

Education and Identity in Public Administration

Contemporary Issues in American Public Administration Education: The Search for an Educational Focus

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What should be the focus of American public administration education? According to Curtis Ventriss, the answer to that question is shaped by the way we approach a variety of issues: the relationship between scholars and practitioners; the appropriate role of public administrators in dealing with social issues; the need for a common intellectual culture among public administration scholars; the insularity of American public administration; and the lack of an integrated approach for the analytic, managerial, and policy-knowledge perspectives that are central to the public administration curricula. In offering ideas to address these issues, Ventriss reminds us that the debates surrounding each have implications beyond the classroom. They help shape the identity of the field, and therefore its future.

If schools of public affairs are to produce leaders, they must be leaders. Rufus E. Miles, Jr.

A fateful question seems posed: does Public Administration, by becoming everything in general, thereby become nothing in particular? Dwight Waldo

Wandering between two worlds, one dead and the other powerless to be born. Mathew Arnold

It has become customary for social science disciplines to engage in periodic soul-searching, but perhaps more than any other field of inquiry, public administration has done more than its fair share. Given the intellectual nature of the field, this is understandable. John Honey, writing in 1967, put it succinctly: "Those in the field are acutely aware of intellectual problems. Is public administration a field, a discipline, a science, a profession? Or is it the process of conducting public business, which requires the knowledge and skills of many disciplines and professions?"¹ Since Honey posed these questions (all echoed before) debate has raged on about the meaning and purpose of public administration. Despite theoretical approaches taken on how to resolve this issue, and the particular merits associated with each, the nagging issue of how to educate students for careers in public service has always hung precariously in the background. The identity of the field, to a considerable extent, has been inexorably linked to a search for an educational focus in public administration and public affairs in general. The ambiguity that besets public administration as a mish-mash of different theoretical and methodological approaches is also reflected in the confusion concerning the kind of education students need for careers in the public service.

Notwithstanding the importance of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration's (NASPAA) standards and how such standards have established some pedagogical order to the field, the questions of the "what" and "why" to teach students (and in what dosage) still remain a vexing issue. While the purpose here is not to trace the historical trends of public affairs education, the major external and internal forces that have shaped the field's educational philosophy are discussed. As new policy issues have emerged, and as public demands have taken new forms, those issues and demands have inevitably impacted public affairs education.

The primary focus, however, is on exploration of certain factors that are critical to the development of any educational focus. These are: (1) the imperfect communication between scholars of public affairs and practitioners; (2) the pedagogical ambivalence of what role the field should play in shaping societal affairs; (3) the inherent tension of an interdisciplinary approach to public affairs that runs the risk of fragmenting the field; (4) the present fixation of an educational inclination focused almost exclusively on domestic affairs in an era of the internationalization of public issues; and (5) the uneasy relationship among analytical, management, and policy knowledge and how varied understanding can be conceptually integrated.

Although this is hardly an exhaustive list of issues dealing with public affairs education, it does provide a starting point of how one might proceed in rethinking an educational focus. At a minimum, it may prompt the field to recast its educational net in new and perhaps innovative directions.

Theory and Practice: An Educational Disjunction

"The need to be intellectually defensible," John Dyckman observed in 1978, "is felt keenly throughout the [discipline], but is most acute in the universities."² Largely for this reason, Dyckman concluded, scholars are under constant pressure to establish theoretical generality, explanation, and rigorous argument. In particular, the ability of scholars in public affairs to validate knowledge and to export that theory and knowledge is paramount in establishing any resemblance of legitimacy for public administration. To many, anything short of this goal represents an intellectual inferiority in comparison to other disciplines; more importantly, it reduces scholars of public affairs to a permanent second-class status. Richard Brown, while perhaps overstating the case, expressed a frustration that exemplifies this general viewpoint:

Most schools and programs in public administration are not very good, lacking in both rigor and purpose. We must create more and better true schools of public administration.... Some, even many, existing programs in public administration should be allowed to die slowly.³

Such a perspective, however valid, ignores the difficult theoretical task in doing research in public affairs. That is,

while theory provides a means of validating knowledge in public affairs, it is a theory, or set of theories, which must have some application to the world of practice. However, within the walls of the university, theory is supposed to meet the demands of empirical explanatory power and of rigor. The inherent requirements of this conceptualization of theory may be ironically exacerbating the academician's role in linking theory with socially-useful knowledge. As one social theorist put it, "there are built-in tensions which in providing rigor, pull theorists too far into the world of abstraction and unreality. Their theories about guidance are impressive intellectual statements that [often] bear no relation to the operation of social systems in a modern world."⁴

The schism between theory and practice of course is not new. This state of affairs, to a large extent, is simply the result of different reward systems of academicians and the practitioners:

Individual members of the university must conserve their position in the university and try to rise in that system. They cannot do so unless they meet the expectations of the university community for publication, and this means the construction of generalizations and ultimately of theoretical systems of explanation.... The canons of academic judgment pursue the individual and determine his success. Very different criteria are determining for the working professional. The [practitioner] may be judged by his fellow professionals, or by the community which he serves but the criteria will be very different from those of the academic community. Fellow professionals may judge him for the size of the budget or quality of staff he has been able to create from the political system, or for the scale of the undertaking he is able to generate or the innovative methods of analysis and programming he mounts.... The community may judge him for his political shifts, for his ability to articulate his programs, for his skill in compromising interests or for his ability to inspire visions of the future.⁵

The purpose, content, and relevance of public affairs education has been attacked from all sides as either atheoretical or, at best, an enlightened form of vocational training.

