

A Question of Focus

The Future of Education for the Public Service

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Educators, administrators, and politicians have at least one thing in common; they each attempt to simplify the world by arranging it into simple dichotomies. Liberal/conservative, Republican/Democrat, process/substance, theory/practice, politics/administration, and oh yes, fact/value come immediately to mind as being especially significant to the discussion at hand. In the spirit of theoretical pluralism to these and no doubt many others we should like to add another, the "do/be dichotomy," because it seems particularly descriptive of a major choice confronting those of us who espouse to educate for the public service. Specifically, do we educate individuals to *do* public service or do we educate individuals to *be* public servants? Or is it possible to do both?

While the do/be dichotomy has been the center of debate between liberal arts and professional educators for years, we should like to confine our discussion to a particular institutional strategy of educating for the public service, formally established degree programs in public administration. Although such programs may appear to represent a singular educational strategy, a singular idiom, with their diversity of approach and theoretical eclecticism they can be seen to represent a microcosm of the educational enterprise.

The future of education for the public service is today very much in doubt, for it will ultimately depend upon the way in

which educators deal with a series of issues pertaining to a field of intellectual inquiry which many influential scholars claim is in a state of crisis. The crisis stems in large part from a broadly perceived crisis in government itself—variously labeled a crisis of morality, inaction, or ineffectiveness.

The crisis is also educational. Very suddenly, an intellectual tradition of some seventy-five years has had to respond to challenges from within and without. Educational programs in public administration are increasingly seen by many scholars and practitioners alike as either barren of intellectual content or generally inapplicable to the actual practice of government. These are not new perceptions.

Public service education has existed within a state of continuous conflict between its theoretical and practical concerns since its earliest days. Such is the dilemma of education in any professional field. The crisis is made more serious than normal, however, because an increasingly large number of educational programs with theoretical and methodological emphases quite alien to the public administration tradition have proliferated almost overnight.

We use the term “traditional public administration” here to represent both an intellectual pursuit and a component of educational institutions strongly oriented in the direction of the political science discipline. Intellectually, traditional public administration has tended to adopt as a central concern, regardless of how resolved, the relationship between politics and administration. Institutionally, traditional public administration programs have existed within departments of political science or, if separate, have been staffed primarily by trained political scientists.

According to Alan K. Campbell (1976) past president of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, membership in that association has increased from 60 to 184 institutions in the past seven years. This understates overall growth of programs designed to educate for the public service, because many newer programs uncommitted to the public administration tradition are not reflected in those mem-

bership statistics. Examples are some public policy programs and public management options existing in business schools.

One immediate result of that growth is that the definition of the "proper" approach to education for the public service has become an extremely diffused, yet more democratic enterprise. The multi-disciplinary character of many new faculties has expanded the variety of perspectives and issues considered central to governmental functions and processes. And, public service education is no longer provided only by schools of public affairs, public administration, or departments of political science. Increasingly, business schools and "generic" schools of administration compete for students and jobs for their graduates, not to mention long-standing competition from law and other professional schools.

With new perspectives comes the definition of the educational enterprise. Whereas previously the dominant issue regarding the relationship of politics to administration occupied center stage, a host of new issues has divided the field. Alternative approaches to public service education in the future are probably to be found among myriad new issues competing for centrality in the field which has lost its intellectual focus.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE FIELD

Since the publication of the first edition of Leonard D. White's pioneering *Introduction to the Study of Public Administration*, public administration education has exhibited two foci of major significance. White asserted, on the one hand, that administration should be studied from the standpoint of "management" rather than law, and management was to be a major concern of public administration education thereafter. On the other hand, he gave major attention to the governmental institutions within which management operated. A professor of political science, White incorporated much from that discipline in his original charting of the field of public administration (Waldo, 1975: 183).

The theory of separation of politics and administration had been adumbrated by F. J. Goodnow in 1900 and by W. F.

Willoughby two decades later (Waldo, 1948: 106-114). With variations, the theme of a separation of politics from administration prevailed until the political scientists who served in Washington during World War II decisively rejected the concept (Fesler, 1975: 104-105). Although political scientists thereafter denied that politics and administration could be separated, they continued to be preoccupied with the relationship—the ways in which administration was controlled or influenced by politics, the power of administrators and their roles in formulating, interpreting, and fleshing out the policies of the chief executive and legislature.

