Education and Training in Public Adminisration

by Pius Suratman Kartasasmita

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Abstraksi :

Tulisan ini mencoba menggali gagasan mengenai apa dan bagaimana revitalisasi sistem pendidikan dan pelatihan yang didasarkan pada landasan teoritis dan pengalaman empiris dalam kaitannya dengan administrasi publik dalam menghadapi otonomi daerah dan perubahan global yang tidak bisa dihindari. Administrasi publik sebagai suatu ilmu, seni dan juga suatu profesi akan memberikan pengaruh dalam memilih dan mendidik pegawai negeri. Oleh karena itu pendidikan untuk administrator publik harus diarahkan pada kemampuan untuk dapat memahami kerangka konseptual administrasi publik, politik, konstitusional, kultural dan perubahan lingkungan yang sedang berlangsung.

1. INTRODUCTION

The failure of Indonesian Public Administration, both to perform excellent public services and to promote democratic citizenship in the past is the failure of our education and training system. Consequently, the revitalization and reposition of Indonesian public administration should begin with educational reform. This paper aims to take liberty in exploring ideas of what and how to revitaliate our education and training system based on both theoretical ground and empirical evidence, given local autonomy and rapid global changes as the environmental challenges in the near future.

2. PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: A SCIENCE, AN ART, A PROFESSION

First, I would argue that public administration is a scientific enterprise. The question of whether public administration is mostly an art or mostly a science has not only been a central to the field of public administration, but also controversial in its history. Hutchins (1953), for example, contends that public administration is not subject matter, and Herbert Simon (1957) believes that there is no one can train administrative ability except for the highest level. However, other authors assert that public administration can be a science (Wilson, 1887) and is already scientific by nature (Waldo, 1956).

Empirically, an expansion of the field in the United States, indicates not only does public administration attractive as a growing profession, but also a promising and thriving

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scientific enterprise. As a branch of social sciences, public administration would naturally be different in its nature from its natural counterpart. In particular, when it comes to deal with social values as an integrated component of social life. Of course, in searching of coherent identities, public administration would always be facing a dynamic competition among different paradigms. The following paragraphs, aims to briefly review a dynamic historical path of public administration as a scientific enterprise.

The claim that public administration can be a science was initially advocated by Wilson in 1887. His article "The study of administration" published in Political Science Quarterly has been widely considered as the foundation for the new field known later as public administration. As a politicai scientist, Wilson concerned with the problem of implementing constitution in the U.S. of his time. He noted that, "it is getting harder to run a constitution than to frame one."(Wilson, 1887: 200). He proposed, accordingly, that government agencies should be managed on a businesslike-basis in which general management principles such as efficiency was becoming the key concept of the newborn science. Administration, according to Wilson, should be separated from politics. In his own words, "...Administration lies outside the proper sphere of politics. Administrative questions are not political questions. Although politics sets the tasks for administration, it should not be suffered to manipulate its offices. (Wilson, 1887: 210). This proposal was finally known as politics-administration dichotomy that was strongly supported by Goodnow (1900), Gulick (1933) and Willoughby (1936). Within this period, also known as the classical period, the search for identities of public administration as a science was closely tied to the heating debates on both politics-administration dichotomy and private-public distinction. The basic argument revealed that if administration can be separated from politics, then administration can be reduced to "matters of selections of means, a generic and value-free administrative function has been identified and this function is amenable to scientific investigation." (Fry, 1989:1046-7).

The effort to advocate public administration as an independent science was widely claimed afterwards. Gulick, for instance, claimed that public administration is a division of political science and one branch of the social sciences (Gulick, 1937). The administrative science, according to Gulick, is "a system of knowledge whereby men may understand relationships, predict results, and influence outcomes in any situation where men are organized at work together for a common purposes." (Gulick, 1937:191). At this point, Merson (1923: 221) admitted that Gulick definition was the seed for the science, which "puts policy into execution and begins where the science of politics leaves off."

Concerning the methodological issue, earlier proponents of this newborn field, classical writers, were simply adopting the methods applied in natural sciences. Gulick, for example, believed that the law that have been used to discover principles and laws of atom, can also be used to discover the principles and laws of human nature (Gulick, 1928:102). The task of scientific examination, therefore, is limited, to classify phenomena, trace causal relationships, testing hypotheses by both experiment and exploration, and the application of discovered truth (Gulick, 1938: 29). Similar position was also shared by Merson (1923: 224). The differences between social and natural sciences, in his opinion, do not primarily lies in the science themselves, but rather in the "accidents of their subject matter." So that it was assumed that the methods applied natural sciences can also be applied in public administration. Even Waldo (1968b: 148), for example, adopted the notion of "cosmic constitutionalism" believing in a natural order of things that is the way thing should be. The function of the science, therefore, is to discover "laws" and "principles" governing both natural and social phenomena.

