introductory student, it is particularly important to understand the relationships between government, politics, public policy, and public administration. To begin with, government is the mechanism that a human community employs to protect its members from internal and external

threats and to establish the policies that will provide the most favorable conditions for pursuing individuals' lives.² Government is the formal mechanism created and used to guide a society. Democratic government is influenced and, in the end, controlled by the participants in the political system.

As indicated in the foregoing definition, public policies are the results of government. The nation's political system is also its policy system. Social and economic factors are important to policy-making but influence public policies only as they affect the political system.

Figure 1 depicts the national policy system, or policy "octagon." There are eight principal participants in the national policy system:

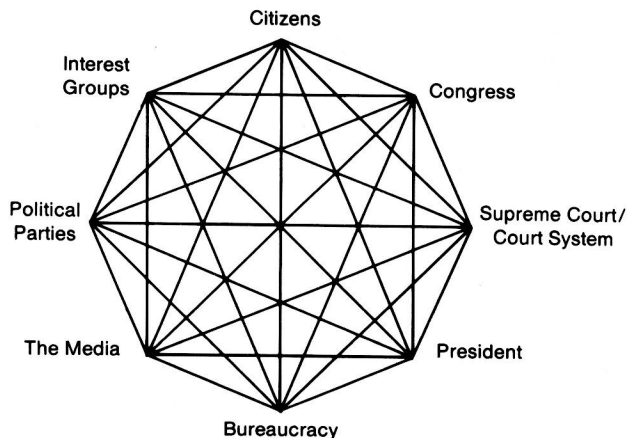
1. citizens
2. Congress
3. the president
4. the U.S. Supreme Court and federal court system
5. the federal bureaucracy
6. interest groups
7. political parties
8. the media

The lines in Figure 1 represent the relationships and interactions among the actors in the policy system. Depending on the issues at any particular time and the specific actors involved, these relations range from direct and continuous and intense to indirect and intermittent.

In the United States, state and local levels of government have their own policy systems, which are connected through our federal form of government. Federalism and intergovernmental relations raise some of the most important current issues regarding the formulation of public policy and its implementation.

Governmental administrative agencies make up the overwhelming ma-

Figure 1. The National Policy System



Adapted from a pictorial scheme developed by the late Professor Roscoe C. Martin.

jority of the apparatus of government. These public agencies are often called bureaucracies. The field of public administration is the study of the activities and impact of governmental bureaucracies.

THE STAGES OF THE PUBLIC POLICY-MAKING PROCESS

We think of public policy as occurring in five stages:

1. policy initiation
2. policy formulation, articulation, and consideration
3. policy legitimation (formal approval)
4. policy implementation
5. policy evaluation

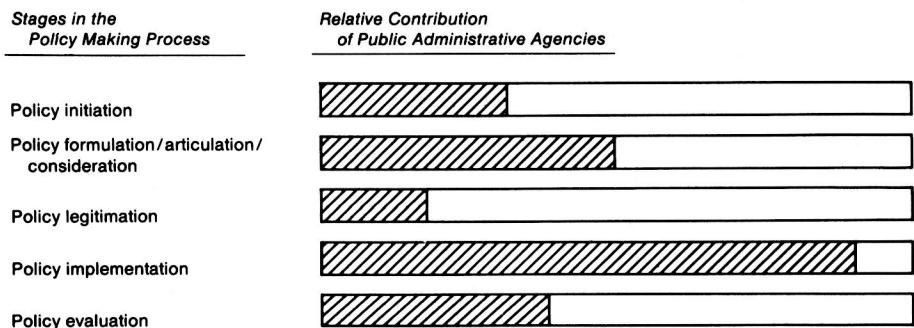
These stages are shown in Figure 2.

Public bureaucracies are most often associated with policy implementation. This has a long tradition in the public administration literature. A century ago, in 1887, a then young scholar, Woodrow Wilson, published an essay titled “The Study of Administration.”³ In this article, Wilson advocated a distinction between the first three stages of the policy-making process—initiation, formulation, and legitimation—and the fourth stage, implementation. This is sometimes referred to as the policy-administration dichotomy.

Wilson’s essay came out of a legally oriented tradition in political science, where elected legislators, “lawmakers,” were expected to make public policy, and administrators were expected to carry out these policies. Wilson’s essay also appeared after a century of the “spoils” approach to governmental employment, and Wilson sought to increase the competence and ethics expected of public employees.