The much heralded demise of the politics-administration dichotomy in the 1940s gave wide scope for political scientists to study “the politics of” administrative subjects and policy areas and to report their findings to students of public administration. New approaches entered the literature of “administrative responsibility,” which dealt with institutional restraints upon bureaucratic power, their strengths and weaknesses, and the possible need for new mechanisms of accountability. The literature embraced controversies relating to presidential power, judicial controls on administration, executive organization, representative bureaucracy, and federalism. More recently, accountability received new emphasis as governments wrestled with citizen participation, delivery of services, consumer legislation, equal employment and affirmative action, and increasing complexity in intergovernmental relations. One institutional reform—the ombudsman—stimulated a growing research literature.

Like other political scientists, public administration scholars tended to accept the pluralist model of American politics as descriptively accurate and normatively sound, although dissenting voices were sometimes raised. For the claims of pluralism were difficult to reconcile with economic rationality which was supposed to be one of the basic norms of management. Yet the play of politics on and through administration enjoyed full legitimacy even when confronted with the claims of decision-making premised upon economic rationality. At the same time, public administrationists easily concluded that the responsive-

ness of Congress to special interests placed in question the legitimacy of intervention by congressmen and committees in administrative agencies, which were believed more likely to uphold "the public interest."

In the development of public administration, a strong commitment to pluralists' conceptions of the political system was an obstacle to the absorption within public administration of rationalistic decision procedures. For pluralism saw the genius of American politics to lie in the process itself, in the interplay of interests groups and political institutions leading to political decisions that had political rationality but could not necessarily meet other tests of rational decision-making.

One of the most sophisticated attempts to describe the political rationality of pluralism was provided by Lindblom (1959) in the well-known article on the science of muddling through. Lindblom's argument was that by taking into account the interests of those groups that are concerned with an issue incrementalist, decision-making ensured policy decisions that would be acceptable in the political system. New policies could be tested without making radical changes in institutions or courses of actions, and irreversible changes could be avoided pending the testing of all departures from the status quo.

The fatal weakness in Lindblom's analysis was, however, that the range of political groups effectively participating in policy choices is limited and, therefore, no assurance can be given that all of the relevant interests at issue will receive due consideration. Lindblom's analysis also failed to recognize that some problems may require radical change in the status quo if genuine progress is to be made in their solution.

From the point of view of the student of administration, rational decision-making procedures and techniques such as those derived from economics, statistics, and operations research implied conflict with the results of the political process. Thus, the political forces in the State of California might give sanction to the authorization of a project to bring water from northern California to southern California, but cost benefit analysis might show little justification for such a project from a strictly economic

perspective (Merwitz and Sosnick, 1971: 239-250). So long as public administration maintained its loyalty to the pluralist framework, it was difficult for quantitative and other rigorous analytical tools to be firmly embraced by the field. The results of such analysis were always subject to veto on the ground that the workings of the master science of politics failed to validate them. Yet to teach such tools without sensitizing budding administrators to their limitations in a political framework was to subject them to disillusionment with the political process should the results of their analytical work be rejected. The schools and programs of administration felt obliged to instruct their students in pluralist politics so that their graduates could go forth with a decent respect for the decisions and decision-making modes that pluralism implied.

Public administration teachers and writers have generally seen the growth of government as a positive response to industrialism, economic fluctuation and depression, war and cold war tension, and urbanism. Governmental regulation of the economy was needed to cope with business cycles, reduce unemployment, encourage or reestablish competition, and protect consumers. Public programs were required to eliminate poverty, to protect health, to achieve equality of opportunity, to ensure safety in the workplace, and to protect and restore a health physical environment. That formal administrative structures could provide the services and implement the controls to achieve public objectives in these areas was widely accepted by the public administration academy. To do so might require administrative statesmanship to protect policy goals from special interest pressures, skill in management to achieve objectives efficiently; and adequate power and other resources to ensure agency survival and strength; but it was nonetheless assumed that the most intractable public problems would yield to well-designed, well-financed, fully powered administration.

In the decade of the 1960s, American society accepted challenges that had gone unheeded in the past, and in large part failed to fulfill the expectations generated by the apparent program successes of a simpler, prewar past. The frustrations arising from

the Vietnam war, racial, racial strife, and the intractable problems of poverty amidst prosperity led to widespread questioning of the capabilities of public policy and administrative structure to achieve basic social goals. Within the academic community, the failure to solve many of the most pressing social problems was generally not attributed to the possible limits of governmental intervention as a problem-solving strategy, but more frequently to the inadequacy of rational planning and decision-making technologies, such as systems analysis and PPBS. While these techniques had enjoyed considerable success in the military, they were deemed inappropriate in sorting out the complexity of social problems (Hoos, 1972).

