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An Analysis on Development of Public Administration Study in Western Countries

TAN Rong^{[a],*}; HAO Lifang^[a]^[a]Zhou Enlai School of Government, Nankai University, Tianjin, China.

* Corresponding Author.

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Abstract

Public administration study has been conducted for several hundred years in western countries, while the countries in different areas presenting diverse development paths and research approaches. Continental European countries represented by France and Germany which fail to get rid of the influence of jurisprudence till now as yet due to the close integration of early study of public administration and administrative law, embody the value orientation of nationalism and features of self-reform. Nevertheless, public administration study in countries like Britain and the United States shows a tendency of managerialism with strong characteristic and tendency of comparative research.

Key words: Public administration; Public administration study; Administrative model; The new right

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INTRODUCTION

Political system started with the appearance of government. Public administration emerges as the times require because political system has to form the government and require government's corresponding

behavior in order to realize its goals. Therefore, public administration, which emerged at the same time when government appeared, has a long history. However, as a special field of study, it started rather late. Public administration has gradually become an academic field and major since German scholars, in the 1900s, tried to discuss cameralism, a theory of systematical management of government affairs. Public administration studies began to appear in the writings of Prussian cameralists in the 18th century and those of researchers in the 19th century, although these studies “tended to emphasize issues related to the continental system of administrative law”. This paper aims to discuss the diverse development paths and characteristics of study of public administration conducted in western countries by reviewing the administration study development in both continental European and Anglo-American countries.

1. DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION STUDY IN CONTINENTAL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

In European continent, state evolution and public administration development has been closely related since the Middle Ages. During the 16th and 17th centuries, with the formation of national states and sharp rise of national significance, governments' duties in European countries were gradually enhanced with increasingly sophisticated contents, involving military, economic and social fields. Along with the ever-growing expansion of government size, the number of governmental administrative staff increased accordingly. In this context, fields and majors related to national state structure, public personnel training and public office management began to appear in continental European universities, and the corresponding professorships were set as well. At the end of the 18th

century, almost all of the universities in Germany had set such research fields and professorships. Although it didn't set independent public administrative courses and corresponding professorships yet, France, in the same way, started to discuss and seek for development in this field. Emergence of the "state" concept in this period helped to push forward the development of public administration and public administrative study in Germany and France. In continental European countries, textbooks and journals on public administration constantly appeared and spread at the end of the 18th century. In this respect, the United States is a whole century late.

In the end of the 18th century, French Revolution triggered the transformation of Europe nations and promoted the development of public administration in European countries. The abolishment of absolute monarchy drove European countries to build the rule by law, requiring the government to protect citizens' rights and freedom; as a result, constructing and strengthening legal system were demanded. Thus, the public administration study evolved into administrative law study. In the middle of the 19th century, a new type of public administration emerged in continental European countries. Governments almost exclusively adopted judicial methods to train public administrative staff. At the beginning of the 20th century, legal tradition dominated the education and training of government bureaucrats in the whole European continent, emphasizing connection between citizens' rights, responsibilities and country. Represented by France and Germany, development of public administrative research in continental European countries displays respective features.

1.1 Development of Public Administrative Research in France

The development of public administrative study in France is inextricably linked to its particular model of the state and ideology and associated with its specific political institutions and development path. The notion of the state pushes forward the development of public administrative study in France. Public administrative theories in France highlight the "uniqueness" of the state, which is prominently displayed as national self-protection, that is, with clear profile and unique functions, it can ensure the continuity of national functions by means of corresponding mechanism and a series of protective arrangements. As the embodiment of public interests, the state, which is built to integrate social and overall principles rather than serve for personal and factional benefits, goes beyond special interests of private sectors. In this ideological premise, the state has the highest status and power in the society, possessing a wide range of social, cultural and economic functions. At the end of the 19th century, French government implemented professionalism of civil service through establishing recruitment examination system, and entitled civil officials to prevent political powers abuse

and ultimately to safeguard national interests through this mechanism.

