

**PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
OF RECREATIONAL
SERVICES**

**GEORGE HJELTE
JAY S. SHIVERS**

SECOND EDITION

Public Administration of Recreational Services

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Ratio sine exercitatione inutilis, exercitatio sine ratione caeca est.

Foreword

At this time of rapidly changing social priorities, those of us engaged in the administration of recreational services and facilities are faced with the need for updated information on the technologies and strategies available for dealing effectively with the social and administrative problems that confront us in the performance of our mission. This publication combines the wisdom and expertise of both town and gown by bringing together the collective knowledge of an eminent scholar and a nationally recognized public administrator. The perspective reflected in this text melds the pragmatism of the public arena and the creative thought process of academia.

This combination gives us a creative approach to resolving the problems of this specialized area of public administration. The administrative concepts and techniques advanced in this publication are leavened by the interaction of the separate perspectives of the authors. I commend the text to both the student and the veteran administrator for use as a resource in the field of the administration of public recreational services.

JOSEPH W. HALPER
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G. H.
J. S. S.

Preface

This book is intended primarily as a text for use in universities offering professional courses for the preparation of recreational service personnel at the administrative level. Although public recreational services are administered by jurisdictions other than local governments, and some recreational services are offered by private and commercial agencies, courses for the professional education of recreationists are related to the field of municipal administration. Recreational services administered by federal and state governments, which are expanding rapidly, are a subject of special study that should be treated independently.

The text deals with administrative techniques and practices pertaining to public administration of recreational services. Therefore, it covers every facet of public administration as it concerns recreational service including organization, operation, planning, development, and managerial procedures. It describes the basic elements of the public field; liability factors and legal framework of operation; community structure; political practices; social implications and typical municipal setting of the recreational service agency. An investigation of other social agencies which may have direct or indirect influence on the amount and degree of recreational services offered within the community is included. The text treats the internal structure of a public recreational service department and the administrative functions that are based on daily operations of the agency. Emphasis is placed on fundamental principles and practices of administering public recreational service departments.

The work is oriented to a consideration of administration from the standpoint of departmental problems. Departmental administration derives its form largely from uniform practice within the municipal government as a whole and, to a large extent, is governed by state and municipal

laws. Problems of administering the particular program and facilities of the unit center or other public recreational place are not included except as they illustrate or are related to universal problems involved in the administration of all types of public recreational sites.

The book is organized into six major parts: Administrative Foundations—dealing with legal establishment and policy making; External Influences on Administration—dealing with other than municipally based agencies, liability, and public relations; Organizational Functions—dealing with organizational conditions, line and staff arrangements, computer technology, systems management, and office management; Personnel Administration—dealing with recruitment, examination, probation, deployment, management-employee relations, employee organizations, management by objectives, and supervision; Fiscal Administration—dealing with financial management, budgeting, budget formats; Administrative Responsibility—dealing with public planning, maintenance management, program administration, and evaluation.

The advantage of this organization is logical progression. The sequence of chapters is in the exact order which might arise in the establishment, development, and operation of a public agency providing community recreational services. There have also been included the impinging forces which create or alleviate problems for the operation of the agency. The reader is introduced to each topic by definition and narrative discussion. Each chapter, although it may stand alone and be perused independently of the others, is authoritative in itself and has been placed to supplement and complement preceding chapters. Thus, the reader is able to follow the complete development and day-to-day administrative practices of the public recreational service system from its inception to operational problems and methods for their resolution.

A secondary purpose of this book is to discuss problems that are the concern of administrators and lay board members or commissioners. Principles that have been formulated and that have borne the test of experience have been set forth. On some unresolved questions, dogmatic and premature generalizations have been avoided. Sound administrative practice is not subordinated to the uniqueness of recreational service, but the management of the department and its professional and auxiliary personnel illustrates how scientific principles may be applied so that maximum effectiveness and comprehensive services ensue. Basically, the book approaches the science and art of public administration in recreational service with logic and sound data to supply concepts that will be of use to administrators every day on the job.