Not surprisingly, these distinct reward systems have traumatized public affairs education. Thus the purpose, content, and relevance of public affairs education has been attacked from all sides as either atheoretical or, at best, an enlightened form of vocational training. To be fair to public administra-

tion, other professional fields like city planning, business administration, and education are also victims of similar intellectual ferment.

Exacerbating this tension is another salient factor: the professionalization of public administration is connected with the natural life of bureaucracy that tends to favor only that knowledge which accentuates the elements of efficiency, expediency, and calculation. The conduct of analysts or administrators is judged by how "things are done" in conformity with procedural rationality. Understandably, substantive rationality tends to play a secondary role to the procedural efficiency manifested in modern bureaucracies. "Except insofar as theory informs the various techniques of practice," Guy Adams notes, "why should students of public administration evidence concern for theory? Indeed, since most techniques in public administration are ill-formed theoretically, the student need have no concern with theory at all."⁶

In the process, scholar and practitioner have increasingly learned to talk past one another, both with their own reward structures and set of concerns. Public administration theorists, for the most part, still have serious difficulty with the notion that "professional education in public administration is concerned with application, operations, and performance, and not primarily with theory, abstractions, and research methodology."⁷ And with good reason! If theorists of public administration are to teach something to their students, it must be knowledge that is, one hopes, cumulative. Recently, attempts have been made to resolve this dichotomy between theory and practice. For instance, those who advocate such approaches as action theory, phenomenology, and other hybrids are the most vivid examples of this trend. However, these approaches (as important as they are) miss a crucial point: they veer the field too far to one side in their virulent, albeit legitimate, attack against the invasion of behavioral methodology, at the cost of only landing the field in a theoretical pit of unbridled subjectivity. The same can be argued for those who fallaciously equate theory with method, as if this "puritanism of knowledge" represents a way to advance the art and science of public administration (it does not.)

NASPAA requirements provide public affairs education with little help and guidance on this matter. What is desperately needed is nothing less than a reconceptualization of what constitutes "knowledgeable action" and the "theoretical understanding" of public issues.⁸ But how is this to be achieved? George Graham provides a hint of where one might begin. Although Graham's words were written almost 50 years ago, his message remains relevant today:

Research is perhaps the only escape—research that involves the mutual assistance of a broader body of scholars that is enriched by close collaboration with public officials and that is related to fundamental problems of government and administration. Without this sort of activity the universities will not be able to meet the needs of the present and the future. Graduate training for public administration worthy of the university tra-

dition must be based upon and closely related to research.⁹

The operative phrase of this perceptive insight is Graham's emphasis on establishing a collaborative research agenda among both scholars and practitioners. While much lip-service has been given to this idea, it has not as of yet taken root. It is not only long overdue, but badly needed. This approach may not eliminate entirely the gulf between theory and practice in public affairs, but it just might provide the kind of communication that will enrich the linkage between the university and public institutions.

This connection, some critics may reply, runs the dangerous risk of potentially contaminating the scholar's willingness to explore certain theoretical issues that the practitioner may find infeasible or even threatening. To avoid this fate, the emphasis must be on *mutual learning* that jointly links scholars and practitioners in furthering their knowledge and maturity on public issues, and not a one-way relationship whereby the research agenda is dictated by the practitioner. Specifically, what does mutual learning mean? Mutual learning refers to an educative conception of theory and practice. According to Brian Fay,¹⁰ an educative conception attempts to uncover the underlying conditions and assumptions of social practices, and, more importantly, to engender self-knowledge in order to clarify, if necessary, the institutional and social arrangements that may be only perpetuating the problem at hand. Fay asserts that such a social theory can be scientific, practical, and critical. Thus, unlike the rational model of theory which emphasizes how to achieve ends by determining causal relationships and how such knowledge can work for the practitioner, the educative approach tries to balance this perspective with a critical analysis of those causal relationships and the consideration of other alternative ends never raised by the rational model.

In this respect, part of the responsibility of academicians is to raise issues and concerns that may be uncomfortable or even unpopular. By this emphasis on mutual learning, both practitioners and scholars may better understand Max Weber's discerning observation: "Certainly all political experience confirms that truth that man would not have attained the possible unless time and again he had reached out for the impossible."¹¹

A Pedagogical Ambivalence

One of the intriguing aspects of public affairs education is the proclivity to be "very much interested in educating students to *do public service*, but not necessarily to *be public servants*."¹² There are historical reasons for this educational inclination, and they are worthy of note. Public administration, like other professional disciplines dedicated to the public sector, was born out of a concern about political corruption. "It was a reform movement, directed against clear and present evils that a rational and well-intentioned people could correct."¹³ The progressive era, as explained by historians, stressed among other things the saliency of administration over politics. In the earlier period of the field's development,

public administration education therefore concentrated on staff functions such as budgeting, organization, personnel, planning, and so forth that were commensurate with the virtues of economy and efficiency.

