

A Citizen As the Principal of Public Administration

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1. Beyond Managerialism

Dwight Waldo's unceasing interest in the relation between bureaucracy and democracy is illuminating and fascinating because it invites us to think more seriously of citizens from whom sovereignty of the state emanates, and who are therefore undeniably the principals of public administration as activities of the state. They are carried out through a complex system of governmental organizations called bureaucracy. But its activities must be directed to the interests of citizens as the principals of public administration. Otherwise, the relation between bureaucracy and democracy would not be of much interests or of any relevance.

The American study of public administration has paid much attention to the problems of how to promote and protect the interests of citizens sincerely. Almost all American scholars of public administration, from Woodrow Wilson to Dwight Waldo, with Paul Appleby and John Gaus in between, have been well known as stout advocates of the cause of democracy. Nevertheless, they have failed to inquire into the relation between citizens and public administration systematically. In the textbooks or articles of public administration, a mention about citizens was usually omitted. Even though there was a haphazard reference to citizens, they were not theoretically and systematically related to public administration. Only one exception might be Herbert A. Simon, who explained citizens as customer or client of a bureaucratic organization. But he aggravated rather than solved the problem, because citizens' relation with public administration is not necessarily the same

as customers' with a company through market economy.1) A customer exchanges money for goods and services with a certain company voluntarily on a quid pro quo, ad hoc and intermittently. On the contrary, a citizen has a more or less systematic, permanent but involuntary relation with a complex system of governmental organizations, even when he is not a direct target or beneficiary of a certain of them. We must make a clear distinction between a customer who interacts with a company or other kind of a supplier through the market mechanism and a citizen who relates with public administration through the mechanism of government. Though both are the mechanisms of social control, they function quite differently. Robert B. Denhardt suggests that this is just one of a set of differences that can be subtle but very significant.2)

One reason why the American scholars of public administration have neglected to explain the relation between citizens and public administration might be a fact that for them it seems so obvious as could be taken for granted that it deserves no serious attention. On the other hand, they have put an exclusive importance upon the problems of public management, whether it is seen to have a similarity with private management or not. From the time on when Woodrow Wilson made a dichotomy between politics and administration, public administration was destined to be equated with management. Even those who criticised the dichotomy could not have escaped the fate of being trapped in the rather narrow concept of public administration as management almost unexceptionally. As far as public administration is confined to a narrow range of management, there is no place for a citizen to be accommodated comfortably except as an outsider such as a customer or a client, and no theoretical necessity is felt to relate her or him to public administration intrinsically in a systematic way.

With the publication of New Public Administration: The Minnowbrook

Perspective in 1971, however, the situation has changed. With an emphasis on "Theory for what," for example, Philip S. Kronenberg concluded that we must use our science and apply our talents for the improvement of the human conditions.³) This concern with human conditions imply inevitably that public administration must serve citizens who share the common conditions of existence and destiny. Nevertheless, most papers in the book still dragged on a preoccupation with management. The editor Frank Marini suggested that a topic of considerable interest to Minnowbrook participants was client-organization interaction.⁴) It is good that a governmental organization become more and more client-focused. But a client interacts with a certain governmental organization qua a citizen. Before he becomes a client, a citizen has a more or less systematically ordered or constitutional relation with the state and public administration as its activities.

Emerging new managerialism also puts emphasis on the service to the public and customer-and/or client-orientation perhaps for a different reason from that of the Minnowbrook Perspective. The rallying-call of new managerialism is the transplantation of market principles and business practices to the public sector. Tom Peters and Robert H. Waterman's In Search of Excellence (1982) epitomized the care of customers as one of the surest ways to business success. But for public administration, a citizen, whether she or he is called customer or client, is important because she or he is the principal to be served and not for any other reasons. It is often said that the public must be well-served in order to restore confidence in government. But the public should never be instrumentally treated as a means to governmental stability or success. Governmental stability is necessary to serve the interests of the public without interruption and not vice versa. That would be a reason why Paul Appleby said that government was different,