New trends in the organization of public recreational services, as presented here, conform with the best thinking in municipal government. Lines of authority and responsibility are clearly set forth for large or small legal units. Legal and other provisions and suggestions are made

for a rich cooperative program including municipal, county, special district, and school units as well as private and quasi-public groups.

The term *recreational service* has been deliberately used in the title and throughout the text. This use denotes our conviction and acceptance of the functional fact that municipal agencies of whatever designation which supply or provide for the public's demand for recreational programming and places are performing recreational service. Since functional names are usually preferred in designating departments of governmental services, it may well develop that *recreational services administration* will comprehend all that is now connoted by other existing titles.

Although this text is based upon previously published works by both of us (*The Administration of Public Recreation*, Macmillan, 1940; *Public Administration of Park and Recreational Services*, Macmillan, 1963; *Public Administration of Recreational Services*, Lea & Febiger, 1972) it contains both updated material as well as many new chapters not offered before. Moreover, it provides the latest administrative techniques as well as illustrative case studies. The work combines the pragmatic outlook of the agency executive and the theoretical orientation of a university professor. The synthesis of these viewpoints and analyses has resulted in a more complete and useful text that tells how to administer. It offers crystalized and acceptable methods for handling current operational problems and for resolving them successfully. The text should meet a vital need of practicing administrators and provide definite information for teachers of higher education.

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PART I

ADMINISTRATIVE FOUNDATIONS

CHAPTER 1

Introduction to Public Administration of Recreational Services

This book is directed to the processes of administration which are relevant to the public sector of society. Of necessity, all forms of human association require some aspect of administration. Whenever there is a need to mobilize material, fiscal, natural, or human resources in order to accomplish some set purpose, administrative procedures are called into play. Administration is certainly a cooperative undertaking, the net result of which is to gain a specific objective. While the goals of organizations vary considerably, depending upon their differing environments, ideology, confronted problems, and assumed risks undergone in consequence of mandated functions, there are techniques held in common. The precise form of administration differs because of local conditions and the nature of the organization in question.

SCOPE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Public administration is understood to denote all governmental activities concerned with operation as distinct from adjudication or legislation. However, with the complexities and interrelationships of government on every level, actual administrative functions overlap the purely judicial and legislative areas. Typically, all administration is similar whether carried out in the public or private sector of society. Public administration is restricted only by the government under which it functions. Therefore, the public administrator is vitally concerned with what may be achieved within the legislative enactments or policy statements passed by those in authority, and by the available resources. The chief purposes of administration are cooperation, coordination and con-

trol. It has been closely identified with management and, to a great extent, relies on devising and keeping records.

Performance of public administration is implicit in the state of the art. All efforts to establish a set of generally applicable principles to all situations have thus far failed. Therefore, any claim that public administration is a science is bound to be received with some skepticism. Nevertheless, students of administration must continue to attempt to apply scientific principles to administration. In an increasingly complex society, the only logical administrative approach to problems is the scientific method. Although scientific approaches and certain technical devices, may be utilized within public administration processes, administration, in either the public or private sector, is not as yet a science. A great body of knowledge concerning the field has been accumulated through research into the way outcomes are generated, why interactions between people are significant to administration, and the purely mechanical aspects of regulating material goods (storage, distribution, allocation, purchase) for efficiency, economy, and speed. But public administration is not susceptible to science in the true sense of the word. The art of administration confirms that, while a tremendous portion of the work may be learned, transmitted, recorded, and filed, crucial decisions are based neither on scientifically acquired research nor on obvious fact. Much decision making critical to public administration at the policy level is still romanticized or made "by feel." The individual administrator's experience, knowledge, and sensitivity to situations and prevailing conditions remain the critical factors from which value judgments and systems are derived and defined. The last best opinion, regardless of its basis, is still opinion.

Scientific management principles may be successfully utilized in organizations, but in recent years people have come to be recognized as being quite different from the machines or materials they operate or manipulate. Scientific managers view administration as essentially devoted to technical features of division of labor and specialization. However, concentration on mechanical features to the exclusion of the human factors involved has come to be regarded as a primary error. Technology can be applied wherever repetitive movements are required or where facts alone constitute the basis for making decisions. However, when the human element is a component of the work situation, another important facet must be understood. Men are not susceptible to manipulation as are inert items; they are much too unpredictable, even on the basis of probability tests and surveys, to be subjects for precise calculations, for they are subject to whims, fancies, subjective influences, and varying beliefs. Their actions or behaviors are not completely predictable nor reliable. Thus, from scientific management practices has come a realization that administration is not a science when it deals with people.