This focus, in part, was epitomized by the influential textbooks written by Leonard D. White and W. F. Willoughby.¹⁴ The significance of White's book, in particular, was his attempt to link political science conceptually to management. His central premises included the following:

- ◆ that management is a single process wherever found;
- ◆ that administration can reasonably aspire to move from art to science;
- ◆ that problems of administration are now and will remain the central problems of modern government; and
- ◆ that the objective of public administration is efficiency.¹⁵

The residue of this propensity is still felt today. The intellectual skyline of public administration education, under the rubric of administration and efficiency, has seemed to settle the field in a conceptual trajectory that has persisted on the central premises of promoting economy and efficiency. To be sure, some scholars like Paul Appleby and Roscoe Martin voiced strong concerns about a fixation on efficiency, hoping that the field would start to concern itself with public policy within a pluralistic framework. Even with the attack on the politics and administration dichotomy in the 1940s and with the rise of the behavioral movement and pluralism, these events only slightly modified the central motifs of public affairs education. The vocabulary of public administration, however, did accommodate the introduction of such concepts as decision making, management science, organization theory, and public policy. But by the 1960s, Allen Schick observed, public administration education resembled a form of eclecticism that "proved to be little more than ambivalence and confusion."¹⁶ In this conceptual rubble, economics with its arsenal of mathematical techniques tried to provide a more empirical grounding for public administration's activities. Although public administration education, as Frederick Mosher pointed out, cannot be viewed independently of the historical and political forces of the day, the intellectual basis of the field's pedagogy, for the most part, has remained fairly constant: budgeting, personnel administration, and organization and management.¹⁷ Policy studies became the most prominent addition to this list in recent decades.

Despite this trend, the general question has always been basically the same: for what are students being educated? Generally speaking, the answer has been consistent since the field's early beginnings—for professionally expert work in public bureaucracies devoted to public service. The critical phrase here is what is meant by public service. Public service, as the field's history indicates, is perceived as concomitant with administrative roles—roles confined within the boundaries of organizations. But is this view too pedantic? Is a balance needed between educating students "to do" pub-

lic service (read: to administer for the public interest) and "to be" prospective public servants (read: to serve as public leaders). In other words, have public administration and public policy educators overemphasized administration and analysis (teaching students to cope with complexity, planning and budgeting, and problem solving) and underemphasized leadership (teaching students to cope with change, communicating a vision, and motivating)? As John Kotter has recently pointed out in the *Harvard Business Review*, leadership and management are equally important—they are just different.¹⁸ This should make public administration and policy educators pause and reflect on their general reluctance to "teach" leadership. As farfetched as this may appear, it is interesting to note that in 1908 Harvard University tried something close to this idea: a graduate school for educating *both* public administrators and diplomats (public leaders). Unfortunately, the idea lost momentum due to the perceived paucity of career opportunities.

What is hinted here should now be more directly stated. The field's pedagogical focus needs an *explicit* emphasis on educating students to be *public leaders* and/or *administrators*. In short, as critical as it is to educate students to be competent public managers or policy analysts, it is equally important to educate students who may one day wish to be the Secretary of State, a senator, or a community leader. It would be pretentious to argue that schools of public affairs can, or should be, the only educational vehicle for producing prospective public leaders. Rather, it is contended that the field's purpose cannot ignore this vital role in shaping societal affairs. As Rufus Miles explained:

Since public affairs are primarily purpose-oriented, prospective leaders of our society cannot be properly prepared for their future roles without active encouragement and assistance toward the development of individual and personally satisfying patterns of social, economic, and political philosophy. How this is to be accomplished in an educational and social setting resembling an obstacle course should be a matter of the greatest concern to thoughtful citizens. This question lies at the heart of the difficult challenge confronting every graduate school of public affairs.¹⁹

Some may argue that such a role is filled with theoretical (and logistical) obstacles. How can one even begin to teach students to be public leaders? Are schools of public affairs really in the business of trying to produce prospective leaders? What must be recognized is that at the heart of public service is not only the importance of administration but the purpose and role of educating individuals to facilitate democratic self-governance. Certainly, the notion of governance includes administration. What is implied here is the casting of public administration's conceptual net a bit differently; that is, educating students to perform administrative and policy functions while at the same time articulating an active social and political philosophy that leaders must ponder to wrestle with the growing interdependency of public issues. If this idea is taken seriously, it means broadening public adminis-

tration's present educational scope to include a focus on how to achieve an "educated citizenry"—an educated citizenry that does not necessarily imply preparing one for a professional role in public institutions. This is not to negate the field's role in educating students for professional careers in the public and nonprofit sectors. It means, instead, that the field's mandate is much broader than presently perceived. To nurture the public interest, public administration must begin by preparing citizens for a variety of public roles. Simply put, if public administration is to recapture its public orientation, an integral part of this *process* means educating both civil servants and other possible future public servants. While this may appear an idyllic role, it is a challenge that can no longer be ignored, despite its inherent difficulty. If nothing else, it is a noble calling.

Rethinking an Interdisciplinary Approach to Public Affairs

The intrinsic value of an interdisciplinary approach to public affairs education has long been noted, particularly given the field's broad interest. For the most part, it was only when public administration started to exert its independence from political science that public administration started eagerly to look for concepts and approaches elsewhere—in psychology, sociology, economics, business administration, law, and urban affairs. Given the inherent interdependency of public issues, an interdisciplinary approach appeared not only to be reasonable, but a necessity. This interdisciplinary perspective can be clearly seen in the background of the faculty who teach in departments or schools of public affairs. As reported by James Wolf, only about 40 percent of public affairs faculty are from political science or public administration. The remaining 60 percent come from a variety of disciplines. He concluded as follows:

[The] teaching faculty in public administration programs then is clearly an interdisciplinary group. It consists of a large group of public administration and political science types surrounded by a host of related disciplines in social sciences and special program areas. This mix may present problems for clarity of program purpose, but offers an opportunity for a variety of professional orientations within PA programs.²⁰

Frederick Mosher, moreover, gave added intellectual legitimacy to this educational eclecticism:

[Public Administration] has cross-interests with virtually all other social sciences. In fact, it would appear that any definition of this field would be either so encompassing as to call forth the wrath or ridicule of others or so limiting as to stultify its own discipline. Perhaps it is best that it not be defined. It is more an area of interest than a discipline....²¹

