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ADMINISTRATION - STILL IN SEARCH OF SELF- DISCOVERY

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present notes (scientific communication) is firstly, on the basis of inventoried definitions of public administration in the Bulgarian literature (legal and economic) to attempt to specify an analogous author's solution and secondly - to interpret the question of the instrumental function of public administration to generate and support the implementation of a complex of policies.

In the first direction, it proceeds from the fact that each definition contains a mandatory categorization and some strictly distinctive feature of the subject under consideration. In this sense, beyond the obligatory generic and species membership, a variety of contextual definitions are possible that will fully serve any creative act. In our case, the utilitarian aspect is applied to the definition of public administration.

In the second direction, as a continuation of the definitional discourse, the power vector of public administration and its role in the creation and implementation of public policies is summarized.

KEYWORDS: definition, definition, public administration, public policy, public utility

JEL: J38, H41, H29, H83

INTRODUCTION

Society has never doubted that public administration is an important element of life activities. Nonetheless, there are still controversial elements in its field that have long attracted the attention of Bulgarian social scientific thought. Two of them are the subject of this article: the self-identification of public administration and its power instrumental-functional fragmentation.

1. DEFINITIONAL DISCOURSE ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

There is a lack of unity in the academic literature and social practice regarding the definition of this category.

An attempt to inventory the definitions of public administration available to the author in the Bulgarian literature confirms this claim.

Back in 1994, Em. Zhivkova presents a number of definitions of public administration that were created (and were accessible to her) in the decade 1980-1990.

In brief touches (pp. 11-12) they refer to:

- a. productive aspect: sphere in which goods and services are produced to meet the needs of citizens;

- b. the political aspect: a set of activities through which government policy is made and implemented;
- c. the electoral aspect: the specification of the electoral platforms of the ruling majority in the form of the political determination of development during the mandate;
- d. applied aspect: part of the political process centred on policy that stems from elections, a group effort of government in the exercise of power (generally legislative, executive and judicial), the defining part of which is the creation/consumption of administrative services;
- e. executive aspect: theories and procedures in the implementation of legislative, executive and judicial government mandates to prepare regulatory instruments and create administrative services for society or prioritized parts of it;
- f. Managerial: the creation and programmatic implementation of public policies through employee participation;
- g. Concerted: consolidation of the different forces in government in the programmatic administrative service to the public and its citizens.

The research marathon of the interpreted author does not stop here. He makes his own commentary on the aspects of public administration envisioned as indisputable requisites (pp. 13-14) of what is essential in its functioning. In a condensed form, it is, first, an institution of public relations that arise between the state and its citizens on the occasion of and in connection with the process of realization of power, second, a system that assists in "bringing" the policies of the ruling majority to the concrete consumer of their applied utility, third, it is dominated by the place of created services to the population and business, fourth, it is an inevitable active part of the mechanism of the functioning of the social system.

With the contours thus drawn, Em. Zhivkova (1994, p. 13) defines public administration as "...the higher and middle level of management of public organizations, which formulates the general policy and strategies for development, creates the necessary conditions for resource provision and effective behavior, in accordance with the principles of the constitution and the laws of the country".

B. Benev (2002, pp. 9-13), recalling that the term "public" conveys openness, transparency, clarity, free exposition of positions, says that administration "...is a special kind of human activity designed to support (the state, b.m. D.K.) and content the organization of decision-making". Without administration, there is no governance, since the administrative product it produces is an indispensable aspect of it. Shortly thereafter (p.12) he writes that public administration is understood as "...a system that carries out a complex set of functions embedded in the composition of institutions and performed by personnel who create certain values for the state, society or other government". In terms of power (p.13), "Public administration is a complex of administrative processes, administrative structures and persons acting in official capacities, supporting and ensuring the development of laws, and the action of the authorities".

It is interesting to note that the same year in the "Terminological Dictionary of Public Administration and Regional Studies" B. Benev did not publish a definition of the category "public administration". Closer to it are those of: a) administrative apparatus (p.7): "...an organizational system of central and local state organizations that are designed to carry out the tasks of state management and development, specifically creative executive power. The administrative organization is an organizational mechanism through which the administrative activities of the state are carried out"; b) administrative power (p.8) - "...executive power of

executive bodies of the state (central and local administration), which is carried out through administrative Power exercised in the interest of the whole society on behalf of the State, which may not be used for private purposes", "2. Collective designation of higher state bodies".

Pavel Pavlov (Hristov, Pavlov and Katsamunska, 2007, pp. 10-11) interprets public administration as a science and as a practice. As a science, it is "...a system of scientific knowledge and theoretical views about the ways in which public power and public administration are constructed and function", and as a practice "...a set of interrelated administrative processes, functions and structures that hold public institutions accountable and support them in the exercise of public power".

It is imperative that "...public administration cannot exist outside its political context" - only two arguments are sufficient: a) synthesized public interest and spirit, and the resulting; b) creates or organizes the production of administrative products for itself (public policies, legislative decisions, normative documents), the population and business.

Hence its links with the law: it facilitates their creation and, above all, their strict implementation.