The response of public administration was to reexamine some of its assumptions and methods. The "new" public administration (Marini, 1971) insisted that research and training be client-oriented, concerned with values, committed to social equity and social change, and "relevant to the current needs and dislocations of society (Schick, 1975: 161-166). The field gave major attention to the problem of structuring administrative systems to eliminate bias that operated to benefit upper socioeconomic groups.

Scholars quickened their output of studies of accountability, but the commitment to the administrative mode of solution continued to be strong, and the new public administration rushed to fill the normative void created by an ever-increasing number of governmental programs in which politicians had relinquished a high degree of discretion to public administrators. It was to be a personal, humanistic, activist, and above all a political theory of administration, and while it has no doubt perceptibly changed the study of public administration, it has failed to provide the thrust of rationality necessary to transform the ethos into necessary action.

The article of faith that a wide range of problems was susceptible to administrative solution was largely untouched by public administration scholars' reexamination of their field. Public administration could and should be more efficient, more even-handed, more sensitive to human need, more accountable—but major withdrawal of policy and administration from the

social and economic territory already conquered was not advocated. Only the public choice literature (Ostrom, 1973) developed the theoretical base for such a withdrawal, but with as yet little favorable response from academic public administration.

MYTH, THEORY, AND PRACTICE

If the past seventy-five years of public administration education has been dominated by a concern with professionalism, it has also been dominated by a single organizing concept—the relationship between politics and administration. It is not unfair to say that the politics-administration myth has fueled the intellectual fires of public administration scholars more than any other single idea. How various scholars at various times have resolved the issue is less important than the fact that the politics-administration myth has remained as the conceptual focus of the field. The maintenance of the myth, however, has required tremendous energy and has diverted those energies from possibly more important tasks.

Politics-administration, like all myths, serves to define a culture and to distinguish it from others. It provides both substance and meaning to the endeavors of those who participate in its maintenance. For the intellectual field of public administration, the maintenance of the myth has helped to ensure both that the field would possess a theoretical base and that it would not be overly dominated by a concern with administrative technique. More importantly, it has provided a measure of unity to a pursuit which would otherwise have disintegrated long ago.

By retaining the concept of political-administrative inseparability, public administration scholars distinguished themselves from the mainstream of political science without actually divorcing themselves from it. Until the 1970s virtually all public administration scholars were trained political scientists; to separate public administration from political science would have been to deny the validity of their heritage. Moreover, retention of the relationship to the discipline assumed that, (at least in the eyes of

the public administrationists) public administration could be an intellectual pursuit on a level comparable to political science.

By disavowing the separability of politics from administration, the field also protected itself from invasion by management technicians, such as those housed in business schools. Because it was concerned with essentially political ideas and behavior, public administration could be considered conceptually and ideologically different from business administration. The idea of "public interest values" as a distinguishing characteristic lives today in standards for educational programs in public administration as established by NASPAA (1974).

The last apparent challenge to the inseparability of politics and administration occurred nearly thirty years ago with the publication of Simon's *Administrative Behavior* (1947). Simon's attempt to formulate a decision-oriented science of public administration was quickly crushed on the grounds that it was both descriptively and philosophically regressive (Landau, 1962: 15).

Simon's work invoked a vitriolic response because his attempt to delineate a distinction between the *premises* underlying administrative and political decisions was widely misinterpreted as a distinction between the decisions themselves. As a result of readers confusing institutional with analytical description, the work appeared to reestablish the descriptive dichotomy between politics and administration at a point in time when this position was under severest attack, much of it from "reformed" scholars who had recently had the opportunity to practice public administration for the first time as members of the war-time bureaucracy. Philosophically, Simon's science of administration was interpreted as a plea to reinstate logical positivism and its attendant fact-value dichotomy, an epistemological perspective then as well as now in wide disrepute within most of the social sciences.

The field of public administration has faced the same pressures to become scientific that have preoccupied most of the social sciences. Science, however, requires theories, and it has been recognized for some time that there is no single, unified theory of public administration. Simon's unsuccessful attempt to create such a theory may explain why.