Few can quibble with Mosher's reasoning. Yet, from a historical perspective, according to Donald and Alice Stone,

an interdisciplinary (or multidisciplinary) approach to professional education in public affairs has been rather disappointing.²² To a certain degree, this disappointment can be attributed to how public administration has become so broad in scope—sheltering so many different kinds of knowledge and skills from other disciplines—that it has become what one scholar so aptly called "a leaky umbrella."²³ As government has grown and increased its role, so has the field. This is reflected in the growth of a myriad of sub-disciplines ranging from environmental policy and management to judicial administration. The *rub* in this trend is that a "pedagogical diffusion" has taken place with little to which to connect a body of knowledge. According to James Bowman and Jeremy Plant, the consequences of this development are twofold:

First, it demeans the tradition of public administration as opposed to policy-specific questions, and so makes management of programs seem a lesser and often troublesome appendage to the tasks of policy development and strategic decision-making. Second, it may make it difficult to educate students for the centrist management concerns of a future dominated by jurisdictional management and interorganizational coordination.²⁴

Another consequence of this pedagogical diffusion—one which represents a more serious challenge for education in public affairs—is that because public administration programs harbor so many scholars from diverse backgrounds a focus can be potentially lost in what constitutes public administration's common ethic and purpose. In other words, public administration programs are slowly coming to resemble a disoriented *educational octopus*, with appendages moving in all directions, lacking a sense of normative coherency. To be sure, the interdisciplinary nature of public administration is to be applauded and further encouraged. But fragmentation should not be mistaken for an interdisciplinary approach—directionless fragmentation that can erode the field's substantive worth. In sum, interdisciplinary research and teaching is not merely a smorgasbord of faculty thrown together who exhibit only a modicum of knowledge concerning the meaningful linkages between administration (or policy) with the public. Frederick Mosher and Dwight Waldo were correct:

A public affairs program is not an intellectual reservation for those who want to teach—regardless of their intellectual perspective—something about the public sector independent of any knowledge (or interest) of the field as a whole.

what makes public administration unique and distinctive is the notion of the *public*. It is true that public affairs education is too important to be left to those who are exclusively trained in public administration or public policy; conversely, it is also too important to be left to an amalgamation of scholars whose knowledge of public administration is rudimentary at best. Expressing an interest in the public sector is simply not enough to provide the proper educational glue. A public affairs program is not an intellectual reservation for those who want to teach—regardless of their intellectual perspective—something about the public sector independent of any knowledge (or interest) of the field as a whole. Saying this, does it make any sense to have different scholars teach in public affairs programs if they have not pondered Dwight Waldo's *Administrative State*, Frederick Mosher's *Democracy and the Public Service*, Paul Appleby's *Big Democracy*, Yehezkel Dror's *Design for Policy Sciences*, or Herbert Simon's *Administrative Behavior*, or worse yet, have never heard of them? Without a substantive connection to the normative content of the field, an interdisciplinary approach is degraded into a state of babel, confusion, and bewilderment. The issue here is not some kind of litmus test or reading lists for scholars who wish to teach in a public affairs program; rather, it is that interest in public issues alone is not enough. A common ethic or common culture of what public administration purports to be, and the debates surrounding these issues, is central to the field and its foundation. If a public affairs program expects its students to be exposed to a variety of viewpoints and how they can be synthesized in addressing the major issues of the day, scholars in public affairs programs must exhibit the same dedication. Absent that interest and engagement, an interdisciplinary approach to public affairs will only be a superficial veil for the lack of any common ethic or culture of what the field is trying to do and what faculties are trying to teach. When all is said and done, the price of such a misguided interdisciplinary perspective is much too high.

In spite of increasing interdependency of policy and economic issues, American public administration (and public policy) has remained insulated from other cultures and neglectful of international issues in general.

The Internationalization of American Public Administration

In 1947, Robert Dahl wrote an influential article in the *Public Administration Review* which, even today, continues

to ripple through public administration. He contended that if public administration is to have any conceptual validity, it must address three major obstacles: (1) the inherent normative implications of public administration; (2) that a science of public administration must be based upon a study of human behavior; and (3) that "as long as the study of public administration is not comparative, claims for a science of public administration sound rather hollow."²⁵

It is Dahl's last point that warrants attention here. Of course, the call for a comparative perspective is not new. Woodrow Wilson, for example, long ago drew attention to the importance of foreign affairs to American public administration.²⁶ Leonard White also stressed a comparative perspective in his 1930 book, *The Civil Service in the Modern State*, which included a comparison of national civil service in different countries.²⁷ And in the 1950s and 1960s, during the highpoint of America's role in providing technical assistance around the world, the comparative administration movement was born. For varied reasons, this movement quickly waned. This was due, by and large, to arguments about what this movement purported to be as a subdiscipline and how it distinguished itself from other similar approaches to international affairs. Regardless of the reasons for this movement's decline, public administration and public policy have been devoid of an international perspective. Ferrel Heady put it succinctly when he argued that "Both in theory and practice, American public administration has historically exhibited an orientation that is primarily national, concentrating on the past experience and future needs of the United States and only incidentally concerned with cross-national comparison."²⁸ In the next breath, Heady spelled out the real implications of this parochialism:

This tendency is reflected in the commonly accepted view that parochialism is a persistent dominant feature of American public administration, evidenced in the curricula of institutions of higher education preparing young people for public service careers and in the conduct of public administration by practicing professionals.²⁹