The claim of public administration as a scientific enterprise was not going without disputes. Disagreements on methods of the newborn field did occur, nonetheless there were strong indications that public administration continued to adopt methods and approaches of natural sciences. Classical authors, according to Gulick (1937), did realize the hazard of adopting natural sciences approach to public administration especially in dealing with social values. However, they argued, social value are relevant only in application and appraisal of the principles, not in examination of interrelationship and variations. Even Fry (1968b: 148) addressed his strong criticism claiming that "the classical approach subscribed to the methods of the natural sciences and intended to transcend the bounds of brute empiricism or the mere accumulation of facts."

Waldo defended his position by claiming that the newborn enterprise of public administration was just an extension of the common sense. It relied on a heaping up of facts with little theoretical guidance. He contended, accordingly, that some parts of public administration are undoubtly amenable to scientific investigation, but the field is generally suffused with values and cannot be treated scientifically. As a consequence, public administration is not fully subject to the mechanistic forces of cause and effect central to explanation in natural sciences. However, Waldo claims that scientific mentality is certainly needed, even if science of public administration is impossible. The most important point put

by Waldo, is that subject matter should define methods instead of forcing methods on a subject matter (Waldo, 1949).

Other critique was launched by Robert Dahl (1966). According to him, classical science of administration fails to deal with values adequately. He asserts that in democracy, values are more central than efficiency and there are broader ethical considerations to which administration must attend. Moreover, Dahl claims, debates and difficulties in distinguishing means and ends need to question value explicitly instead of disguise it behind scientific neutrality. Classical approach does not sufficient for explaining human behavior in organizations and it was not sufficiently sensitive to the setting of public administration. As implication of his assertions, Dahl suggests the importance of comparative analysis in the study of public administration. It cannot be assumed, according to Dahl, that a new administrative class advocated by classical authors is appropriate, even in American setting.

The most substantial critiques, in my opinion, came from Simon's behavioral approach. Classical literatures was viewed as lacked of empirical evidences and tend to occur in contradictory. The analytical problem, therefore, is to establish the balance between the contradictory statements. Classical principles, according to Simon, were useful as rules of thumb or diagnostic criteria in organization analysis, but they have little scientific value. In contrast to that, behavioral approach favors the study of "successful" sciences, focusing in observable behavior, testing empirical theory, and gathering data with theoretical guidance. This kind of science, according to Simon, is located more in other social sciences like psychology, sociology, social psychology and anthropology than in mainstream classical public administration.

Although in general the behavioral approach shares the scientific aspirations of the classical authors, but it pursues its goal by focusing on organization in general, or more specifically in individual behavior in organizations. In other words, its objective is to construct a scientific valid "theory of organizations" (Fesler, 1975). The exemplar of behavioral approach represented by Simon's is different from his predecessor in two ways. *First,* he calls for operational concepts and systematic empirical investigation employing experimental design in the study of public administration. *Second,* he describes different domain of public administration. Classical authors proposed that the entire of public administration is amenable to scientific investigation if it is separated from politics. Simon thought only part of public administration is amenable to scientific analysis. Dichotomy between politics and administration is empirically invalid and normatively inadequate. A

value is beyond the scientific investigation and public administration involves in some value consideration. Accordingly, he then concludes, the entire public administration can never be considered scientific (Simon, 1957).

As an alternative, Simon proposes his own "facts-values" dichotomy. Administrative decision has two basic components, value component and factual component. The first is ethical statement; it cannot be evaluated as true or false. The second is the relationship between an alternative and its consequences which is observable, and thus can be assessed as being true or false. The science of administration, according to Simon, should focus on the factual component of administrative decisions. Such a science, in his opinion, can give us a more accurate assessment of the consequences of our choices. However, Simon does not believe that public administration fulfill such criteria. In more precise expression, "... it will not solve the political problems of conflicting interests, scarce resources, value definition and choices inevitably associated with public administration."(Fry, 1989:1049).

Other important point suggested by Simon is "pure-applied" science dichotomy. He distinguishes two different administration sciences, pure and applied. The first intents to discover and verify empirical propositions about human behavior in organizations. The second concerns with more broad application of science that involves value system and recommendations to improve administrative performances. Both science, according to Simon, relevance to both public and private administration because the two types of organization are conceptually more similar rather than different.