The unalterable view of administration as a pure science has not gained wide acceptance. Even the technological advances made in computer processing, data analysis, cybernetics, and automation have not convinced students of this field that administration is, can be, or should be a science. Certainly, scientific principles should be applied wherever they are feasible, but this does not make a discipline a science. Individuals who stubbornly revel in this approach rarely can visualize the social contexts of which economic and technical units comprise but one segment. People are seen as pinpoints on impersonal organizational charts or diagrams. Writing about those whose attitude reflects this concept, Robert Tannenbaum states that:

While the effective manager must, without question, be able to understand and deal with economic and technological phenomena, he must *also* be able to deal with interpersonal phenomena. Managerial problems involving motivation, morale, teamwork, creativity, introduction of change, demand creation, public relations, etc., can adequately be solved only through a keen understanding of human-relations variables and an ability to behave appropriately in light of such understanding.¹

Scientific principles and practices greatly aid public administration in organizational analysis and efficient production, but the field itself relies on the art of administration because interpersonal relations are integral throughout its processes. Cooperative or collective endeavor is the touchstone of administration. Public administration encompasses every area and enterprise under the aegis of public policy and should not be thought of as mere policy execution. In the most restricted view this is precisely the outcome of administrative effort. Administrative adroitness is found in the enactment of legislation, the adjudication of legislation, and the shaping or molding of value judgments that become policy statements.

Public administration is often thought to be concerned with the organization, policy execution, and management of personnel, finances, and other practices fundamental to the effective operation of agencies charged with carrying out the specific functions of government. It is all of this, but, by asserting its cooperative significance in recognizing that human behavior of a collective type is vital to it, its scope becomes much broader. Among its characteristics are the necessity for cooperative group effort for or toward some goal; an overt influence on the formulation of policy and, therefore, on politics; its involvement in all aspects of government whether of the legislative, judicial, or executive branches;

¹Robert Tannenbaum, "Some Current Issues in Human Relations," *California Management Review*, II, No. 1 (Fall, 1959), p. 53. Originally published by the University of California Press; reprinted by permission of The Regents of the University of California.

and, its impact on private persons and organizations by providing a variety of services.

NATURE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Administration is formed of three components: (1) the determination of policy, because policy is essential to direct the activities of the institution or agency; (2) the policies must be translated into substantive operations to achieve the prescribed ends; and (3) the operations must be put into action. Therefore, administrative achievement comes from sound interpersonal relationships: first, between the administrator and those who set the policy; second, between the administrator and his chief subordinates in managing, motivating, leading, and supervising the personnel who will execute the policy of the agency; and third, among the operating personnel, because production (whether of goods or services) depends on cooperative relations.

Although there is a blurring of distinct spheres of interest between policy making and administration, owing to the strong influence exerted on policy makers by the administrator and the realities of administration, a discrete function may be clearly observed. Administration is always subordinate to policy. Despite the reliance of executives, political leaders, and legislators on administrators to supply them with relevant facts on which to base decisions (thereby permitting the administrator to subtly influence policy decisions), policy making is not a responsibility of administration. Execution of policy by operable means to reach desired ends is the essence of administration.

The primary purpose of public administration is to manage the public's business in the most competent manner possible. Administration is a highly complex process which has evolved gradually with the maturation of society and is a direct outgrowth of the division of labor, requiring special learning and skills. The administrator requires an ever-expanding body of knowledge, both formal and informal, to equip himself for competency. Whether the process of administration is a science or an art, the administrative practitioner will have a much restricted role within the social milieu unless he brings a scientific orientation to his work.

A science is fundamentally defined in terms of universally applicable principles having precise and demonstrable consequences on application. Outstanding authorities are attempting to determine basic principles for public administration.

CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Public administration in any society is a reflection of that society's complexity. As the social order becomes more complicated, the range