It is well known that theory requires conceptualizations which abstract and simplify phenomena. A measure of success of any theory is the effectiveness of these concepts as analytic tools. Among the analytical concepts employed by Simon were those of "politics" and "administration." It has been suggested that Simon's concepts became confused with the names of institutions (Landau, 1962: 17), and inevitably his theory was rejected. It is a dilemma which results from attempting to theorize about an applied field. Theoretical concerns must be made compatible with practical concerns. The scientific must be equated with the popular.

The lack of a unified theory of public administration need not create an insurmountable problem, for it can be rationalized on the basis that the job is not to develop but rather to implement theories. Thus, public administration is frequently seen (much like engineering) as the interpreter and implementor of theories derived from the social sciences. Public administration becomes the linkage between established sociopolitical theories and action. It is not surprising then to note that many programs of public administration emphasize both political theory and organizational theory as central elements in their curricula. Nonetheless, there is reason to suspect that as the social sciences continue to grow more specialized and esoteric in their pursuit of science, that the theoretical base will shift (some say it already has) to a point too distant from practical concerns to allow a linkage between ideas and action to be maintained.

The role of theory in any science is to simplify, generalize, and organize the facts of experience. Theories thus provide their adherents with alternative ways of looking at the world. Within an academic setting, however, theories perform an even more important function. Their existence demonstrates to the uninitiated that there is indeed a body of knowledge worth studying in the abstract.

The availability of theories thus helps legitimate the academic enterprise as the best, quickest, most efficient route to knowledge. Within programs designed to educate professionals, however, this conclusion assumes that theoretical knowledge bears a direct

relationship to the actual practice of the profession. If it does not, other approaches such as on-the-job experience may prove the less expensive, more fruitful road to useful knowledge.

No profession is immune to the inevitable conflict and an often unbridgeable gap between theory and practice, but few seem more susceptible to its problems than programs designed to educate for the public service. Educational programs which emphasize “nuts and bolts” are often viewed with suspicion by academics, as they entail abandonment of a theoretical orientation and, by implication, of the social science tradition as well. What makes matters even less tolerable is that such programs are often moneymakers.

THE EDUCATIONAL RESPONSE TO THEORY-PRACTICE

In the absence of a general, unified theory of public administration, alternative conceptualizations of what public administrators do and thus what they should know have emerged. As such, the fundamental question regarding the future of education for the public service becomes one of determining the type of institutional environment in which it will occur. For it to occur in an academic setting as opposed to on-the-job, academics will have to demonstrate that abstract knowledge is better than, or at least capable of enhancing, practical knowledge.

At present, the academic community seems better able to deal with the education of techniques of administrative practice—economics, finance, accounting, quantitative methods, marketing, and the like—that of the processes and behaviors and institutions which pervade the art of administration. Administrative techniques are not unique to one particular “brand” of administration, at least that is what educators seem to have concluded. Judging from the curriculum descriptions distributed by representative programs, it appears that there is little difference among them regarding what technical skills are decreed important to administrators.

What then are the differences? If one views the broad range of programs designed to educate administrators, one finds two major ways in which they attempt to convey a unique identity. First, programs may be aligned by sector, that is business administration and public administration. The second means of identifying a unique orientation is via the specific technology and/or professional endeavor being administered, e.g., health care administration, education administration, or the administration of science and technology.

In comparing schools of public administration and business administration, it is apparent that a major difference is one of simple ideology. This is usually manifest in the position taken (either implicitly or explicitly) with respect to free enterprise and governmental intervention. It is not unfair to say (nor inconsistent with survival interests) that public administration programs are generally biased toward increased governmental intervention, and business programs toward less government and more free enterprise.

A second difference is structural. We are continuously amazed among our business administration colleagues at their lack of concern for something called "business administration," while we are so preoccupied with defining and articulating something called "public administration." The reason is, of course, that business schools have become highly specialized, departmentalized organizations. The educational enterprise of business administration, moreover, has developed an infrastructure to support this specialized, functional taxonomy. Specialized faculty appointments, academic societies, and journals support and legitimate such specialized functional pursuits as accounting, marketing, finance, and production. A few of the larger schools even have departments which deal with the "field" of business administration as a whole, but it is also a specialty.

Moreover, this functional taxonomy receives further support from the fact that many large business organizations, at least, possess functional departmental structures which closely mirror those of the graduate schools. In the field of business administration there is a melding of institutional description and analytical

conceptualization the lack of which, as we have discussed, has troubled education for the public service.

