

Original Paper

Eight Principles of the New Public Administration —A Brief Review of *The Spirit of Public Administration*

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Abstract

*In the book *The Spirit of Public Administration*, devoted to the search for the soul and spirit of public administration, the eight principles of public administration put forward by the Frederickson in the last chapter deserve careful study and reflection. After learning the author's background and reading the complete book, I found that these eight principles not only link all the chapters and contents of the book, but also run through Frederickson's research on the theory of new public administration. After each principle, I will add my own understanding to restore the author's original intention as much as possible. From the perspective of civil service administrative practice and specific operations, we will conduct a more in-depth discussion on issues such as public, fairness, justice, law, and administrative discretion. It is hoped that public servants can have a deeper understanding of the spirit of public administration in their specific work and achieve a good vision of combining theory with practice.*

Keywords

eight principles of public administration, administrative spirits, unification of theory and practice

In general, the structure of *The Spirit of Public Administration* is divided into three parts: the academic background, the equity and the ethical issues. The introduction is to make the reader understand what “public administration” actually means. The first part, the first three chapters, as the background of public administration, describes the public, political background and public administration as governance in public administration; the second part is the fourth chapter to the sixth chapter mainly talks about the issue of fairness (justice), and the issues of administrative discretion and intergenerational fairness in public administration. The third part, including the last five chapters, mainly deals with ethics, civic spirit and charity in public administration and the problems in regarding

to the management of representatives. In the last chapter, he puts forward the famous Primary Principles of Public Administration. When the author's attention was highly concentrated and quickly turned to the last chapter, I felt that my reading speed slowed down. The famous eight principles of public administration attracted me. I found that these eight principles are not only tightly buckled. I also find out that these eight principles are the soul of this book and perfectly represent F's main thesis. As the Chinese interpreter puts it: "This is the mind of a public administration. The journey of translating *The Spirit of Public Administration* is also a journey of self-sufficiency for oneself". Personally, the climax of this book is the most exciting part is the eight principles in the last chapter, and the previous article is just a narrative one. But at the same time, the eight principles are inseparable from the previous content, and the two complement each other, just like the symphony in the last chapter, deducted the beautiful notes at the end of life. The logic of the last chapter seems to be the suggestion of the problems in the public administration and the clarification of the duties of public administrators, and the principle of public administration in simple statements and questions. But in fact, each principle has its hidden meanings. I will explain these eight principles one by one in the following.

The first one is mainly about the field of public administration. To understand this principle thoroughly, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of "public". The first chapter of this book, *Public in public administration*, refers to the meaning of the public. The classical meaning of the public comes from the Greek word "pubes", "maturity" (mature) or "koinon" (care), meaning different from the individual, the common, and the meaning of others. In fact, the meaning of the word public is so narrow in the Frederickson's era that it is equated with the government. From different angles, Frederickson proposes that the public is an interest group, a rational choice, a representative, a customer, and a citizen. At the same time, in addition to understanding the public meaning of public administration, it is also necessary to clarify the field of public administration, which is why the author should distinguish public administration from government administration. We all know that traditional public administration emphasizes the management and control of government agencies, and rarely involves the management and operation of new types of public activities. Here, we have to mention the emergence of the word "governance" in Chapter 3. "Public Administration as Governance" shows that people have different views on the scope of public administration, and has greatly expanded the field of public administration. It is assumed that governance covers all public activities—government, quasi-government, and non-government. These non-governmental public organizations should understand the spirit of public administration and should also have the spirit of public administration. In this network, control is loose, power is decentralized, and its use is completely consistent with the first principle.

The second principle is also the second question raised by Frederickson, the task of public administration. The last principle is concerned with “public”. The last principle talks about “public”; this principle is how to define the “administrative” part that describes public administration. In the management course, I also learned that the evolution of organizational theory from hierarchical to matrix organization to the loosely-organized structure of power is nothing more than the search for the efficiency and economic problems of organizational management in “administration”. In the tumultuous changes of history, the issue of organization and management has once again become the central issue of scholars in the field of public administration in this period. But the new public administration theory also leads us to refocus on the value of “fairness”. Among them, in Chapter 5, *Fairness and Social Equity in Public Administration*, it also emphasizes fairness. Balancing efficiency, economics, and fairness is the responsibility of civil servants. The principle of social equity guides our understanding of the spirit of public administration, which requires us to be both efficient and fair.