At the beginning of the 18th century, the organization study appeared in France, which foreshadowed German cameralistik theory. Under the guidance of the state and on the basis of empirical studies, jurists and government officials drew up codes of civil organization and administrative dictionaries. Those works were free from doctrinal pretensions, close to administrative practice and sought for the effective management of public affairs. In the 19th century, the organization study experienced an increasingly vigorous development in France, a large number of works showing up and the underlying principles of administrative actions gradually being formulated. Charles-Jean Bonnin, considered as the first in French scholar who broke away from the earlier tradition, held the opinion that "treat administration as a science," we should "determine, first of all, the general principles covering this subject". Seeking for principles of public administration and then studying public administration systematically became the primary mission of French public administration research in the first half of the 19th century. Administrative science turned into a "social science" and mastered social data of administrative action with the help of investigative tools, especially statistics, to improve the national administrative efficiency and promote social welfare.

In the following period of time, the political science and administrative study in France were in decline. Expansion of administrative law study impeded the development of public administrative research to some degree and caused a long-term stagnation of this discipline. Until the 1950s, along with the emergence of new problems and approaches, traditional methods of legal analysis were broken and new perspectives of public administrative research appeared; until then, public administrative research began to revive. In the 1960s, public administrative research developed rapidly in France, and French scholars incorporated many aspects studies into the administrative study category, that promoted three trends in public administrative research appeared:

The first is law trend, which seeks for more comprehensive public administrative structures and functions in the study of public administration, emphasizing the tendency to reference legal texts. Researchers of law trend regarded administrative study as a descriptive discipline with the objective to describe administration while taking administrative law as a normative discipline, adopting formal logic and deductive reasoning in their research. As for the relationship between administrative study and administrative law, it is focused on the proper position of law in administrative life can't be ignored; vice versa, it should be avoided as well the normative trap in studying public administration through legal texts.

The second is management trend, aiming to find a most effective management technique without public/private bounds. These scholars incorporate public administrative study into the management category. However, this trend had been constantly resisted in France. In the 1970s, new principles of public administrative study formed in France, emphasizing the uniqueness of public domain, objecting to equate public administrative study with efficiency theory. Public administrative researchers increasingly jumped out of the narrow perspectives of managing organization to consider public policy issues with a broader perspective..

The third is sociological trend, which aims to enhance comprehension on administrative phenomena with the help of sociological concept and methods. This kind of research, based on observations on specific administrative situation, tends to emphasize administrative functions and its research method is deeply influenced by sociology. Nevertheless, sociological research method should not be the only way to understand administrative phenomena.

During this period of time, analysis of culturalism had a profound impact on French public administrative study. In 1963, Michel Crozier put forward his point of view that public administrative organization, like any other organization, is the product of certain cultural traditions, so when analyzing its national peculiarities must be taken into account. For instance, French administrative institution demonstrates itself as a typical cultural model with characteristics of isolation and absolute authority, and this type of tradition and culture runs lastingly through the institutional transformation. This perspective of research emphasizes value orientations of public administration, bringing vitalities to its research.

Another focus of French public administrative study is administrative institution and administrative process. Eric E. Otenyo and Nancy S. Lind considered, "Comparative public administration is a branch of public administrative study that focuses on comparative analysis of administrative processes and institutions,"

which includes formulation and implementation of administrative plan, local jurisdiction and etc. Since 1982, Mitterrand government has carried out a reform on local government which profoundly changed French society, politics and bureaucracy, granting local administrative research a unique position and making it an important aspect of study on relationship between civil officials and societies and a frontier of public administrative study. The study on senior civil service is an important aspect of French administrative system research, which is represented by works written by Ezra Suleiman. Such research involves a number of significant issues, including importance of senior civil service in decision-making process, relationship between civil service and politics, and etc. After 1980s, it is represented as case study in combination with public policy study.