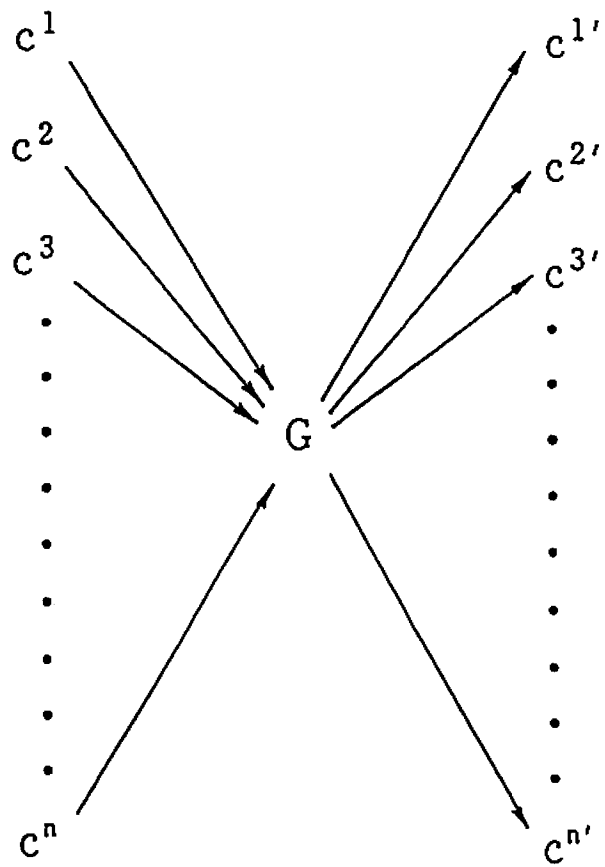
because it must take account of the desires, needs, actions, thoughts and sentiments of 140,000,000 people.⁵) In so saying, he clearly gave a credence as the principal of public administration to every citizen. But in order to relate a citizen to public administration intrinsically, we need a new conceptualization of it other than that of public management. It is no doubt that unless there is good public management, there could never be good public administration. In this sense public management is as important as ever. But it is only one of the intervening variables of public administration. We need a new conceptualization of public administration wider than that of public management not only to relate a citizen to it but also to make clear the framework in which public management should play its role meaningfully. According to Denhard, business concepts can not be completely embraced in the public sector, because the circumstances and, more important, the core values are different. But what is most different is the way in which public administration is organized in a society and functions involving and affecting all members of it.

2. A New Conceptualization of Public Administration

The Volker Commission Report of 1989 declared, "How well the tasks of government are done affects the quality and lives of all our people." 7) But why and how? It is because the tasks and activities of government are carried out as a collective enterprise to pursue public goals in behalf of all members of a society called citizens. This collective enterprise involving and affecting all members of a society in some way or another might well be defined as public administration. In the American study of public administration, there has been a tradition to look upon public administration as governmental activities and/or "government in action," as advocated by such an author as Marshall E. Dimock. If we restore this concept from oblivion, we would be able to

relate a citizen with public administration and give a proper place in it. For governmental activities are to be done not for the sake of the state or of government acting in the name of the state but for the sake of all members of a society. Public goals pursued by the collective enterprise of public administration are set in order to meet needs common to all members of a society who share a communal existence and a mutual destiny. In this sense, all members of a society or citizens are undeniably the principals of public administration. It is they who burden all costs, both tangible and intangible, of governmental activities. It is also they who absorb all effects of governmental activities, however good or bad. A civil servant who acts as an agent of his fellow citizens might be praised or be blamed for his deed, but the effects of his deed never accrue to and fall upon him except as one of citizens. Through the collective enterprise of public administration, a citizen is closely related not only with government but also, being mediated by government, with another citizens.

The relations of a citizen with government and with his fellow citizens are shown in the Chart 1. Citizens $c_1, c_2, c_3, \dots, c_n$ concentrate their power upon government designated by G in the Chart 1, and contribute resources necessary for governmental activities in terms of taxes and other kinds of payments. With the use of resources thus concentrated in its hands, government carries out various activities and delivers benefits to citizens $c_1', c_2', c_3', \dots, c_n'$. A citizen c_1 as a bearer of cost does not necessarily correspond with a citizen c_1' as a beneficiary of governmental activities, because the principles of taxation and those of distributing benefits are not the same. As the principles of taxation, the most important are the ability principle and the benefit principle. As the principles of benefiting citizens, there are the equality principle, the principle of fairness, the necessity principle, the merit principle and so on. It is highly a



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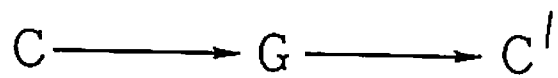


Chart 1

The Mechanism of Government And Relations With Citizens

matter of public policy to choose and mix the principles of various kinds in order to achieve social justice as a whole.