Education for the public service has yet to define such a well-defined functional taxonomy, in large part because the substance embodied within each function may vary widely among governmental agencies and levels. Thus, it may be impossible to generalize sufficiently about even such standard functions as "personnel" and "budgeting" to create legitimate academic specialities. Beyond general knowledge of motivation, behavior, and classification systems, for example, a personnel administrator must know the appropriate statutes, regulations, and procedures pertaining to his or her agency. In view of wide variability of these among governmental units, this knowledge is probably best obtained on the job.

Education for the public service may also take place in programs emphasizing administration of certain professional areas, such as health care administration. A substantial measure of the educational process is devoted in such programs to an understanding of the basic technology, language, and values inherent in the profession. Thus, future health care administrators study the basic technology of health care. As contrasted with business or public administration with the ethos oriented to sector, these programs naturally tend to be oriented toward the technology being administered and thus face the danger of becoming captives of that technology.

In June 1976, the Sloan Foundation convened at a week-long seminar at Amelia Island Plantation in Florida to consider the problems and prospects of new developments in education for public service. Based on categories defined by Sloan, the seminar discussed five approaches to education for the public service programs of public policy; public management programs in business schools; technology-based management programs, mainstream public administration; and legal studies. Our discussion adds a sixth category—"generic" programs.

The public policy school or program incorporates into its curriculum quantitative analysis, economics, policy process, and policy analysis, as well as courses in a functional field, such

as urban affairs, health, international affairs, or education. Drawing upon various social science disciplines, public policy programs aim to prepare students to apply sophisticated analytical tools in the study of complex issues and the formulation of recommendations for decision and action. Such preparation is not viewed with particular enthusiasm by many practicing administrators who expect to implement policy, not to make it. When practitioners do require the talents of policy analysts for major issues, they may go to the holder of a Ph.D. in economics (Singer and White, 1976: VII-1) or some other discipline, or a lawyer, or to a specialist educated and experienced in the appropriate substantive field—health, engineering, education, forestry, and the like.

Although the current market for public policy analysts appears to be poorly organized and not highly receptive, the graduates of the schools of public policy do manage to locate positions in public service (Singer and White, 1976: VIII-5) although not necessarily as “policy analysts.” In the longer run, however, the career of the policy analyst may come to a dead-end unless the agency provides opportunity to move from analytical tasks to an operational role requiring management knowledge, knowledge often not included in the public policy program.

Public management programs offered by business schools typically include requirements that parallel public policy in their insistence on quantitative methods and economics, but stress management subjects to be taken by students aiming for government employment as well as those aiming for the private sector: accounting, organization theory and behavior, finance, and marketing. In some of these programs, the public management electives appear to be a small island drifting in a sea of traditional, specialized business administration courses. Yet, with the label M.B.A., the product of such a program increasingly finds a receptive market in public agencies.

The combination of engineering with public policy studies at the undergraduate level can offer a significant advantage that most other types of programs find difficult to realize: their graduates possess broad knowledge of a field or fields of machine

technology. Since “hard” technology enters into the work of the public sector in myriad ways, such knowledge is to be considered a decided asset. The problem, of course, is that the demands of most engineering and other highly technical curricula often leave little time for detailed study of the complex policy environment which technology so greatly affects.

The synthesis of engineering and public policy studies is more commonly pursued in combination with graduate work. The most common strategy is for the undergraduate engineer to obtain a graduate degree in administration. The M.B.A. with an engineering degree has long been an educational combination highly valued by industrial employers. A relatively new strategy is to educate for technological knowledge at the graduate level. The problem with this approach is that the analytical thought process required to deal with complex technology is not quickly learned, in contrast, for example, to subjects like economics. It has been suggested that “the rudiments of economics are the beginning of a real knowledge of economics, but the rudiments of technology are only the prerequisites for the knowledge of technology rather than the beginnings of real knowledge” (Singer and White, 1976: II-4). Graduate technology-based programs, such as the School of Urban and Public Affairs at Carnegie-Mellon University, are attempting, however, to give some understanding of the internal dynamics of technology and its impact upon public policy to students who have no prior engineering background. Such understanding is deemed essential if managers are to exercise effective influence over technology-based programs (Campbell, 1976).

