

Six Pillars Essays

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PSAP 600: Scope of Public Administration

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Essay One: The Politics/Administration Dichotomy

In the beginning and from its inception of creating the United States Constitution, our three founding fathers adopted their models of how public administration should function, however, the United States Constitution did not define or acknowledge the structural needs of what and how public administration should be implemented. The Hamiltonian, Jeffersonian, and Madisonian models are effective methods of organizing the field of public administration—theorists like Frederick W. Taylor, a classical theorist who believed that politics and administration should work hand-in-hand focused on maximizing efficiency in the workplace. However other theorists like Luther Gulick believed that by separating politics and administration, you could produce greater efficiency in public administration. Like Gulick, Woodrow Wilson argued that politics and administration should be kept separate.

The Politics/Administration Dichotomy set forth a distinction and constructed the boundaries of public administration between elected officials and administrators. In Woodrow Wilson's article "The Study of Administration," Wilson highlighted the importance of understanding the science of public administration, focusing on the need for efficient and cost-effective government operations. Wilson emphasized the historical background of administrative studies, leading to the challenges during that era in 1887. He discussed how administrative tasks have become more complex with the evolution of society, necessitating the establishment of a science of administration to guide governmental actions. By examining the historical approaches to administration in Europe and contrasting them with English and American practices, Wilson suggested that while these countries excel in political liberty and practical political skills, they fell behind in administrative organization and skill due to the dominance of popular sovereignty. He argued that organizing administration became more challenging in democracies where diverse opinions and the influence of public opinion complicated decision-making processes. Overall, Wilson called for the adaptation and improvement of administrative practices in the United States, urging the country to embrace a science of administration that tailored to its decentralized governmental structure and democratic principles.

Another scholarly researcher, Sapru (2006) argued that Wilson's conclusions in *The Study of Administration* regarding the administrative-politics dichotomy were unclear (p. 56). Wilson was the first in American history to reshape the understanding of public administration by adopting a scientific and systematic approach. His concept of the dichotomy also promoted the recruitment of professionally trained bureaucrats to establish a more skilled and professional administration in the United States. Embracing this dichotomy involved making appointments based on partisanship and leveraging political power to gain support for specific policies and programs. He believed that, for administrators to operate efficiently, they needed to be given a certain degree of discretionary decision-making authority by their chief executives.

To that end, the most effective governments have a cohesion of all three components: management, policy, and politics, all working together effectively.

Essay Two: The Responsible Public Administrator

A responsible public administrator in today's public service must be dynamic, adaptable, inclusive, sensitive to the needs of a diverse population, and most importantly, a person who keeps integrity at the forefront of public policy decision-making. And who are these responsible public administrators? Elected officials, that we, the citizens elect. We vote for representatives that we believe will best support, meet, and advance the needs of our communities.

According to Terry L. Cooper (1990), the purpose of a responsible public administrator is to uphold strong ethical standards, assess situations, and embody public service values. Cooper highlighted the accountability of public servants to both the public and elected officials to act ethically and not misuse their authority—and that in itself has had its challenges over the years in the public sector. However, responsible administrators understand when to choose the right course of action over the wrong one, but it's not that simple because ethical reasoning is a perishable skill. We have witnessed corruption repeatedly on many levels of government and unethical practices, which led to harming the organization's success, losing public trust, and harming the public's perception of government leaders. Cooper also pointed out that moral reasoning is essential in an ever-changing global environment.

Another theorist who contributed to the evolution of the field of public administration is Mary Parker Follett. In her work, "The Giving of Orders," Follett discussed the complexity of issuing orders in business settings and the importance of understanding human psychology in the process. She explained that simply giving orders without considering if employees truly understand or accept them can lead to issues and conflict within organizations. She underscored the need for collaborative decision-making and mutual respect between employees and employers to achieve successful business administration. Finally, she highlighted the harmful impact of giving orders in a disrespectful or dictatorship manner, emphasizing the need for professional training and development.

In a recent study by Gallup (2021), they found that managers are responsible for 70% of the variance in employee engagement. In other words, disrespectful and bad managers influence employee engagement negatively, leading to less productivity and poor outcomes for the organization. All this to say that I attended a professional development seminar on emotional intelligence (EI) and it covered topics on how to enhance your leadership skills with emotional intelligence being at the forefront of managing people. To Cooper's point of upholding ethical standards and Follett's importance on delivering communication with respect, emotional intelligence teaches us to, in a professional setting to manage our emotions when stressed or feeling overwhelmed, create a culture of collaboration, and respectfully resolve conflicts (Goleman, 1995).