Having encountered with behavioral approach, public administration has to, once again reconsider basic principles proposed by classical authors. Waldo (1954), for example, saw some hopes and new ray from the classical approach in comparison to behavioral approach. Basically Waldo attacks "logical-positivism" proposing value-free social science that underpins behavioral approach. According to Waldo, classical approach seems to disguise values under the "mantle" of scientific analysis. Logical positivism, on the other hand, simply ignored them. Logical positivism is a "dogmatic and intolerant evasion" of the value problem (Waldo, 1954:86). He contends, in addition, that "fact-value" and "pure-applied" dichotomies are simply repromoting an old doctrine promoting public administration as an instrumental role in governmental affairs (Waldo, 1955). Facts and values, in his opinion, should be viewed as an integrated entity. It cannot be separated, even in pure science category. The reason is that as long as a social science is social it cannot avoid social values as part of the science. At this point, seems to me, Waldo claims that administration is

undoubtedly can be considered as a science, which is different from any natural sciences. Accordingly, public administration should include ethical theory and study values consciously and carefully (Waldo, 1954).

According to Fry, Waldo does not mean that administration should avoid its scientific aspiration entirely; he contends instead, "logical-positivism and empiricism are not identical with science. For him, science is simply identical with knowledge that obtained and legitimated according to the cannon of a specified methodology. Although Fry indicates that Waldo has a "mild commitment" on the question whether public administration can be more scientific, one clear point is that he admits that public administration has already scientific (Waldo, 1956). The central question would be could public administration be more scientific. The answer is open to all public administration community, both practitioners and academics. At this point, Fry optimistically shares Waldo's hope asserting that "a joint effort of creative imagination combined with scientific probing and testing" will serve to enhance administration capacities (Fry, 1989: 1050). This position leads to the convincing claim believing that public administration is not just a science, but also an art in accomplishing politically determined objectives.

Having discussed theoretical conceptualization above, there are strong implication on both selecting and training public officials. *First,* the field of public administration is a scientific enterprise. It is primarily a science that consists of body of knowledge obtained systematically through particular scientific methods. This body of knowledge has been continually accumulated in the past and can be develop in the future, accordingly, it can be taught across generations. At this point, public administration training should be able to flourish academic communities committed on research and teaching. *Second,* public administration is partly an art especially when the applied dimension is concerned.

Since public administration is a social science, it is convinced that public administration should continue to search its identities that might be different from the natural sciences. Continuing debates on method and substantial controversies about values are not unique to the field of public administration. Instead, it is natural to social sciences in general and should be positively conceptualized as a motor of scientific development. Taking values into account of public administration is not necessarily should jeopardize it as a scientific enterprise. The most important thing is how to treat values properly and scientifically. No science—even natural science—is value free in nature. It comes before philosophy of sciences and determines scientists theoretical and methodology preoccupation. Therefore, it

seems there is no reason to avoid values from public administration as a scientific enterprise, instead to integrate them as a component of knowledge. They should "consciously" and "carefully" be studied.

As far as a profession is concerned, there are always three kinds of people that comprise the enterprise. *First,* those who are committed themselves in developing knowledge through their research. *Second,* those who are interested in transferring the knowledge to others in teaching and training activities. *Finally,* those who are willing to practice this knowledge. In general, those people might be professionally called researchers, teachers or professors, and practitioners respectively. In the field of public administration as scientific enterprise, the term public administrator is directly associated with practitioners who are professionally committed their lives to practice the knowledge of public administration in public agencies.

3. DIRECTION OF TRAINING AND INTERNATIONAL AIDS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Given the basic assumptions above, a well trained public administrators should be able to fulfill the following merits:

a. Knowledgeable about the nature of local political and constitutional system in which public administration operate.

b. Knowledgeable about and aware of social and cultural context characterizing the public to whom all services is provided.

c. Knowledgeable about and sensitive to the rapid global environmental changes

d. Skillful in managing particular substantive administrative function like filling, stock administration, financial management, personnel management, public works management, prison management, etc.

e. Skillful in identify, compare, and select a publicly acceptable values from different available choices in order to formulate, implement, evaluate public policies effectively.

f. Willing and able to "translate" value judgment into a concrete administrative action such as to support a democratic regime, to combat poverty, to fight bribery, etc.

Given the characteristics of public administrators above, one might easily figure out particular training packages. One of the possibilities is the example enclosed in Appendix-A. This tentative curriculum should be read as a raft guidance and open to further development.

I assume that a successful teaching and training will not only depend on a neat written curriculum, but is also determined by its methods. This is, surely, assumes certain degree of skills, creativity and imagination of the instructors. So in public administration "... good teaching continues to be both an art and a science with a little theater thrown in." (Chandler, p.639).

As a closing paragraph I provide the implications for utilization of foreign assistance. Such aid in public administration, in my opinion, can best be utilized for the following matters.

1. Helping to establish or develop research centers in public administration independent to government
2. Helping to develop potential training institutions or universities that offer program in public administration
3. Helping to create or develop public institutions relevance to local capacities and needs including NGOs that promote citizenship in the grassroots level
4. Giving technical assistance in particular administration area such as to increase efficiency of public managers, to implement new technology, or to stop bribery etc.

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