Student demand for mainstream public administration programs remains strong, but there is evidence that placement of the products of traditional M.P.A. programs is more difficult than in the past, and that schools of public administration are experiencing difficulty in retaining the status and prestige they once held. Certainly, they are being challenged in the market by the M.B.A., the public policy analysts, the technology-based specialist, and the lawyer. Public administration programs have responded by moving to accept some of the substance of the

competitors, permitting electives or adding requirements in quantitative analysis, public policy, and economics. Yet wide variation in requirements and offerings remains, and there is less emphasis than in other program types upon sophisticated analytical tools as a central element in the curriculum. Management subjects continue to be offered widely—personnel, finance, organization theory and behavior, intergovernmental administration, and administrative law (Mackelprang and Fritschler, 1975: 188).

We distinguish the “generic” school from all of the foregoing types, in that it aims to provide an education in management that is not specialized by public or private sector or a specific technology; the degree offered is in “management” or “administration.” The Graduate School of Administration of Willamette University offers an M.Ad. degree; the Graduate School of Administration of the University of California at Irvine offers the M.S. in Administration. Northwestern University offers the M.M. (Master of Management). Yale’s new School of Organization and Management will offer the degree of Master of Public and Private Management.

The generic schools aim to prepare managers, not public policy analysts. They lay more stress on the common elements of administration than do the mainstream public administration programs. They seek to integrate public and private perspectives into a range of courses, and to achieve a certain balance among sectors (business, public, nonprofit, and so on), rather than seeing public management as one of many options for concentration in a business school.

One thing is clear: “publicness” as a dominant characteristic of preparation for public service education is in decline. Analytical methods are given greater prominence in all programs, except some mainstream public administration programs. Economics, finance, information systems, and organization behavior and theory compete for program time with the subjects relating to governmental institutions and processes that once dominated public administration in the traditional programs.

CONCLUSION

The academic enterprise of public administration is in a state of crisis, because programs formally charged with education for the public service find themselves without a real source of legitimacy. The social sciences, in their attempt to become more scientific, are no longer sufficiently pragmatic to deal with popular ideas and the day-to-day problems of public administrators. And, our governmental institutions cannot absorb, reorganize, adapt, and modify fast enough to accommodate rapidly changing problems and proliferating solutions.

So long as public administration retained an institutional relationship to political science, it could draw strength and legitimacy from the intellectual heritage of that discipline. Education for the public service was essentially the task of selecting and interpreting those concepts and methods which would prove useful to the operation of government. It was a relatively safe position because it ensured that future public administrators would be educated first in democratic principles and only secondarily in the rational techniques of administration. Democratic rationality however is a rationality of process: yet, the enterprise cries for substance, action, results.

One cannot say that our governmental institutions have rushed to support public administration education. The public service often sees its technical needs as being quite different from those perceived by educators. For example, many governmental agencies have no place for the new policy analysts, no way to utilize their exotic skills.

The current failure to resolve the issue of legitimacy in public service education is quite different from that of business administration. The business schools, if not exactly revered, are at least tolerated and supported by business and also by their university administrations.

If one is to believe the preliminary findings of the Sloan Foundation's Amelia Island Conference, then one must conclude that conceptual knowledge is a secondary factor in successful

public service employment. What is important, according to federal participants, are basic communication skills, public relation skills, and a proper set of attitudes and behavioral skills—skills traditionally neglected by public service education programs. It may be that these attitudes and skills are best obtained in alternative educational environments. For example, legal education was seen as especially appropriate for future public executives.

First, lawyers were trained to learn on the job. They were accustomed by the nature of their education and of their early legal careers to cope with large amounts of information, of whatever kind; to exude confidence in their ability to manage that information; and to make persuasive cases for one point of view or another. They were trained to detect self-interest wherever it exists. They were trained further to identify, negotiate and resolve conflict; to compromise opposing views; to appreciate the variety of interests that must be taken into account in rendering decisions. All these were talents that lay at the heart of managerial process in public service.

Any professional school, well-conducted, tends to turn out arrogant graduates. The law schools alone, however, succeed in turning out graduates who are universally arrogant: they are arrogant not only about the possession of their own professional skills, but they can maintain that attitude of arrogance toward other people's professional skills. In terms already used in this report, they are critical consumers of every kind of knowledge, or at least have learned to behave so. And this confers upon them an enormous tactical advantage. They rise inexorably to the top [Singer and White, 1976: V-1, 2].