Heady's point should be taken seriously: that in spite of increasing interdependency of policy and economic issues, American public administration (and public policy) has remained insulated from other cultures and neglectful of international issues in general. Concomitantly, this is reflected in the curriculum in public affairs which is dominated by domestic concerns. But is this fixation on domestic affairs realistic anymore? It is not. Recognition of this deficiency is not an invitation to reenter the debate on what does, or what does not, constitute the study and practice of comparative administration. Charles Goodsell, for example, has called for what he refers to as a "new comparative administration" that includes both supranational and subnational levels of analysis.³⁰ Instead, the issue concerns what might be called the "internationalization of public administration/public affairs." As Astrid Merget explained:

I am struck, as I visit campuses around the country, how public administration is parochialized. It is Americanized. What we need to do is infuse the cultural context of other countries into our subject matter. I'm not talking particularly about more programs in comparative administration or development administration, but *rather an infusion of an international perspective into what we teach in management and what we teach about public economy, public finance, and other specialized fields...* We need to infuse among our analysts the greater complexity of analyzing problems in a cross-cultural perspective.³¹

From both a theoretical and practical view, an examination of this internationalization of public administration and public policy might include exploring some of the following themes:

- ◆ examining the lack of appropriate policy and economic frameworks based on the interrelationships of political, economic, and administrative impacts which may reduce capacities for self-governance;
- ◆ clarifying the interactions of nongovernmental actors (trade unions, banking and investment institutions, world trade clubs, etc.) and governmental actors (local, state, national, and supranational) and their overlapping influences on policy making;
- ◆ examining the implications of technology and information which has lessened geographic and social distances, thus intensifying the interaction of international, national, and local systems;
- ◆ exploring new policy strategies to deal with economic and political issues in an interdependent world; and
- ◆ studying different social and administrative systems in order to incorporate new knowledge and procedures that may fit within the American context.³²

This is only a partial and suggestive list of what might be considered as part of the "internationalization" of the field. According to Fred Riggs, one thing is certain, however: "no one can claim to understand public administration when all she or he knows is the administrative experience of one country...what we used to think of as comparative administration must be viewed...as nothing more than ordinary public administration."³³ No one has said it better.

Analytical, Management, and Policy Knowledge: An Uneasy Relationship?

The juxtaposition of analytical, management, and policy knowledge is regarded as essential to prepare students with the knowledge and skills necessary to participate successfully in careers devoted to public service. For example, NASPAA's standards call for a common curriculum in three broad areas:

- (1) management of the public and, as appropriate, third sector organizations;
- (2) the application of quantitative and qualitative techniques of analysis; and
- (3) an understanding of the public policy and organizational environment.³⁴

As reasonable as this appears in theory, in actual practice some disconcerting trends in public administration education have emerged that have provoked students and scholars alike to question how well this balance is being adhered to.

David Brown, for example, has recently posed this poignant question: "Is Public Administration really interested in management?"³⁵ Brown's conclusion was largely negative. Following this same theme, Blue Wooldridge questioned whether departments or schools of public affairs are adequately preparing students to be managers in the public sector.³⁶ Bill Kirchoff, the City Manager of Arlington, Texas, was even more blunt: "What can today's MPA graduates do? ...Unless they have an undergraduate degree in engineering, accounting, business administration, architecture, or some other hard science, and possess the tough kernel of ambition, the answer is not much."³⁷ Because Kirchoff's point cannot be easily brushed aside, it is worth quoting him at length:

So long as we foist theoretical nonmanagerial training on people who are going to be assigned the task of managing and give them a maze of choices that could have been designed by Kafka, our expectations for success remain low... What we do the most, managing people, facilities and equipment with limited resources, is not easy to learn in a typical public administration program because, with rare exceptions, it simply isn't being taught. We need to see our world as it is rather than as we wish it were. Our primary orb is service delivery, not the creation of public policy. Some open-kimono time is needed by the profession.³⁸

With little conceptual understanding of the importance of the public to public administration and public policy, and with a modicum of consensus of what it means, this state of affairs has resulted in making public affairs education particularly vulnerable to invasion by any field which can move in and, so to speak, declare itself sheriff.

The educational schism is clear: that management is not policy or a collection of analytical skills—it is skill-oriented knowledge that is reflective of a pragmatic approach to service delivery. Whatever may be said about the validity of this assumption, it raises once more the search for relevance that dates back to when George Graham voiced this same issue in his book, *Education for Public Administration*.³⁹ Schools of public policy deal with this problem straightforwardly. They do not purport to educate public managers, but rather sophisticated policy analysts. Furthermore, economists and political scientists in policy programs, in terms of academic respectability and analytical rigor, feel more at home teaching policy than the less respectable “nuts and bolts approach” of public management. It should come as no surprise that MPA programs in California are taught in the California State University system (with the exception of the University of Southern California), and policy programs are taught in the more prestigious University of California system. In fact, some of the most respected schools of public affairs are explicitly policy oriented: Carnegie-Mellon, University of California at Berkeley, Princeton, Harvard, and the University of Chicago, to name a few. Unfortunately, this trend smacks of an educational form of Taylorism. That is to say, the planning and policy function is best performed by those with a sound background in the rigors of analysis and the execution of policy procedures left to the less analytically-minded managerial janitors of the public sector. The sad fact is that “while policy study tends to be an important aspect of Public Administration, the majority of institutes, centers, programs and so forth are organizationally outside of Public Administration entities.”⁴⁰

Administration *may indeed*

be at the core of government, but the public is at the core of the republic.

