

Week 3

Recap: What were the problems with the Plunkitt approach to governance? Administrative decisions made for personal financial gain at public expense (corruption), staffing decisions made to reward political supporters rather than ability to achieve public objectives (nepotism and cronyism), distribution of services directed toward rewarding political support (favoritism), larger public problems not addressed (ineffectiveness): administrative process (delivering services, managing government) subordinate to political process (getting elected, connecting to voters). We want administration to be subordinate to politics (voice of the people, essence of democracy) but not to “politics,” which is concerned with perpetuating the terms of current office holders. Current alternative is customer service orientation, but that is not the only response and there have been others. **The Goal:** responsiveness without corruption, efficiency without unresponsiveness; reconciling bureaucracy and democracy.

Lecture Preface for Chapter 2: This chapter is about a century of efforts to define what public administration is and who practices it. Is public administration different from politics? Is public administration different from the management? These are really about the focus (or subject of study) of public administration. That debate is now complicated by the fact that all levels of government privatize some services, but continue to monitor them because they are still public services, and because all levels of government have devolved responsibility to nonprofit agencies, which are doing public work but not as government agencies. This is really about the locus, or institutional location, of public administration. The first debate is the most explosive, for it boils down to this: what are we teaching you in public administration that you could not get in either political science or business? Political science will teach you all about democracy, how to make government responsive to various political constituencies, and how policies are made by elected officials. Business will teach you how to manage organizations and get things done. If those crucial subjects (democracy and management) are taught elsewhere, rather than taking courses in public administration, why not get a joint degree in political science and business? That is, is there something distinctive about public administration that does not derive from either political science or business? Why is it necessary to study the administration of public organizations? What makes the management of a public organization different from the management of a private organization, and what makes the bureaucrat different from the elected official? To help clarify this problem, take a look at the excerpt on page 38 from the article by Luther Gulick on Roosevelt and Social Security. To what extent do you see how the public administration perspective differs from the political perspective? Is it enough to leave to politicians the sort of political sensitivity Gulick attributes Roosevelt? What happens if bureaucrats become too politically sensitive?

Reconciling bureaucracy and democracy is an enormous task and public administration is not the first or only field of inquiry to deal with either of these components of the problem. Indeed, public administration borrows heavily from other fields to build its approach to the problem, and this raises several important questions about what public administration actually is. As you read through the chapter, keep the following questions in mind: (1) What is the relationship between public administration and political science and business administration? Is public administration separate from either of these? What does it have in common with them? Given those commonalities, does PA have its own distinct identity? Or is PA just a combination of political

science and business administration, without any distinctive substance of its own? (2) What is the relationship between the theory and practice of public administration? Should it be devoted to helping practicing managers deal with everyday service delivery, or should be focus on larger theoretical questions? (3) What are the focus (subject matter) and locus (institutional setting) of PA? Is there a set of PA principles that belong only to public organizations? Are there nongovernmental organizations that are pursuing public objectives, and, if so, what does that mean for PA as a field? Answers to these questions change over time, which means that it is difficult to say precisely what PA is and what institutions it describes.

Here, too, imagine how far the debate has come from Plunkitt's time. For Plunkitt, the principles of good "administration," in so far as there was such a thing, came directly from politics, and more specifically from the practical business of providing attention to voters so that they would support the machine at election time. It was a very personal activity, and hardly something you could learn from studying business or political science. Plunkitt learned how to deal with people in the neighborhood, gathering a following and understanding their basic needs. To what extent does modern public administration do the same thing, or something very different?

How do the administrators in the ICMA-TV videos relate to their customers? Would you say that they are business-like in the way they treat them? Is there something more than efficiency that is motivating them? Is there something distinctly "public" about their approach?

Chapter Two

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION'S CENTURY IN A QUANDRY

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The intellectual evolution of the field and profession of public administration is reviewed, focusing on the major developments in the twentieth century. Six paradigms of public administration are explained, concluding with a discussion of the waning of government and the development of governance in the public sector.

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

1. Understand and explain how the discipline of public administration has developed over time.
2. Understand the relationship between how public administration is defined and how public administration is practiced.
3. Identify the perceived differences between politics and administration and discuss how those concepts have evolved and meshed over time.
4. Discuss the concept of principles of administration. Identify the principles included in the anagram POSDCORB and why they were considered important foundations of public administration.
5. Describe public administration as an autonomous field.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

THE BEGINNING

Think Tanks for Public Service

Public Administration and the Universities: The Fortuitous Year of 1914

PARADIGM 1: THE POLITICS/ADMINISTRATION DICHOTOMY, 1900-1926

The Uses of the Dichotomy

The Dilemma of the Dichotomy

PARADIGM 2: PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, 1927-1937

A Reputational Zenith

Money and Power

An Academic Backtrack

The Meaning of Principles

THE CHALLENGE, 1938-1950

Deflating the Dichotomy

The Demise of the Dichotomy

The Dichotomy Resurgent?

Puncturing the Principles

Fearful Reactions

PARADIGM 3: PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AS POLITICAL SCIENCE, 1950-1970

Consternation, Confusion, and Contempt

A Glimmer in the Wasteland: Comparative and Development Administration

An Intellectual Emergence

An Intellectual Dilemma

An Intellectual Decline?

The Impact of Political Science: Bureaucracy in the Service of Democracy

PARADIGM 4: PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AS MANAGEMENT, 1950-1970

The “Groundswell” of Management

“Fundamentally Alike in All Unimportant Respects”

The Erratic Impact of the Intellectuals

What is Missing?

The Impact of Management: Understanding the “Public” in Public Administration

“Publicness” and “Privateness”

The Agency, or Institutional, Definition of “Public”

The Interest, or Philosophic, Definition of “Public”

The Access, or Organizational, Definition of “Public”

THE FORCES OF SEPARATISM, 1965-1970

Separatism in the Halls of Academe: Nuanced Notions

“Science, Technology, and Public Policy”

“The New Public Administration”

A Bright but Brief Interlude

Separatism in the Corridors of Power: Pride to the Practitioners!

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AS NEITHER MANAGEMENT NOR POLITICAL SCIENCE (case study)

PARADIGM 5: PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AS PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, 1970-PRESENT

NASPAA’s Nascency

The Statistics of Secession

PARADIGM 6: GOVERNANCE, 1990-PRESENT

The Future of Governing

The Decline of Governments

The Rise of Governance

“Making a Mash of Things”

Does Governance Work?

The Future of Public Administration

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, HAPPY AT LAST

KEY CONCEPTS/TERMS

paradigm 1
politics/administration dichotomy
politics
administration
paradigm 2
principles of administration
POSDCORB
political acts
administrative acts
span of control
paradigm 3
cross-cultural administration
precepts of American political science
paradigm 4
administrative science
generic management
agency
interest
access
definitions of public
privatization
“new public administration”
practitioner pride
National Academy of Public Administration
paradigm 5
NASPA
M.P.A. programs
paradigm 6
government
governance
governing by network