A few pages later (p.17) the same author presents another faceted definition "Public administration can be defined as a system of institutions (ministries, agencies, commissions and other similar budget-dependent institutions) and their employees to whom the authorities have delegated the right to provide public services".

Stavrev, S. (Stavrev, S. and Vulkov, A. 2008, p. 371) does not give a direct definition of public administration, but pays serious attention to the active action of "administration", as methodological and technical service through the application of the rules and norms in force, in another aspect "...to assist, but also to assist social actors in adjusting their private and public activities to the requirements of the valid rules and norms". Obviously, this is a private segment of the essence of public administration.

H. Arabadzhiiski (2010, pp. 22-23) describes five groups of specific definitions (categorization) of public administration (see also; Velichkov, Iv. and Benev, B., 2004, p. 23):

- a. political aspect: inevitable political context of public administration; synthesized expression of the public spirit; part of the cycle of public policy-making for the realization of the public interest; complex of activities and actions for the provision (directly or indirectly) of public services to citizens;
- b. legal definitions: law in operation without any right to administrative arbitrariness; regulation of legal relations arising between the state and citizens; means of distributing public goods through the application of laws;
- c. managerial definitions: executive function of government; delivery of public services, allocation of public resources, control and appropriate consumption of public goods; fetish of bureaucracy, formalism and order; support of public opinion through policy;
- d. professional aspect: expression of performance by public servants; continuous competitive process that is linked to professional career; form of organisation to acquire power quickly without the presence of personal status; theoretical field in which the characteristic features of public administration theory are shaped.

On this basis and a number of other studies N. Arabadzhiyski (2010, pp. 19, 34) circulates two definitions of public administration. In the first (tentative!) he considers it "...as a complex of processes, organizations and persons acting in official positions and roles related to the implementation of laws and other regulations in the sphere of administrative activity of the

state". The second definition is definitive: " Public administration is a socially managed system comprising public authorities and administrative structures, with the employees appointed to them carrying out tasks related to assisting these authorities to implement the powers presented to them by law and to provide public services to citizens".

The intention of the present fragments is an attempt at an authorial definition of public administration in terms of utility generation. In this sense, it is a part of the administration of the economy (state in action, material and immaterial sphere), whose purpose (telocracy) is to provide the necessary (in terms of desirable quantity and high quality) administrative services to the population, business and government bodies, as well as to create and provide public goods to those in need in strict compliance with legislation and regulations (nomocracy) and to demonstrate a high morality of commitment (prompt, concrete, honest, economical and efficient service) to joint

This definition can be contextualized in different aspects to serve the differentiated clarification of the nature of public administration.

The search for purity in the absolute is a mandatory responsibility of every author. Only in this way will he reveal himself as an individual and be maximally understood by his audience.

2. POWER VECTOR OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Power emanation (radiation) finds implicit manifestation also through public administration.

Power is a type of social relation that is associated with the imposition of constraints and the delegation of certain human actions in the form of rights, responsibilities and obligations. In its content, it is the disposition, control and subordination of another's will, which derives from the nature of the political and socio-economic relations operating in a country. Its intensity (power, including through positionality of power) is determined by legal and moral regulators.

Power is a coordinated system of influences and manifests itself in a unified network of political choices (political parties), policies, laws, wealth, celebrity (publicity), charisma, expertise (knowledge and skills), interests, beliefs, governance, subordination, regulation, etc. It has adequate institutional integral mechanism for implementation.

Public administration is part of the substratum of this mechanism. (Table 1)

Table 1. Institutional mechanism for the exercise of power

№	Groups and types of power	Foundation	Powerful force	Interest level	
				Microlevel	Macro level
	I. Common authority identification group				
1.	1. Capital power	Ownership in the form of tangible, intangible and financial assets	Socio-economic force and asset progress	Self-interest and interest of the organisation	Interest of the whole society
2.	2. Semiotic power	Public authority of the institution, more generally – signs of communication exchange	Sociocultural power	Operations, market power, media, regulations, etc.	Strategic activity: power over society public opinion and information connectivity

	II.Functional group of power				
	1. Public authority				
3.	1.1. Political power	Trust and electorate	Public force	Regional election	Central elections
4.	1.2. Executive power	Right to take management decisions on the basis of delegated powers	Administrative force	Normative system (rules of the game in the organization: rules, regulations, standards, etc.) Administrative empowerment of the adoption and implementation of current, specifying and individualizing established norms, operational management decisions: territorial and municipal administration	Standards System (rules of the game in the state (strategies, policies, laws, etc.: central administration.
5.	2. Judiciary	Enforcement of laws and regulations	Controlling force	The interests of citizens and regional institutions in terms of compliance with laws and regulations	The interests of society but in the context of central institutions in the aspect of compliance with laws and regulations
6.	3. Market/economic power	Private property and private interest	Economic economic power	Business interests manifested in fair competition and inevitable innovation	The interests of society as consumers of business products created in an efficient production mode
7.	4. Citizen power/social dimension of democracy/effective social alternative	Civic initiative (moral criteria and civic values) based on unmet needs from state and business failures	Civic power	The interests of disenfranchised individuals and social groups with embedded compassion and social concern and social entrepreneurship	Anti-social distortions, quality control of institutions, guarantee of human rights, efficient social adaptation

Source: the table is based on solutions (with author's additions) of Stavrev and Valkov, 2008, p. 424.425; Tanev, 2008, p. 76, 152-155; Tanev and Petrov, 2020, pp. 20-44.