Institutional analysis regards civil service as products of history and society, focusing on relationship between

civil service's behavior and the society, social influences brought by civil service's behavior and administrative functions, influences exerted by outside actors on governmental administrative originations, and etc. In his study on French politics, administrative system and internal power relations within administrative organizations, P. Gremion pointed out that the research can not be carried out without taking into account the networks of exchange woven between the organization and the environment; systems of action form between internal actors and their social team-mates.

For a long time, comparative study has been the weak point in French public administrative study. In recent years, with European countries are increasingly open, French scholars tried to compare French public administrative model to that in other European countries in order to remedy this weakness. Since the 1960s, various disciplines have been entered into the field of public administrative study, with history, geography, public economics, linguistics and psychology jointly comprising French public administrative study, making it a multi-interdisciplinary subject with richer contents.

1.2 Development of Public Administrative Research in Germany

German public administrative study is associated with modernization process in the early 18th century, which is represented as a pursuit of "rule of law" when Germany was still in the monarchy period of "rule of man". As a non-classic constitutional state, its national identity and stability as a nation for a long time have been established on the principles of public law and connected administrative organizational rule. This trend, on one hand, keeps governmental administrative departments highly stable; even in the two world wars, German public administration was regularly operating. On other hand, until now, German public administrative "science" is still shrouded by the discipline of law, the public administrative system, to a large extent, is incorporated into the administrative law study category.

German governmental administrative mode is represented as a combination of strictness and flexibility in public administration. On one hand, it manages the sophisticated administrative machine through strict legal system, turning public administrative system a reliable mechanism and making people in this mechanism understand and know how to use the law. On other hand, this type of legal system is not the same as the constitutional system representing civil will in countries like Britain and the United States, but a product of comprise between "rule of man" and "rule of law" during modernization process of Germany in the 19th century, becoming a "legal system" professional administrative process in German public administration in the later half of the 19th century.

Under this administrative model, the governmental

administrative system in Germany, on one hand, has high stability and “reliability”. As the pillar of public administration, relatively strict legal structure acted as a powerful counterbalance factor to the volatility of political structure in the 20th century of Germany. On the other hand, German governmental administrative system is appeared as a limited self-reform mode resisting interferences from outside. For instance, implementation of Prussian civil service examination system in the 19th century, reconstruction of the state bureaucracy, local democratic reform of local administration and administrative reform of German counties and regions in the 1970s were all launched by senior government bureaucrats. Different from American-style open reform, such type of reform didn’t arise from social criticism on bureaucratic system.

In the 1960s, when the reform of public administrative structure and public plan accelerated, the social science trend of public administration study began to appear in Germany. Different from traditional public legal research, this type of research not only proceeded from administrative norms, but put more emphasis on administrative reform; therefore, it is also called as “reform study”, which replaced law jurisprudence by administrative science in civil servants training. Thus, public administrative study became the academic backbone of governmental civil service system research, and political science played an important role in this process. However, the rise trend of public administrative research encountered strong resistance by public law discipline which maintained its hegemonic status in public administrative field by preventing public administrative from being a powerful and independent discipline. In the 1970s, failure of German civil service reform caused the mode of employing lawyers as senior civil officials to continue, seriously limiting the public career choices for non-lawyers.

At the end of the 1960s, the role public administration played in political life was widely discussed in German academic circles. During this period of time, Germans considered governmental issues from perspectives: first, conservatives attempted to establish a countervailing power of democratic value and political participation; second, in consideration of sustaining its own dominion, the government kept its attention on political science, making it an important subject so that the academic circles could study the government more freely and practically and regard the government as a tool of political reform.