All in all, a democratic government is more likely to succeed with responsible public administrators. Both Cooper and Follett's contributions to the field of public administration remain pertinent today.

Essay Three: The Legitimacy of the Administrative State

Legitimacy is the basis of all authority (Beaumaster, 2024). As discussed in our Scope of Public Administration class, the four sources of legitimacy in the United States are the United States Constitution, Public Perception, Professionalism, and Legal, however, there is no mention of public administration as a source of legitimacy when in fact it is vital to the governance in that it ensures social equity, efficiency, economically and coordinated management system of services and goods (Frederickson, 1971).

In this short essay, two of the four sources will be discussed. First, the American Declaration of Independence (1776) depicts a fundamental component of this concept of the legitimacy of the administrative state. It is in this documents that formally announced the Thirteen American Colonies' decision to break free from British rule and outlines the philosophical foundation of the 13 colonies, emphasizing that all men are created equal and endowed with unalienable rights, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It also asserts that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. Among other important information and complaints to the British monarch, the American Declaration of Independence holds its power and full authority to govern.

Secondly, another source of legitimacy is public perception, but the issue with this source is that the average citizen does not understand the ins and outs of politics and public administration and therefore all interactions with the citizens must be delivered with the utmost professionalism. After all, it is through professional conduct that we find legitimacy (Beaumaster, 2024). Public administrators are responsible for the legitimacy of the state by providing a clear and accessible flow of communication with the citizens. In the age of information, this means that communication methods must go beyond sending a mass email.

According to Corporate English Solutions, Generation Z, that is, those born between 1997 and 2012 is the youngest and fastest-growing generation in the workplace. As their numbers grow, their experience of technology, global connectivity, diversity, and digital transformation is influencing workplace communication, collaboration, and organizational culture. This translates to ensuring the public administrators meet them where they are, on TikTok and other platforms, and deliver visual communication to this generation.

To that end, I believe that the first step in creating a sustainable partnership between public administrators and citizens is for the employer to select, and train a representative as a Public Administrator leader—One who will foster healthy communication with its constituents, build rapport, and trust and is genuinely seeking to advance the people. There is a high probability that legitimacy can be achieved through the aforementioned sources, as well as empower the government to accomplish policymaking and meet the needs of the community at large.

Essay Four: Accountability in Administration

The topic of accountability is not easy and very complex (Denhardt et al., 2015). Accountability as defined by Keehley and Abercrombie's (2008) "is the principle that individuals and organizations are responsible for their actions. When actions and decisions appear questionable, the public has the right to ask that those behaviors be explained (p. 162)." Often the term accountability has a negative connotation and the media does a good job relating it to "blaming" or "punishing" an individual or an entity, however, the purpose of accountability is for citizens and administrators to work together—build and or strengthen relationships and trust that the government will be responsible with its expenditures, and provide quality services (Dr. Beaumaster 2024).

The implications of accountability in administration vary from public trust, and lack of transparency to effective methods of communication with citizens. Public trust in government is extremely important and can only be achieved by having a fair and just accountability process. Lack of transparency occurs when governments do not disclose honest information to the public or keep valuable information from the public. Public officials must listen to and address all of the concerns plus adhere to a myriad of factors such as legislative matters, community concerns, political norms, and citizen interests.

The Old Public Administration and the New Public Management oversimplify the issue by focusing on political officials and market forces, but the New Public Service emphasizes serving citizens in the public interest through citizen engagement and dialogue (Denhardt et al., 2015). Public sector accountability should be centered on public administrators serving citizens' interests, citizen empowerment and civic engagement to navigate societal hardships. It is through community interactions that public administrators can engage citizens to express community conflicts and be part of the conversation of setting realistic solutions; it is then that accountability expectations can occur.

The setting of administrative accountability is complicated and requires a balance between external factors, professionalism, and ethical conduct to uphold democratic governance effectively. Contemporary discussions on ensuring accountability lean towards integrating ethical considerations to reinforce responsible administrative behavior. But still, the topic of accountability is evolving, and it is a necessity because it brings control and expected outcomes, enhances the integrity of public governance, and supports the development and improvements of performance (Dr. Beaumaster 2024). The truth is the process of accountability takes a long time, clear and structured protocols, and quality assessment analysts.