In making sense of the information in the table, several additional considerations should be kept in mind.

First, the recognition group of power appears in two forms: capital and semiotic.

The capital one is based on the widely interpreted carriers of a building substance (the immutable basis of everything), concentrated in property (in the form of tangible, intangible and financial assets) and brought into play by the human factor. It is interesting, that even the mere possession of this social substrate (common ground) gives rise to the lord's trust in the individual, group, collective, organization, etc. concerned. This moment is historically established and exists as the disposition of people (slavery, for example), property and destinies and hence hierarchically ensuring submission to a certain superior will. In another perspective (and in this connection) it is no secret to anyone that an educated person solves present and future task far more easily and correctly than an uneducated one. The competent individual possesses much greater activating power, which results from the accumulated knowledge, skills and attitudes, and on this basis generates quickly and with high quality a necessary product. At the same time, this agent "climbs" far more quickly and smoothly up the ladder of personnel and professional growth, organizes at a high level the qualitative performance of the tasks set, forms a full-fledged trusting attitude in the public, etc. All these moments are rightly associated in the last decades with a certain kind of capital, as a nucleus, a force-major of the can, a guarantee of success, a specific "radiation" of any progress, a kind of power manifestation. Capital has many carriers, but what unites them is the ownership of emblematic resources: land, forests, beauties, talent, information, knowledge, experience, approach, etc. In this sense, it is a socio-economic force. Its function is related to the multiplication of wealth, seen in the broad and humane sense as welfare for all (low cost of quality life). Capital's function is the abscissa of all power, i.e., its purposive orientation towards progress. In fact, it is both the basis for its creation and the vast "food" for the functioning of life activities.

The semiotic attribute refers to the recognisability of the institution in terms of its public authority and communication capabilities. Just as we prioritize the demand for health care by some hospitals "marked by society" as creating more useful value than others, some cities gain public prestige because of the good municipal social policy they have, others because of the impeccable road infrastructure they have built, others because of their brand position, which is the result of the presence of mineral springs and ecological environment, etc. The communication side is also related to the possibility of information communication, which is the ordinate of any success.

The second consideration relates to the functional power formed and exercised - public (political and executive), judicial, market (economic) and civil. The first relates to the creation of a regulatory public framework and the general management of its implementation through the formulation of specific policies, the second to the monitoring of this implementation and the protection of the rights of citizens and society, the third to business and market processes, and the fourth to the growing role and place of citizens' initiatives. The main focus of this group is the creation, maintenance and improvement of order and security in the state, specifically the adoption and enforcement of laws, in a more general sense the implementation of the policies of the ruling majority and in an even more specific aspect the fulfilment of the promises made by politicians to their constituents. The economic and social conditions of life should not be underestimated either.

Thirdly, the fields of constellation (interactions) in the matrix under consideration can be interpreted as follows: a) along the two tiers: general recognition and functional; b) within the individual tiers; and c) between the elements of the individual tiers. This involves legitimating the functioning of multiple relationships, which is a complex, labour-intensive and extremely difficult task. More relevant to the context of this analysis are the following conclusions:

- a. the basic meaning of the two common recognition aspects: capitalization and semiotization are at the same time conditions for the recognition and delineation of relations (jointly and separately) with the 4 functional fields of power;

- b. in turn, the sides and fields in question interact separately and in combination;
- c. it is difficult to attempt a gradation of the strength of these interactions as they define their impact in a complex whose components are equivalent;
- d. there is no doubt that there is a confluence of influences between these elements that manifest themselves as mixed relations: capital and semiotic forces in the sense under consideration are charges that feed successively or simultaneously all the elements of the functional system;
- e. Between the latter, there is also compensation for any shortcomings that may have arisen in the event of a distrust of one of them, as well as an institutional transfer of responsibilities and powers from one field to another.

Fourthly, in this configuration, the public administration serves the entire functional group of government, concentrating considerable public resources.

This stems from the fact that the public complex (Hristov, 2005) includes the institutions that administer all four varieties of power functional resource. In this sense, public administration is the "violin" played integrally by each power in relation to and more as a result of creating and implementing its own policies.

In its most general form, the interpreted administration performs the role of an important instrument for the implementation of a balance between market, state and civil sector (triangle of modern management), which is undoubtedly a requirement of good anti-monopoly governance (Tanev and Petrov, 2020, pp. 55-64). This point is parallel to the search for full correlation between the elements of this triangle and, in particular, presupposes the need for a detailed knowledge of the advantages and failures of its constituent components.

Public administration is a phenomenon whose functioning is linked to the interests of the entire economic and social complex. Therefore, it is necessary to increase our attention to its theoretical and practical conundrums.

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