In the 1970s, the oil-price shock in 1973 and the following economic recession ended the West Germany administrative reform which began in the late 1960s. Dealing with unemployment caused by economic recession became the principal domestic policy agenda for West Germany government. Reform-oriented public administrative research gradually gave way to a complex

and empirical public administrative research which involves national administration, federal structure, state administration, municipal administration and so on. The research widely adopted normative and testifying research methods, investigating problems the governmental bureaucratic system had in legal structure and organization structure. This type of testifying survey, which got a great deal of support from the government, made an inquiry into planning abilities and methods of government and coordination of organization structures and on this basis, put forward a proposal of reorganizing bureaucratic system, and discussed the structure reform of West Germany federalism to help solve a series of problems, including rationalizing the three vertical administration layers and a broad variety of horizontal specialization of Germany to make the public administrative activities more flexible and responsive. The 1970s is regarded as the golden age of public administrative study in West Germany, and the development of German public administrative study during this period is called by some scholars as new public administrative movement.

In the 1980s, West Germany carried out non-bureaucratized administrative reform and introspection on national and institutional foundations, which is embodied as a self-reform of German administrative bureaucrats. Three aspects were involved in research of this period: the first is study on top-level bureaucrats’ behavioral patterns led by Hans-Ulrich Derlien and Renate Mayntz, they put forward that top-level bureaucrats in West Germany represent a hybrid type decision makers who are semi-politicized and fully professionalized. The second is the study on public administrative history, aiming to understand the characteristics of German statehood. After analyzing the relationship between private and public interests, T. Ellwein et al. drew a conclusion that public administration was remarkably successful in achieving durable institutional arrangements. The third is study on “administrative interest mediation” which was led by Gerhard Lehmbuch. This research assumed that by means of its expertise and organizational complexity, public administration is capable of integrating and coordinating social interests relatively independent from legislative or governmental organization. Their research supported the hypothesis, showing that public authorities and private interests are subject to mutual dependence that forces them to cooperate.

After the 1990s, along with the reunification of Germany, the reconstruction of East Germany turned into the most serious challenge faced by Germany in constructing its government orders since 1949 and became a major issue of public administrative study during this period of time. Reunification of Germany brought certain impact on its political and administrative systems, and as a result, stimulated the development of German public administrative study which involved a series of

problems, such as powers, resources redistribution and multi-level decision making, and the redistribution of financial resources among the three layers of federal, state and municipal administration being the essential problem. Although the administrative research theories and methods in Germany have not been integrated until now, public administration has achieved development as a research core and subject.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION STUDY OF IN BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES

2.1 Development of Public Administrative Research in the United States

Unlike continental European countries, Americans started to study public administration until the later half of the 19th century. However, they held a keen interest in experiences accumulated by other countries from the very beginning of their research. In order to serve their own purposes, research pioneers of American public administration, for example, Thomas Woodrow Wilson, Frank J. Goodnow, Ernst Freund, and etc. paid great attention to use the experiences of European countries for reference to recognize and improve American public administration, trying to apply these positive experiences to the United States. In the 1920s and 1930s, American public administration study entered into a normative and orthodox period when public administration scientists represented by Leonard D. White focused on the internal management of their own government, losing the broad vision of comparative study in the past.

During the Second World War, worldwide campaigns broadened people's horizon and showed western people a world which is completely different from their own, as a result, people were increasingly interested in comparative politics and comparative public administrative study and a growing number of research subjects began to emerge after the war. Quite a few universities and colleges successively set up comparative public administration courses and in 1953, the first association relating to comparative public administration in American academic circle----American Political Science Association----was established, and the distinguished research group of comparative public administration appeared thereafter. Under the leadership of Rowland Egger and Fred W. Riggs, this group played a positive role in promoting theory and practice study of comparative public administration, driving American comparative public administrative research toward a climax in the 1960s and 1970s.

In the 1960s, Fred W. Riggs published his paper "Trends in the Comparative Study of Public Administration" in *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, which is one of the representative works of

American comparative public administration study. He summarized three development trends of comparative public administrative research from normative to empirical approaches, from idiographic toward nomothetic approaches and from non-ecological to ecological approaches, and explored comparative public administration research methods. American comparative public administrative research during this period of time also includes: 1) the search for theoretical paradigms of comparative public administrative study; 2) the basic issues of comparative public administrative study; 3) the administrative law tradition of comparative public administrative study in continental European countries; 4) the relationship between comparative public administrative study and comparative political study, that probed into the significance of comparative public administration study within developing comparative politics study; 5) applications of theoretical knowledge of comparative study to solve problems of developing countries, and etc.