If we can express citizens $c_1, c_2, c_3, \dots, c_n$ as C and citizens $c_1', c_2', c_3', \dots, c_n'$ as C' , goods and money move from C to G first and then from G to C' . That two steps flow of goods and money characterizes public administration as distinct from any other kind of social exchange. Economy is, for example, based upon a quid pro quo exchange between a buyer and a seller mediated by the market mechanism irrespective of whether they are individuals or collectivities. In market there rules the exclusion principle which crowds out those who are not prepared to pay from a chance to enjoy goods and services. The intervention of government sublimates the exclusion principle and makes possible the more equal and fairer distribution of goods and money, consummating in social justice, the core value of public administration.

By definition, public goals can be achieved not by separate efforts of individuals and their organizations but by combined and coordinated efforts of all members of a society. Within a small circle of a society, a voluntary agreement among the members would be enough to challenge common goals. As the circle becomes larger, however, a free-rider problem might arise. Thus the intervention of government becomes an absolute necessity to mobilize all members of a society toward the common enterprise of pursuing public goals and to benefit them therewith. Government can do this because it has a power to declare a public policy binding all members of a society at once and making an authoritative allocation and deprivation of values among them. This relation between government and citizens is that of the one and many, in which Richard Flathman insists the public interest inheres. Through its activities, government can not only improve the common conditions of human existence and influence the future course of societal development, but also tackle with the problems caused by the market failures including the adequate

supply of public goods, externality problems, a control of monopoly, a problem of asymmetrical information, not to speak of a redistribution of income.

The new conceptualization of public administration shifts the emphasis from management to more substantial problems of governmental activities and public policies. But even public management can revive in the new context by addressing itself toward governmental activities and public policies. Social justice and fairness are to be achieved not in abstract but in a concrete context of governmental activities involving and affecting all members of a society by managing to keep a changing balance among them in some way or another. That would be one of the most important tasks of management and leadership. At the same time, a structural relations of a citizen with government and with other citizens via government are made clear. A citizen must be served well and be taken a good care of, because she or he is the principal of public administration and nothing more or less than that. Because all members of a society share an equal citizenship, they must be treated fairly without any bias and discrimination.

3. The Principals and Agents of Public Administration

Government is a mechanism of social control standing at the center of a society and having a tangential relation with all members of it. Though it has a monopoly of power, it must be used within the constitutional framework. But government can not act without moral agents to act through in behalf of it and in the name of the state. Appleby said that government existed precisely for the reason that there was a need to have special persons in society charged with the function of promoting and protecting the public interests.⁸) These special persons are not only moral agents of government but also the agents of the principals of public administration who must act in the

interests of all members of a society.

Though citizens are the principals of public administration equally and invariably, not all of them need be necessarily engaged in the collective enterprise of carrying out public goals into actuality. Even in the age of direct democracy, the public offices were allocated to a few persons either by lot or by vote. All other citizens could devote their time and efforts to their occupations or duties with a minimum requirement of attending a public meeting. As the division of labor had developed, there emerged a special group of public officials who engaged themselves in the collective enterprise of public administration professionally. While it enhanced efficiency of public administration by overcoming administration by laymen, it also allowed other members of a society to be wholly engaged in their own pursuits of private ends.

In the early modern political theories before the rise of the administrative state, it was customary to make a distinction between the state and society. Hegel, for example, explained the state as the embodiment of ethical ideas and society as the system of wants in which every one pursues their private goals and avarice even to the extent of usurping others. Society could only be saved from self-destruction by total absorption to the state through the activities of the group of public officials who were considered to be the cornerstone of the state, and thus to be honored with privileges. Lorenz von Stein, as the last Hegelian, followed him in putting a precedence to the state over society, but defined the state not as an abstract construct but an actual entity consisting of all members of society. According to him, it was the constitution that members of society participated in the making of the will of the state, while it was public administration that the state intervened into society in order to cure diseases of society and restore justice. Though he never recognized that public administration as activities of the state must be subjugated to the

will of the state formed by participation of the members of society, Stein insisted that the missions and purposes of activities of the state must come from and be found in society.⁹⁾ Stein's suggestion is illuminating even today. But his theory fell into oblivion in the course of history, perhaps because it was not well fitted with constitutional democracy.