From the beginning, Wilson’s dichotomy greatly oversimplified reality. And if it was ever true, the policy-administration dichotomy is certainly not valid today. As shown in Figure 2, public administrative agencies are engaged in all stages of public policy-making, in addition to implementation. Some examples:

Figure 2. Public Administration in Terms of the Public Policy-making Process



Public executives often initiate ideas for new or improved public policies. Public administrators regularly interact with their agency's clients and other interested groups as well as with legislative committees, their members, and their staffs in the formulation of new public policies. Public executives testify regularly at legislative hearings considering proposals for different public policies. And administrative agencies increasingly evaluate the effectiveness and impact of public policies by surveying citizens and otherwise employing systematic research methods.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND POWER

Much is said these days about the power of public bureaucracies. It is a topic we will begin to address in the first chapter and continue to consider throughout this book. The basic reason public administrative agencies have power is because of their expertise—to build dams, fight fires, even just process the paperwork so that an elderly relative receives a social security check on time. But power and public administration are far more complicated than that.

How can we understand why bureaucracies have power within the policy system and even why some bureaucracies are more powerful than others? To begin with, the power of public agencies derives from two main sources: the influence of the agency's clients and constituents and the character and priority of the agency's activities.⁴ If an agency's clients are organized and powerful—business groups, for example—the agency has relatively greater authority and influence. In addition, if a public agency is concerned with broad-based matters of importance—like national defense or economic development—it is more powerful. The relative importance of an agency can change over time, as in the example of public policy toward the energy issue and the federal Department of Energy.

There are other sources of agency power as well. The technical nature of the organization's work (if its activities are hard for the average person to understand, much less perform) and the agency's record of accomplishment also influence an agency's power.

The quality of organizational leadership may also be important. The skill, style, experience, personality, and ability to communicate of the top agency executives are naturally related to the power of an agency.

Similarly, organizational morale and commitment by employees can influence an agency's power. There is a big difference between an organization where everyone leaves at 5:00 P.M. and another organization where staff members remain after 5:00 if there is work to be completed, even if they are not paid to do so.

Finally, an agency's sheer size also affects its power. The number of employees, size of budget, scope of functions, and even geographic distribution of an agency's activities often influence an organization's power in the policy system.

All of these factors influence the power of a public agency—the power available in the policy-making process.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS BOOK

This volume has been divided into four parts, generally parallel to many of the textbooks in this field. Part One provides reasons for the study of public administration and distinguishes administration in government from administration in business.

Parts Two and Three are the core of this book. Part Two focuses on the political environment in which public bureaucracies operate. It treats the interaction of administrative agencies with the other policy-making participants. At the end of Part Two, special attention is given to the fit between bureaucracy and democracy in modern America.

If Part Two stresses the external relations of public agencies, Part Three turns attention to the internal, organizational dynamics basic to understanding bureaucracies and making them work. Part of this emphasis is on the use of resources—people, money, and technology—in improving the management of the public's business at all levels of American government.

Part Four examines two key topics in the future of public administration. The first focuses on the relations between business and government, including the relative size of the public and for-profit sectors as well as government regulation of business practices. The second topic treats in depth the need for revitalizing the public service in the 1990s and beyond.

In the last decade, the United States celebrated two important landmarks in the development of public administration. In 1987 the nation commemorated the centennial of the publication of Woodrow Wilson's article, from which most scholars in this field date the formal study of public administration in this country. In 1989 we celebrated the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution, the charter for our form of government. This fourth edition of *Current Issues in Public Administration* is designed to provide a solid background for understanding American public administration as we enter the second century of its systematic study and our third century as a nation. It is a time of dynamic change in both theory and practice.

Notes

1. See Frederick C. Mosher, "Public Administration," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed. (1974).
2. Adapted from Max J. Skidmore and Marshall Carter Tripp, *American Government: A Brief Introduction*, 4th ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), p. 1.
3. Woodrow Wilson, "The Study of Administration," *Political Science Quarterly* 2 (June 1887), pp. 197–222.
4. This section is drawn from Francis E. Rourke, *Bureaucracy, Politics, and Public Policy* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969).

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PART ONE

Introduction to Public Administration