These comments are extraordinary. In the first paragraph, the lawyers' virtues are identified in terms that smack of politics—"persuasive . . . self-interest . . . negotiate and resolve conflict . . . compromise opposing views . . . appreciate the variety of interests." In the following paragraph, however, "arrogance" is added to the qualifications ascribed to lawyers. If we substitute for "arrogance" terms such as self-assurance and pride in professional accomplishments, the undesirable connotations of a word

can be avoided. What is crucial to the lawyers and other specialists is a well-defined knowledge base that is not readily penetrated by the uninitiated. That knowledge base affords the tremendous advantage of *certainty*, which gives the legally trained the ability to provide *answers* to specified (legal) problems. Well-developed powers of analysis and persuasion buttress self-confidence, even when the issues embrace uncertain policy and management issues as well as those of legality.

Both law schools and business schools have shown that it is possible to create certain attitudes and behaviors by stressing the importance and rigor of a specialized knowledge base. Traditional public administration, on the other hand, has emphasized conceptual openness and the "gray areas" of the processes of government. Its skepticism made many issues problematical. Principles of administration were raised and disavowed. Sound administrative decisions were an amalgam of political shrewdness, management lore, and ad hoc analysis. The value of rigorous analytical methods was often questioned on the ground that these methods were applicable only to trivial problems or required data for which only dubious surrogates were obtainable.

Such preparations did not provide the public administration graduate with the certainty, the self-assurance, and the knowledge that would impress practitioners. Rather it challenged even those virtues that practitioners had distilled from experience or borrowed from the "greats" of business and public management. The graduates came bearing dubious gifts: questions and problems, rather than *answers*. Even the better developed social science knowledge base failed to impress as its application to concrete problems often was unclear.

We are told that in the postindustrial society power will reside with those possessing knowledge, primarily abstract or theoretical knowledge (Bell, 1973: 343). If true, those programs of education for the public service that provide a degree of certainty based on a defined knowledge base will have a clear competitive advantage. Traditional public administration will achieve success as a professional program only if it overcomes the uncertainty of the past. Yet, the political skills that lawyers offer can be a decided

asset of public administration graduates if they are sensitized to the political environment of public management.

The acquisition of specialized professional knowledge may well be necessary for the public administrator of the future to compete successfully at the entry level for employment. It does not follow, however, that the administrative qualities required by the public administrator of the future will be best developed by this route. It is precisely the "arrogance" of the specialist that presents a major problem for administration of the future. The well-known tendency of professional groups to take a parochial and even a self-interested view of issues of policy suggests that a major requirement of the future public executive will be to reconcile differences between professional groups and among experts within a professional field. The executive will need to examine critically the work of specialists whose analyses cannot be separated from their advocacy. We think that the ability to perform these tasks will depend less upon "arrogance" based on specialized knowledge than upon *general* analytical capabilities, political sensitivity, and interpersonal skills.

The future executive will need unaccustomed abilities in dealing with political forces in the environment. The activation of citizens, the development of institutions to represent consumers and clients, the increasing use of legal methods to enforce the accountability of public officials, as well as traditional relationships with interest groups, legislative bodies, and the media—all of these will demand that the public executive possess extraordinary understanding of the political environment and super-human skills in influencing, resisting, and responding to forces impinging upon his or her agency.

These and other demands upon future executives suggest that there is ample reason for retaining in the education of public administrators elements relating to the development of political sophistication, an understanding of socioeconomic forces and the ways in which they may impinge upon public programs, the development of interpersonal skills, a high degree of flexibility that permits rapid adaptation to changes in the environment, and a tolerance for uncertainty and for the "arrogance" of specialized

individuals and groups. If this analysis is even approximately correct, the two years or less of a typical public administration Master's degree program are scarcely sufficient to permit the laying of foundations for the future development of these qualities, and at the same time to provide a concentration in some substantive area of public policy.

The growth of continuing education opportunities for public service employees may be seen as a prime solution to the problem of what can be taught and learned in a limited amount of time. More important, the free exchange of individuals between government agencies and academia can only enhance the validity of both institutions. It also holds high potential for eliminating the theory-practice gap which has for so long plagued public service education.

Easing of the educational time constraint diminishes the importance of selecting a specialist for generalist educational strategy. Educational programs must be prepared to respond to both as the need arises. In that sense, whether we educate people to do public service or to be public servants, or indeed if we can do both, is increasingly based upon the perceived applicability of the appropriate knowledge and behaviors to the operation of government. We can only hope that the educational institutions do not become coopted to a degree where all detachment is lost, for it is only through a measure of detachment that necessary critique of the governmental enterprise can continue.

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