Thomas Paine reversed the relation between the state and society. For him society was good, being unified by a natural tie of love, while the state was a necessary evil, whose government must be as small as possible and should work within a narrow confine of a legitimate area of activities. Adam Smith and Wilhelm Humboldt joined him in nursing the theory of a small government which abruptly revived in 1980' in the form of Reaganomics and Thatcherism. At the time of the rise of the administrative state, however, the state was not considered to be a necessary evil any more and its government could be as good as society whose agent it would be. The group of public officials were expected to work neutrally as much as possible, reflecting the configuration of societal forces. In the administrative state, however, a strong tendency for a public official to subjugate a citizen into a position of a mere target of public administration was well-embedded, involving the decay of citizenship.¹⁰⁾ A citizen was now a mere customer or client and not any more than that. A beneficiary of governmental activities might have well been called a customer or client, but she or he could not have been separated from personality of a citizen. It has been against such a background that the agency theory as espoused by economists and some of lawyers attracted the attention of the students of public administration to restore a citizen to a proper place as the principal of the collective enterprise of public administration.

The agency theory is very effective in that it makes clear that a citizen is a principal of public administration and a public official

is his agent. In the study of public administration a citizen has never been treated as a principal or a subject of it. Nevertheless the agency theory is too general to be applied to public administration concretely. It is said that whenever one individual depends the action another, an agency relation arises.¹¹⁾ This does not explain anything about the relation between a citizen and a public official. Most embarrassing is the fact that a citizen has no chance to pick up a public official of his own choice and face with him personally. On the contrary, both politically appointed and permanent public officials are organized into governmental agencies called bureaucracy, with which a citizen must encounter. A public official a citizen happens to meet at the street-level or at any other place is acting in a capacity assigned to him in a bureaucratic organization and not as an agent of his own choice. A public official is also in an awkward position, for he does not have a definite principal to serve but a very ambiguous and fluctuating bunch of the principals.

How a citizen is related with the common enterprise of pursuing public goals has been shown in the Chart 1 in the above. As far as she or he burdens the costs of the common enterprise, and absorb the all effects arisen therewith, she or he would be an undeniable principal of it. But her or his relation with government must be constitutionally structured so as to guarantee the status of a sovereign or at least as the origin of sovereignty to a citizen, if a citizen as the principal of public administration is to have any concrete meaning. At the same time, a homogeneity or commonality between a citizen and a public official as her or his agent would bring their relationship into an existential reality.

John Gaus proposed a concept of citizen as administrator,¹²⁾ and Terry L. Cooper elaborated it into a concept of the citizen administrator. While Gaus has in his mind the citizen participation, Cooper emphasizes

that citizens and public administrators share a common ethical identity.

13) He said, "the ethical identity of the public administrator then, should be that of the citizen who is employed as one of us to work for us; a kind of a professional citizen oriented to do that work which we in a complex large-scale political community are unable to undertake ourselves." In this sense, the public officials are to be a fiduciary for the citizenry as a whole. They could be so as far as they can think in terms of a larger society with compassion and empathy to every member of it.

4. Governmental Failures

Because government stands at the strategic center of a society, it can influence the course of societal development by providing public goods and services, absorbing externalities and redistributing income. But just as there are market failures in economy to be overcome by government, the collective enterprise carried out by the hands of government can not escape its own failures. First of all, though government sets and influences the common conditions of human existence, it can not give happiness as such to a people, for they can become happy only by acting themselves. This is one of the most serious agency problems. An agent can empower a principal in one way or another, but can not take a place of her or him entirely. However well the collective enterprise of public administration is done, it does not necessarily make every people happy. Here is a clear limit to governmental activities. A white paper published by the British government titled Civil Service: Continuity and Change (1994) poses key questions: Does the job need to be done at all? If the activity must be carried out, does the Government have to be responsible for it? Where the Government needs to remain responsible for an activity, does the Government have to carry out the task itself? These are questions we must ask continually.