A much broader question, however, is implied in this uneasy relationship. It is a question eloquently raised by Waldo when he asked whether “Public Administration by becoming everything in general, [has] become nothing in particular.”⁴¹ Waldo’s postulation, while true in what it implies, overlooks a more basic point; namely, *it is not so much the mass and diversity of public administration that may be the problem (although assuredly this is part of it), but rather the absence of any conceptual link that gives coherency to this mass and diversity.* This conceptual link is the notion of the public. Public administration and public policy have forgotten that often what is called *public* administration or *public* policy is really nothing more than the “administration of the public,” or a “policy for the public.” The ordering of the words of the field is important; it denotes that the primary focus should be on the *public*, rather than on administration or policy. It is the view of the public that should guide the field’s conception of administration and policy, not the other

way around. This view of the *public* particularly applies to policy analysis, as argued by Allen Schick:

Policy analysis has emerged as a separate field because of disaffection with public administration...[however] policy represents only a fraction of what is public; analysis is only one component of administration. Now it appears that the focus has been too limited. [Analysts] may even have to rediscover public administration....⁴²

Schick is only partially correct. The real rediscovery of the linkage among management, analysis, and policy is to be found in a common quest for the role of the public and its substantive meaning. No doubt, most perceive the public as an elusive and slippery concept. Most theorists and practitioners are content to settle on the meaning of the public as synonymous with the government or as embedded in the vocabulary of pluralism. Obviously, this view has some virtue. Yet, this myopic conception of the public—as Theodore Lowi notes—regards the public as congruent with interest-group liberalism that now pervades modern politics. Given this theoretical view, “one wonders if we have perhaps reduced the notion of the public to an abstraction—an amorphous statistical configuration that becomes real only when voices are raised.”⁴³

So what does this all mean for educating students for public service? First, it means that it is the *publicness* of the inquiry that makes the interdependency of management, analysis, and policy so crucial. Obviously, students must become acquainted with policy analysis, management science, budgeting, public finance, and so forth. NASPAA’s regulations have done much to move the field in this direction. That is not the pivotal controversy facing public affairs education. Rather, it is the myopic conception of the public and its unidimensional characterization that haunts public administration and public policy. With little conceptual understanding of the importance of the public to *public* administration and *public* policy, and with a modicum of consensus of what it means, this state of affairs has resulted in making public affairs education become particularly vulnerable to invasion by any field which can move in and, so to speak, declare itself sheriff. Consequently, a crude form of educational Taylorism has emerged that has resulted in isolating management from policy because little room exists for a common universe of discourse.

This lack of common discourse has disguised old and unresolved struggles about what to make of the notion of the public. This is primarily why public affairs education—regardless of the balance one tries to make in exposing students to crucial aspects of the field—looks like a collection of disconnected parts without a whole. At present, the common link seems to hang on producing socially-useful knowledge. Acknowledging this, it is not surprising that the 1967 Honey Report on Higher Education for Public Administration had almost nothing to say about pressing public issues. Writing in response to the Honey Report, Peter Savage addressed a point that is still pregnant with meaning today: “for what

purposes and to what ends are we and our knowledge being used? The answer may not have been very frightening, but if we are to offer ourselves and our talents as social scientists to the highest bidder, we ought to know to what ends.⁴⁴ Administration may indeed be at the core of government, but the *public* is at the core of the republic. And that means facing some troublesome moral dilemmas:

What standards of decision do we use to select which questions ought to be studied and how do we study them? Who defines our questions and priorities for us? To what extent are we aware of the social and moral implications of knowledge in public administration?... To whose advantage does public administration work? What are the assumptions and, more importantly, the consequences of research and education in public administration?⁴⁵

The issues raised by these questions will not, and, given the values at stake, should not go away. Such questions also raise an interesting twist to the discussion posed so far: integral to the balance sought is to address these questions with students of the field. In the final analysis, to do otherwise would make the discussion of a balance, even if it were to be resolved to everyone's satisfaction, seem almost irrelevant, even dangerous.

Conclusion

Nothing is more crucial to the role and purpose of public administration (and public policy) than how students are educated for the complex tasks that await them. This is why the role and purpose of public affairs education will most likely continue to be a constant source of controversy and debate—as it should. The issues at stake are too great to be taken for granted. Notwithstanding the importance of research, how students are educated stands at the apex of public administration's contribution to society. While it is true that only four or five percent of the governmental workforce have degrees in public administration or public policy, schools or departments of public affairs are looked upon as resources where administrators and analysts may update their knowledge.

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1. John C. Honey, "A Report: Higher Education for Public Service," *Public Administration Review*, vol. 27 (July/August, 1967), p. 301; see also Dwight Waldo, "Scope of the Theory of Public Administration," in J. C. Charlesworth, ed., *Theory and Practice of Public Administration* (Philadelphia, PA: American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1968).
2. John W. Dyckman, "Three Crises of American Planning," in Robert W. Burchell and George Sternlieb, eds., *Planning Theory in the 1980's* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1978), p. 285.

Although not discussed here, continuing education has long been an integral aspect of the outreach activities among universities in this field.

It is for these reasons that a coherent educational focus—or search for it—is needed in public affairs. The arguments posed here have only scratched the surface of the meaning of this focus, but they are probably worth repeating: (1) initiation of a mutual learning research approach to help bridge the dichotomy between theory and practice; (2) broadening of the field's intellectual net to educate prospective public leaders outside of administration who need to become acquainted with the complex intricacies of policy issues, especially given that most policy issues exist in an interconnected political and economic environment; (3) reexamination of an interdisciplinary faculty who, because many have little conceptual understanding of public administration, strip the field of a shared culture or ethic; (4) a call for internationalizing public administration and public policy; and finally, (5) a reevaluation of the growing separation of public policy from management that has led to a form of educational Taylorism. Part of the balance which links analysis, management, and policy will mean nothing less than the rediscovery of the *public*.