Comparison, which is the most important issue in comparative public administrative research and the essential problem in public administrative research, should be taken into consideration when carrying out comparative public administrative research. In the article entitled "The Study of Administration" in 1887, which is regarded as a milestone of public administration as a special research field, Wilson explicitly stressed that comparative method is the basis of developing administrative principles. Riggs said, "All Political Science and any scientific understanding of Public Administration needs to be comparative." In his *Administration in Developing Countries: the theory of prismatic society* in 1964, Riggs displayed a cross-cultural study and further laid a foundation for study on comparative public administration by comparatively exploring development and rules of public administration under different social backgrounds and constructing models. This type of cross-cultural study is very important for constructing public administrative theories and indispensable for carrying out cross-cultural studies and understanding public administration in different countries. Robert Dahl, a famous American political and public administrative scientist, said, "The comparative aspects of public administration have largely been ignored; and as long as the study of public administration is not comparative, claims for 'a science of public administration' sound rather hollow. Conceivably there might be a science of American public administration and a science of British public administration and a science of French public administration; but can there be 'a science of public administration' in the sense of a body of generalized principles independent of their peculiar national setting?" In *Comparative Public Administration: the essential readings* Eric E. Otenyo and Nancy S. Lind pointed out, "Scholarship that informs

practice can hardly be adjudged as scientific if it lacks a comparative dimension,” and the comparative method “is central to both practical and academic aspects of public administration”. Since American study of public administration tended to ignore comparative study in a fairly long period of time, Ferrel Heady proposed, “The limitations and hazards of such parochialism have now been recognized, and we have entered a new era in administrative studies that stresses comparative analysis.” Gabriel A. Almond regarded comparative method as “the methodological core of the humanistic and scientific methods”. In the process of comparative study, people’s horizon was broadened, concepts and theoretical connotations appeared in the study became richer with more general significance and universality, and the study results produced more profound and lasting influence.

However, “recognizing the need for comparison is much easier than coping with some of the problems posed by efforts to compare on a systematic basis.” In Ferrel Heady’s point of view, the important contents of comparative study of public administration are represented as: first, “the institutional arrangements for the conduct of large-scale administration in government—organizing for administrative action”; second, research on “the environment or ecology of administration—the relationship of the administrative subsystem to the political system of which it is a part and to society in general. This combination of concerns” provides a basic framework both for the analysis of particular national systems of public administration and for comparisons among them.” On one hand, he put comparative study of public administration into administrative system category, studying various and “variant” forms of administrative system, focusing comparative study of public administration on government bureaucracy and studying the similarities and differences of each country’s function system; On other hand, he emphasized focusing on the relationship between governmental bureaucratic system and political polity types in comparative study, and stressed that public administrative system, as a part of political system, exists in the environment of political system. Therefore, comparative study of public administration was inevitably connected tightly with comparative political study and needed the platform provided by it, which turned into a prominent characteristic of comparative study of public administration.

The rise and construction of a research field always requires its systemic theory and research paradigm. It’s a problem which American scholars have not solved well in comparative study of public administration. Lack of distinct concept and definition of study category and paradigm made scholars “dissensus prevailed”. Some scholars therefore called comparative study of public administration “practitioner oriented” and “empirically rooted”, making it wandering between the

research framework of comparative politics and public administration.