Understanding of the third principle lies in the consideration of discretion in the fourth chapter “Administrative discretion”. The philosophical origins of the dispute over administrative discretion are traced back to Plato and Aristotle. Regarding it, whether we should simply use the law in accordance with the legal meaning of the law, or further explain it in the face of specific cases, while taking into account the issue of equity to avoid the problem of injustice caused by the law. Is it simply or explicitly using the law in accordance with the legal meaning of the law, or is it a further interpretation of the law in the face of specific cases, considering the issue of equity and thus avoiding the injustice caused by the law? After I learned the law myself, I naturally think that the Aristotelian view is more appropriate. As he believes, people do not choose between perfection and stability but choose between the many possible ways to achieve justice in society.

The principle of public administration is cautious about this expanded discretion. In practice, principles and commitments should not be forgotten to recognize the rigor of the law and the power to support elected officials in making laws and policies. No policy is perfect, however, the administrator should, to a large extent, make it more fair to most people.

This principle is tailored to local conditions and has regional characteristics. It does not seem to have universal characteristics, but the principle is the same. Public administration, in terms of investing in academic and time costs, should not only focus on the roles and responsibilities of the central government (federal government) but also balance the roles and responsibilities of local governments at all levels below the central government.

This principle involves the transformation of public administration. Change is not always good, since it also requires managers to have the ability to respond to change. Therefore, we try our best to avoid the crisis of citizen trust caused by “distance paradox”. Linking to the reality of China, the paradox is just the opposite of China’s national conditions, perhaps because the “distance gap” between policy

formulation and implementation has led to a real gap between the people and local officials. Therefore, change means cost, especially for local grassroots public servants. The various deficiencies brought about by the reform have undoubtedly increased the people's distrust of grassroots government personnel, and the reverse "distance paradox" has also expanded. In the two-way political exchanges, civil servants do not get a good response, and the lack of public administration spirit is also inevitable. At the same time, Frederickson raises the question of who the public manager should be responsible for. The answer is necessary and responsible. So, he came up with the following principle.

Frederickson thinks that this is a broader and more appropriate answer, and public managers should be accountable to citizens. In a democratic society, we have the responsibility to weigh the constitution, legal issues, and political issues. We have the responsibility to make decisions that enable us to understand policy implementation well. We have the responsibility to establish an institution that assumes moral responsibility for citizens. Judging from the spiritual essence of the whole book, public administration is not just a work that should be completed. It is necessary to rediscover the connection between public administration and civic spirit and citizenship in order to rediscover the spirit of public administration and thus feel the lofty and sacredness of our work.

The last three principles are actually emphasizing the duties of public managers. It seems that the seventh principle is to repeat the principle of fairness and equality in Chapter 5, *Fairness and Social Equity in Public Administration*, but in reality, it stands on a higher level. Re-examine this issue from the perspective of public managers' commitment to fairness and equality. These principles are not separate, but interconnected. The previous principle is clear that public managers are responsible for citizens. This article emphasizes that public managers' commitment to fairness and equality is as important as efficiency. Only by following the principles of fairness and equality can we break the inequality of this world and protect the fairness and justice of this society. At the same time, we need to pay attention to avoiding the intergenerational inequality mentioned by the author in Chapter 6, *The intergenerational concept of public administration*, rather than depriving the resources and freedom of the future generation.

This principle is reversed. From the perspective of citizenship, it emphasizes the "Interact" between citizens and public managers. It is quite similar to Habermas's "dialogue democracy", but the emphasis is on reality. It is the cultivation of the civic spirit and the public administration spirit based on the "good deeds and good deeds" embodied in the process of communication between public managers and citizens.

The ninth chapter *patriotism, charity, good governance, and public administration* are a kind of love for citizens. This kind of love is conducive to cultivating the spirit of public administration and is also conducive to the better completion of this noble cause. "Be good and good" means a broad and heartfelt love for citizens, and it also means a commitment to serve the larger public interest and to take

care of the needs of citizens fairly. With this, public administration is more than just a government work has meaning and value.

For the author, I strongly agree with Cooper's point of view. He believes that civil servants are not just technical experts, problem solvers, or government employees. They are best understood as someone who extends civic responsibility to a lifetime of work. How clever this sentence is! To clarify the spirit of public administration, public servants should not be practitioners and members of the government's interests. Instead, they should extend civic responsibility to their own life, practice public values, and provide public services based on citizenship. Comprehend the public spirit.

References

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