Putting aside the logistics of how these suggestive ideas can be implemented, one point is strikingly obvious: finding an educational focus is a critical part of what public administration is and of what it is likely to become in the future. That alone should make one pause concerning the scope of the challenge.



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Notes

3. Cited in Blue Wooldridge, "Increasing the Professional Management Orientation of Public Administration Courses," *American Review of Public Administration*, vol. 17 (December 1987), p. 93.
4. Nicki King, "Planning Theory: An Examination of Linkages Between Implementation, Knowledge and Action," *Rand Corporation Paper P516* (January 1974), pp. 1-2.
5. John Dyckman, "Three Crises of American Planning," pp. 280-281.
6. Guy B. Adams, "Prolegomenon to a Teachable Theory of Public Administration," in Thomas Vocino and Richard Heimovics, eds., *Public Administration Education in Transition* (New York: Marcel Dekker, 1982), p. 94.
7. Alice B. Stone and Donald C. Stone, "Early Developments of Education in Public Administration," in Frederick C. Mosher, ed., *American Public Administration: Past, Present, Future* (University: University of Alabama Press, 1975), p. 26. It should be noted that Alice and Donald Stone did not argue for a public

administration devoid of theoretical concerns. They merely said that public administration is inherently problem oriented with a strong clinical focus. Even given this orientation, they contended that public administration would be crippled "without the development of a substantial descriptive and theoretical body of knowledge" p. 27.

8. For example, see Nicholas Henry, "The Emergence of Public Administration as a Field of Study," in Ralph C. Chandler, ed., *A Centennial History of the American Administrative State* (New York: Free Press, 1987), pp. 37-85. For a different view consult, Gregory A. Daneke, "A Science of Public Administration?" *Public Administration Review*, vol. 50 (May/June 1990), pp. 383-392.
9. George Graham, *Education for Public Administration* (Chicago: Public Administration Service, 1941) p. 132.
10. Brian Fay, *Critical Social Science* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1987), pp. 83-116; also refer to Fay's *Social Theory and Political Practice* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1976). Also consult Richard Bernstein, *The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1976); Jurgen Habermas, *Theory and Practice* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1974); Donald Schon, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Basic Books, 1982).
11. Cited in Lewis A. Coser and Irving Howe, eds., *The New Conservatives* (New York: Quadrangle, 1973), p. 8.
12. James S. Bowman and Jeremy F. Plant, "Institutional Problems of Public Administration Programs: A House Without a Home," in T. Vocino and R. Heimovics, eds., *Public Administration Education in Transition* (New York: Marcel Dekker, 1982), p. 40. See B. L. Gates and J. Doubleday, "A Question of Focus: The Future of Education for the Public Service," *American Behavioral Scientist*, vol. 21 (July/August 1978), pp. 907-910.
13. Frederick C. Mosher, ed., *American Public Administration: Past, Present, Future*, p. 4; for a somewhat different perspective, see Peri E. Arnold, *Making the Managerial Presidency: Comprehensive Reorganization Planning 1905-1980* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986).
14. Leonard D. White, *Introduction to the Study of Public Administration* (New York: MacMillan, 1926); W. F. Willoughby, *Principles of Public Administration* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, 1927).
15. Dwight Waldo, "Education for Public Administration in the Seventies," in F. Mosher, ed., *American Public Administration: Past, Present, Future*, p. 183. See also Waldo's "Introduction: Trends and Issues in Education of Public Administration," in Birkhead and Carroll, eds., *Education for Public Service* (Syracuse: Syracuse, Maxwell School, 1976), p. 17.
16. Allen Schick, "The Trauma of Politics: Public Administration in the Sixties," in F. Mosher, ed., *American Public Administration: Past, Present, Future*, p. 157.
17. Consult the following literature for various views on this issue: Richard Chapman and Frederick N. Cleaveland, *Meeting the Needs of Tomorrow's Public Service: Guidelines for Professional Education in Public Administration* (Washington: National Academy of Public Administration 1973); H. George Frederickson, "Public Administration in the 1970's: Developments and Directions," *Public Administration Review*, vol. 36 (September/October 1976), pp. 574-576; Guthrie S. Birkhead, "Standards and Educational Institutions," *The Bureaucrat*, vol. 6 (Summer 1977); Robert T. Golembiewski, "The Near-Future of Graduate Public Administration Programs in the U.S.," *Southern Review of Public Administration*, vol. 6 (December 1979); Robert B. Denhardt, "The Contemporary Critique of Management Education: Lessons for Business and Public Administration," *Public Administration Quarterly*, vol. 11 (Summer 1987), pp. 123-133; Frank J. Thompson, "Is University Training Practical? Perspectives of Public Personnel Officials," *Public Administration Quarterly*, vol. 38 (January/February 1978); Richard L. Schott, "Public Administration as a Profession: Problems and Prospects," *Public Administration Review*, vol. 36 (September/October 1976).
18. John P. Kotter, "What Leaders Really Do," *Harvard Business Review*, vol. 89 (May/June 1990), pp. 90-98. See also Mark A. Abramson, "The Leadership Factor," *Public Administration Review*, vol. 49 (November/December 1989), pp. 562-565. Abramson makes the obvious (and valid) point that political leaders are often chosen for reasons other than their leadership and management skills. Administrative careerists, in short, do not have the same opportunity for leadership that careerists have in other fields. Public Administrative careerists can only end up, at best, as "number twos" in their organization, according to Abramson. I concur with Abramson's argument that given this reality senior managers must be aggressive in formulating their vision for their agency. My only disagreement with Abramson is that public affairs programs must expand their educational scope to educate students who seek different career paths in public life, namely, as elected and appointed leaders. It is interesting to note that the field comes the closest in providing both leadership and management skills in how it educates city managers.
19. Rufus E. Miles, Jr., "The Search for Identity of Graduate Schools of Public Affairs," *Public Administration Review*, vol. 27 (July/August 1967), p. 345. See also Derek Bok, "The Presidential Report, 1973-1974," *Harvard Today*, vol. 18 (June 1975), pp. 4-10; E. N. Gladden, *A History of Public Administration*, vol. 2 (London: Frank Cass, 1972), p. 397.
20. James F. Wolf, "Careers in Public Administration Education," in T. Vocino and R. Heimovics, eds., *Public Administration Education in Transition*, p. 119.
21. Frederick C. Mosher, "Research in Public Administration," *Public Administration Review*, vol. 16 (Summer 1956), p. 177.
22. Alice Stone and Donald Stone, "Early Developments of Education in Public Administration," pp. 11-48. Nicholas Henry raises a critical point concerning an interdisciplinary model to public administration. See his article, "Root and Branch: Public Administration's Travail Toward the Future," in Naomi B. Lynn and Aaron Wildavsky, eds., *Public Administration: The State of the Discipline* (Chatham, NJ: Chatham House, 1990), pp. 20-22.
23. This term is borrowed from Lawrence D. Mann, "Planning Behavior and Professional Policymaking Activity," in R. W. Burchell and G. Sternlieb, eds., *Planning Theory in the 1980's*, pp. 113-149.
24. J. Bowman and J. Plant, "Institutional Problems of Public Administration Programs: A House Without a Home," p. 45.
25. Robert A. Dahl, "The Science of Public Administration," *Public Administration Review*, vol. 7 (Winter 1947), pp. 1-11.
26. See Richard Stillman, "Woodrow Wilson and the Study of Administration: A New Look at an Old Essay," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 67 (June 1973), pp. 270-273.
27. Leonard D. White, *The Civil Service in the Modern State: A Collection of Documents* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930).
28. Ferrel Heady, "Comparative Public Administration in the United States," in R. Chandler, ed., *A Centennial History of the American Administrative State*, p. 480. See especially Richard Ryan, "Assessing the Impact of Global Issues on Domestic Policy" (Washington: NAS-PAA, IAS Occasional Paper #1, 1989); Randall Baker, "Internationalizing the Core of the MPA Degree" (Washington: NAS-PAA, IAS Occasional Paper #2, 1990).
29. Heady, *Ibid.*, p. 480.