2.2 Development of Public Administrative Research in the UK

The United Kingdom is a unitary state with parliament cabinet system in which the central government, under control of highly disciplined majority party in Parliament and less restrained by other sides, displays the characteristic of administrative integration. Some scholars think that public administrative study in the UK, being quite different from that in continental European countries, lacks its own unique public administrative school, and follows the American trend. In late 1960s and early 1970s, traditional public administrative science in the UK faded away gradually, and public administrative field was practically dominated by public policy and government study. And since then, public management study began to rise, emphasizing “applied” issues of management techniques, competition and so on. For instance, at the Open University of the UK, public administrative courses belonged to the fields of government and politics science in the 1970s, but at the end of 1980s, courses of MPA were set in the school of business school, under the category of MBA. During this period of time, to meet the needs of efficiency and social development, accounting and law study obtained a substantial progress.

Along with the development of public administration study in the UK, a radical change happened in the public administration since 1979 when British government encountered an intense anti-national reform which brought about profound changes to British governmental public administration and resulted in a redefinition and labeling of it in the academic world. During this period of time, conservative government carried out market reform boldly and radically, introducing market mechanism into National Health Service (NHS) and community care. This type of marketization reform and large-scale privatization touched most fields of public services. The reform since Thatcher’s coming to power in 1979 can be roughly divided into three stages: the first stage is from 1979 to 1982, represented as fierce drive for economies, aiming to reduce government public spending; the second stage lasted through to the late 1980s. During this period of time, although British government advocated “three Es” (economy, efficiency, effectiveness) principles, most procedures and performance indicators focused on the first two items, and public utility privatizations remained the central position in government’s program; the third stage begins after Thatcher won the election in 1987, in which time conservative government launched a series of public-service-sector reforms with a number of more radical measures.

British New Right, in this time, proposed the following criticisms on public administration of previous governments. 1) Pluralism and corporatism mode lead

to deals between the state and powerful interest groups, which resulted in higher public spending. 2) Professional staff of the government, as self-interested monopolists, pursued their own professional goals, demanded high salaries yet limited their services rather than satisfying requirements of those to whom they afforded services. 3) Public officials were featured as being mainly concerned with the maximization of their budgets and status, which caused the relative ineffectiveness of the whole public sector. 4) The crucial point of government growth was gradually undermining individual freedom. 5) "Big Government" weakened citizens' enterprise spirit and self-reliant sense. 6) Centre-left governments mistakenly pursued egalitarian notions of social justice, which ultimately undermined individual freedom and fiscal self-discipline of the state. 7) The expansion of the state sector suppressed growth of private sector.

From 1980s to 1990s, the Conservative Party government repeated recourse to the ideology and governing philosophy of anti-state, [10] adopting monetarism, Austrian school of Economics theories, public choice theory and liberalistic philosophy, offering these theories to department directors through right-wing think bank, making them throughout public polices. These policy trends of reducing public spending, bringing down national regulations and taxes, recovering "management power" and restricting trade unions which represented itself distinctly as a mixture of new right doctrine and generic managerialism, were well-received by upper management in commercial, financial and industrial world.

In the 1980s, along with dramatic changes in governmental public administration, British public administrative scholars conducted a great deal of theoretical research, resulting in a productive period of British public administrative works. In this period of time, traditional institutional descriptive study underwent a fundamental change due to the infusion of public choice theory, organizational theory, accounting theory and public management theory, in which public choice theory was a powerful analysis tool. British public administrative study, in this time, made its own contributions in both theories and more professional and practical aspects, although the academic circle didn't recognize a prominent and unique study construction of public administration in the UK.

Generally speaking, it is widely believed in academic circles that the public administration study in British does not follow the steps of European countries; instead, it is closer to the United State in the aspect of cultural inclination. Compared with continental European countries, public administration study in British is hardly comparable with France and Germany in the respect of constructing national status and functions.

In conclusion, public administration study has been

conducted for several hundred years in western world, while different countries presenting diverse development paths and research approaches. Continental European countries represented by France and Germany which fail to get rid of the influence of jurisprudence as yet due to the close integration of early study of public administration and administrative law, embody the value orientation of nationalism and features of self-reform. Nevertheless, the public administration study in countries like Britain and the United States shows a tendency of managerialism with strong characteristic and tendency of comparative research.

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