Essay Five: The Issue of Representation

Historically, the United States has had an issue of representation—since the creation of the United States Constitution, for example, the Three-Fifths Compromise (U.S. Const. art. I, § 2). Today, the complexity of defining the issue of representation persists. The theory of representative bureaucracy suggests that when representatives have similar values to the citizens they serve, they will better advocate for them. In the “Representative Bureaucracy” by Samuel Krislov (1974), he delves into this concept and examines the significance of multiple perspectives in evaluating merit and selection criteria and emphasizes the need to consider societal representativeness in bureaucratic structures. Krislov also explored the implications of societal divisions based on race, ethnicity, and gender in bureaucratic systems.

While the implications mentioned by Krislov are still relevant today, representation in public administration faces new issues like social equity, enhancing trust in elected officials, and fostering community engagement. Representatives must promote diversity and inclusion within government organizations and social equity throughout the nation. They must also serve citizens, not customers (Denhardt et al., 2015) to enhance citizens' trust in government, and finally, representatives can help achieve and close disparity gaps by ensuring that government decisions reflect diverse communities. The scope of representation has shifted (Dr. Beaumaster 2024) and that well aligns with the growing demographics of our nation. In comparison from only 10 years ago to today, women's representatives account for 153 of 540 voting and nonvoting members of Congress which translates to a 59% increase from the 96 women who were serving in the 112th Congress (Leppert et al., 2023).

An ongoing issue that I have witnessed specifically in my hometown community of Wilmington, CA is that most citizens are unaware of who represents them. Equally important, the citizens don't know what the role of their representative is and therefore are not informed about policies that directly affect them and their community. Wilmington, CA is made up of a diverse group of ethnic backgrounds with 84.4% identifying as Hispanic. It is also a lower-income geographic area where 20% of those living in poverty, but despite their socioeconomic class, they too must be represented. It was only through a public administration class during my undergraduate studies that I became aware of the representative bureaucracies and even then, it was a difficult topic to grasp.

With the New Public Service framework, and the emphasis on social equity, representation must recognize the shift and adapt their approach to fulfill the gaps. And in a state where immigration and non-resident people live, how does that complicate representation? It creates a problem in proper representation and creates more division about values and ideologies among citizens.

To conclude, issues in representation exist, but public servants, public administrators, and elected officials must work together with the people they represent and move forward combating one societal issue at a time.

Essay Six: Efficiency and Effectiveness

For the past 100 years, experts have argued that the central problem of government is poor management (Frederickson et al. 2012). Efficiency and effectiveness are two important concepts and therefore are a pillar of Public Administration. Efficiency is defined as “the production of outcomes with the least expenditure of resources” and effectiveness “is the successful achievement of goals and objectives” (Dr. Beaumaster 2024). Efficiency and effectiveness are distinct, often closely related, and work together to produce successful outcomes for an organization or government entity. However, it is possible to be efficient but ineffective and vice versa. For example, the focus on efficiency is streamlining operations to reduce costs while improving productivity, and the focus on effectiveness is achieving organizational goals and producing successful outcomes. Both concepts are measurable, efficiency measures tasks performed, and effectiveness of the quality of the outcomes.

In “The Administrative State” (1948), theorist Dwight Waldo made significant contributions to public administration particularly the views that efficiency and democracy were compatible and suggested that “government would it be cleanly divided into separate realms of decision and execution.” This article led scholars to embrace efficiency as a fundamental objective for public administrators. As exciting as this appears, it was only the beginning of developing a science in administration.

Today, efficiency and effectiveness go hand in hand. It also helps if organizations set clear organizational objectives, and hire quality professional staff and good public administrators. Knowing that efficiency and democracy are compatible, front-line employees must be motivated to be efficient and effective.

If we are moving toward the New Public Sector, perhaps social equity needs to be grouped with efficiency and effectiveness as a pillar of Public Administration. Generally speaking, the goal of equity is to understand and advance the individual needs of the citizens and close the gap to obtain equal services and resources—which can ultimately be measured through quantitative and qualitative measures. Social equity in public administration involves public services and policies to even the vulnerable and at-risk members of our society (Barry Article, 2021).

In an ever-rapidly changing world, efficiency and effectiveness must remain a fundamental value in public administration. When it comes to providing goods, services, and resources to the citizens, government entities must ensure that they are both efficient and effective in their organizational practices. But that takes good management and accountability of the organization. In my professional experience working with federally funded programs in Los Angeles, CA, assessment of efficiency and effectiveness has been difficult to measure and often overlooked by other pressing tasks and responsibilities, still, it needs to be a priority just as setting annual objectives and expenditure projection. It is only through the analysis of the report findings that you can track the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization and discuss where you can improve or make adjustments to services to the citizens, accordingly.

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