30. Charles T. Goodsell, "The New Comparative Administration: A Proposal," *International Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 3 (March 1981), pp. 145-155.
31. Astrid E. Merget, "A Campus Perspective, III," in *The State of American Public Service: A Tribute to James E. Webb* (Washington: National Academy of Public Administration, 1985), p. 25.
32. Cited in Curtis Ventriss, "The Internationalization of Public Administration and Public Policy: Implications for Teaching," *Policy Studies Review*, vol. 8 (Summer 1989), p. 902; also refer to Jeff Luke and Gerald Caiden, "Coping with Global Interdependence," in James L. Perry, ed., *Handbook of Public Administration* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1989), pp. 83-93.
33. Cited in Ferrel Heady, "Comparative Public Administration in the United States," p. 504.
34. National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, "Standards for Professional Masters Degree Programs in Public Affairs and Administration" (Washington: NAS-PAA, 1988).
35. David Brown, "Is Public Administration Really Interested in Management?" American Society for Public Administration Conference, Phoenix, AZ (April 1978).
36. Blue Woolridge, "Inadequacy of Public Administration Schools," *The Bureaucrat*, vol. 10 (Summer 1981), pp. 3-4.
37. Bill Kirchhoff, "Babbitt Could Have Been A City Manager," submitted to International City Management Association's, Future Visions Committee, unpublished p. 3.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
39. George Graham, *Education for Public Administration* (Chicago: Public Administration Service, 1941).
40. Dwight Waldo, "Education for Public Administration in the Seventies," p. 206. This trend is taking place because public policy, according to Nicholas Henry, can be viewed from two different angles: the substantive branch (the politics of 'something') which is dominated by political scientists and the theoretical branch that is concerned with issues of strategic planning, organization theory, program evaluations, and the like. The latter approach is more closely identified with public administration. Henry concludes that this schism has allowed political science to retain public administration without officially admitting it. Compare Henry's analysis in "Root and Branch: Public Administration's Travail Toward the Future," pp. 5-10 with Susan B. Hansen, "Public Policy Analysis: Some Recent Developments and Current Problems," in Ada W. Finifter, ed., *Political Science: The State of the Discipline* (Washington: American Political Science Association, 1983).
41. Waldo, *Ibid.*, p. 197.
42. Allen Schick, "Beyond Analysis," *Public Administration Review*, vol. 37 (May/June 1977) p. 263. For an equally critical view, consult Charles E. Lindbloom, "Integration of Economics and the Other Social Sciences Through Policy Analysis," in James C. Charlesworth, ed., *Integration of the Social Sciences Through Policy Analysis* (Philadelphia, PA: American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1972).
43. Curtis Ventriss, "Two Critical Issues of American Public Administration," *Administration and Society*, vol. 19 (May 1987), p. 35.
44. Peter Savage, "What Am I Bid for Public Administration?" *Public Administration Review*, vol. 28 (July/August 1968), p. 391.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 391.