The values to guide our judgement are human dignity and autonomy. At the same time, however, we should never sacrifice the core value of social justice, without which the bond of a social tie might be loosened.

It is the government and not the citizens that decides what job should be done to what extent and how. As a matter of course, the citizens can express their will through elections and through the channels of mass-media and discuss what they want from the government. But the government has a monopoly of power to decide ultimately in order to pursue public goals which can be achieved not by separate efforts of individuals or their organizations but by a joint efforts of all of them combined by the authority of government. A social problem solved by the government allows only one solution. Once provided by the government, a public good not only can be, but also must be, consumed or enjoyed by every member of the society irrespective of her or his own opinion, taste and preference. That is, there is not citizen-or consumer-sovereignty but only provider-or supplier-sovereignty in public administration. A citizen has no choice but to accept the decision of government, once it is made. A citizen can not decide what kind of a public good she or he chooses and to what extent she or he consumes it in general. Even when a divisible private or semi-private good is provided by the government, it must be distributed among a people on the principle of equality and fairness, and not by individual choice. This is the second case of governmental failures.

As is suggested in the Chart 1, a payer of cost and a beneficiary are not necessarily the same. Therefore a citizen has not chance to express her or his preference as to what kind of a good she or he likes at the expense of what amount of cost. This leads to a lack of the mechanism of aggregating the demands of the people. Without aggregating wills and desires of the citizens, the government decides its own activities involving and affecting all members of the society. This is the

third case of governmental failures. It may look like a great paradox that the government decides its activities involving and affecting all members of the society without aggregating the wills and desires of them. But it is because of the lack of the mechanism of aggregating the demands for the public goods that we trust the government with the monopoly of power to decide in behalf of all of us. Theorists of the public choice school such as Gordon Tullock suggested a possibility of aggregating demands for a public good through a newly developing telecommunications technology. But it is beyond the mere problem of technology whether a people can reach the general will in terms of Jean Jacques Rousseau or a genuine concept of the public interest other than the total will summing bare desires and private wants of all citizens.

The lack of the mechanism of aggregating demands for a public good leads in its turn to the lack of clear-cut criteria of the rational use of scarce resources. This is the fourth case of governmental failures. The rational use of scarce resources can be achieved by allocating money among different activities in a way to equal the values of the last dollar going to each activity. But there is neither a way to calculate the dollar values nor a way to adjust the allocation therewith. As a surrogate for a profit-maximization in the private sector, the cost-benefit analysis and cost-effectiveness analysis have been developed. While, however, the former involves the difficult problems of how to calculate a benefit of a governmental activity in terms of money, the latter faces serious problems of measuring effects of governmental activities in quantitative terms. After the fall of the PPBS, the United States Government continued the effort to measure the effectiveness of governmental activities through the MBO, ZBB, and many systems of the program-evaluation until it passed the law mandating the measuring of performance and results of governmental activities in 1993. Its consistent efforts deserve a praise. Still it would be impossible to

develop criteria of the rational use of scarce resources in the public sector by the very reason of the nature of the collective enterprise of public administration.

The fifth case of governmental failures is the problem of bureaucratic power. The agency theory points to an asymmetrical or distorted relation between a principal and an agent in terms of knowledge, information and power. In the case of public administration, the problem is more serious because a citizen as the principal must face not one agent but many agents organized into bureaucracy. While the citizens come and go, bureaucracy exists consistently and ubiquitously in the society, standing at the strategic center, having a tangential relation with every one of them and making authoritative allocation and deprivation of values. Unless the government has a power to make a decision binding all members of a society at once, it can not carry out the tasks of achieving public goals. Still, power concentrated in bureaucracy is enormous and threatening. Much worse is the lack of the clear line of responsibility and the sense of responsibility among public officials, both political and permanent. Though governmental activities leave tremendous and enduring affects behind, no incumbent public officials are prepared to take a responsibility for them, for some of them seem to have been done by their predecessors and some others look to be left to their successors to take the care of.

5. Politics and Administration

In the relation between the government and the citizens as is shown, in the Chart 1, the dichotomy between politics and administration is not of much relevance, if not meaningless at all. When the government intervenes into a society, it acts as the one and not separately either as politics or as administration. It would be usually difficult to attribute some effects of governmental activities to politics and others

to administration. Following the American tradition of managerialism, a German sociologist Renate Maynzer makes a clear distinction between the political system and the administrative system. Still she suggests that we had better forget it when we think about the functions of the state, governmental activities or administrative tasks.¹⁴) The dichotomy obstructs us to think seriously about what kinds of activities should the government undertake in order to achieve the public interest and to assess the results and effects thereof upon the society. The distinction between politics and administration gains its importance when we think not about the functions of the state or governmental activities but about the structure of the government and the way of functioning of it.

When Woodrow Wilson made a distinction between politics and administration, it would have been parallel to the division of power between the Congress and the Presidency. Franz Goodnow expanded politics to include the Presidency, the separation of which from the rest of the government was to be legitimized by W.F. Willoughby's division of the executive power and the administrative power. Now it would be rather a common sense to group both elected and politically appointed public officials to the side of politics, and permanently appointed public officials on the basis of a competitive examination to the side of administration. Just as Lorenz von Stein did not subjugate administration to constitution, Wilson did not think that administration should be subordinated to politics, as far as it could be disciplined by its own principles and technologies. At the same time, however, democracy required that administration should be totally controlled by elected and politically appointed public officials, because only they had a popular mandate from, and could take responsibility to, the sovereign citizens.

It is within a decade or two that politics has gotten a primacy over administration in the Western developed countries. In the United

States, politics has become supreme by interposing several levels of political appointees between the President and classified civil servants. The most Western countries where a predominant party system or a coalition among the major parties is well-established have followed the American example either by sending a group of ministers of a lower rank and political advisors together with a minister of the cabinet-rank to a ministry or by appointing bureaucrats politically with an occasional intake of outsiders. This tendency might be welcomed from the standpoint of increasing political control over permanent public officials, whose autonomy and independence have been long criticised. But the primacy of politics has been inevitably accompanied by politicization of administration in the sense of partizanship. According to Mattei Dogan, the more politicized senior civil servants are, the less essential role is left for them in decision-making processes.¹⁵) In the United Kingdom, for example, the civil servants' dominance of policy advice has been threatened so much that Colin Campbell and his colleague speak of the end of Whitehall.¹⁶)

The scene in Japan seems to be to the contrary. With the lack of a group of political advisors, the Japanese ministers in charge of the ministries and agencies are assisted directly by vice-administrative ministers who stand at the apex of the senior civil servants. Officially, a minister has the appointing power of the vice-administrative minister of his own ministry. In actuality, however, he can not use it usually, for the order of promotion of the senior civil servants has been settled among themselves. A minister might dare to appoint a vice-administrative minister of his own choice. But the order among the senior civil servants has a resilience to return to normality as soon as the minister leaves the ministry. In this way, politicians and senior civil servants live together in symbiosis, keeping their own sacred precincts free from intervention. This does not mean that the

senior civil servants are not politicized at all. On the contrary, they are highly politicized in that they have almost a daily contact with politicians of the major parties not only in order to sound their opinions representing the constituencies but also to sell favorite policies of the ministries to them to mobilize their support behind. Thus they have been successful in keeping an essential role in policy-making processes.

Now the Japanese bureaucracy has been under fire not only from society but also from abroad. The problem is not, however, how to tether bureaucracy with power of politics but but how to make both politicians and bureaucrats contribute together to a solution of knotty problems people of every country face in the post-industrial society with increasing mutual interdependence, both internal and international. Adrian Ellis points out that policies are getting more and more ideological in the sense that they are premised on contested, untested or untestable hypothesis about casual relationships. According to him, as the ideological components of a policy increase, an administration wishing to avoid its taint would certainly be paralysed.¹⁷⁾ This might be the case in Europe. On the contrary, the Japanese bureaucrats are not so shy as to shun ideological commitments. But because politicians including ministers are involved only occassionally, peripherally and marginally in policy-making processes, they could not take any effective responsibility for the results of boldly promoted policies by bureaucrats, resulting in rampant irresponsibility prevailing in society and frustrating sovereign citizens. A solution for that may be found in increasing politicians' involvement in policy-making precesses from the early stage on, and open and candid discussions of policies inviting participation from all circles of society.

Notes

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