## The Contribution of Organization Theories to the Study of Public Administration

An Identity Crisis of Public Administration

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Organization theories take the lion's share of the basic theories of public administration. As the students of public administration insist that "few would contest that a knowledge of organizations is essential to both the study and the practice of public administration" (Harmon & Mayer, 1986: v), the organization theories have provided the fundamental knowledge to the discipline of public administration. For instance, most text books of public administration share large proportion of their spaces to the organization theories (Fox, 1976). One may even have difficulties to distinguish the study of public administration from that of organization theory.

However, the discipline of public administration has suffered the so-called 'intellectual crisis' in its scope and methods of studies (Ostrom, 1974). Scientific methods of the study of public administration and their practical application to its field have not been clearly identified. In short, students of public administration have searched the identity of the discipline since its birth, but they seem to be still searching its identity. Organization theory was suggested as

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an alternative theory for the study of public administration (Simon, 1947), but its contribution to the public administration is still uncertain and arguable (Waldo, 1980).

The purpose of this paper is to explore the contribution of organization theories to the study of public administration. Why has the organization theory been considered as the major theoretical approach to the public administration field? To what extent, in a practical way, has the organization theory contributed to disclosing and explaining the public administration phenomena? Or, as some critics contend, if organization theories have not so much contributed to the study of public administration as anticipated, what are the reasons for this (Hall & Quinn, 1983)?

Keeping these questions in mind, this paper will review the development of public administration study, particularly focusing on the role of organization theories in the discipline. First, the origin of identity crisis of the study of public administration will be examined. It will illustrate the characteristics of public administration study and provide the reasons for the emergence of the significance of organization theory in the discipline. Second, the development of organization theories in the study of public administration will be reviewed. Here, the 'administrative' aspect will be focused. Third, since the 'administrative' aspect alone does not suffice to understand the properties of public administration, the 'public' or 'political' aspect of public administration will be investigated. Fourth, limitations and contributions of the application of organization theories to the study of public administration will be analyzed. Finally, as a conclusion the future prospect for the scientific development in this field will be explored.

## 1. An Identity Crisis of Public Administration

The scientific characteristics of public administration need to be investigated in order to understand the role of the organization theory in the development of public administration. The creation of the field itself may tell us the innate nature of the public administration. The study of public administration was born with the identity crisis. It is the hybrid of 'public' and 'administration.' Although the discipline initiated its study to focus more on the administrative aspect than on the public or political aspect, the innate nature of the public administration study embraces both aspects. Because two unresolvable issues, i.e., 'public' and 'administration,' are embedded in the inquiry of public administration, the mixed characteristics of public administration, i.e., democracy versus efficiency (Waldo, 1948), policy and administration (Appleby, 1949), art versus science (White, 1955), and value versus fact (Simon, 1947), have persistently caused a perplexing problem in the study of public administration.

In the late 1960s, Waldo raised the problem of the crisis in the study of public administration. "Both the nature and boundaries of the subject matter and the methods of studying and teaching this subject matter became problematical. Now two decades after the critical attacks, the crisis of identity has not been resolved satisfactorily (Waldo, 1968:5)."

1) However, since Waldo raised the question, the identity crisis of the discipline has not been resolved. Rather, the discussion of the identity crisis seems never ending.

Why is such a crisis persistent in the study of public administration? Ostrom derives the identity crisis of the field from the unique nature of public administration. He argues that the incessant inquiry of the identity of the public administration field stems from the fact that "the theory of administration

The critical attack denotes the challenge to the orthodox theories of public administration just after the war, which will be described in the later section.

presumed that technical solutions were available to public problems" (Ostrom,  $1974:5\sim6$ ). In other words, the lack of emphasis on the 'public' aspect in the study of administration has promoted the conditions of the identity crisis. Then, why has such situation been developed in the study of public administration? It may be appropriate to examine the early development of the study of public administration in order to answer this question.

## 1) The Early Development of Public Administration

At the outset, Woodrow Wilson's seminal article, "The Study of Administration" published in *Political Science Quarterly* in 1887, sparked interest in a scientific study of what was to become public administration. Wilson viewed the public administration as 'the detailed and systematic execution of public law.' Thus, the students of public administration proclaimed the segregation of the study of public administration from the arena of political science. They showed deep interest in a scientific research in the public administration. Departing from the value-laden political issues, only the execution of the suggested policies should be the subject of public administration.

The Wilsonian ideology of the public administration was upheld by a group of early public administration scholars. Among others, Frank J. Goodnow's early work on the public administration, *Politics and Administration: A Study in Government* (1900), Leonard D. White's the first public administration textbook, *Introduction to the Study of Public Administration* (1926), and W. F. Willoughby's *Principles of Public Administration* (1927) represented the Wilsonian tradition.

The early works have commonalities in several ways. First, they divided the functions of politics from those of administration. The so-called 'politics-administration dichotomy' was coined for this tradition. According to Goodnow, "there are, then, in all governmental systems two primacy or ultimate functions of government, viz the expression of the will of the state and the execution of that will ... These functions are, respectively, politics and admin-

istration" (Goodnow, 1900: 22). Thus, the functions of administration should focus on how to operate the given policies efficiently.

Second, the founding fathers of public administration understood politics in a pejorative way, since the study of politics had been understood as a normative or a descriptive study of political philosophy, political institutions, and legal systems. In addition, the study of politics was believed to have neglected to delve into public administration. In the preface of his book, White criticized the lack of the study of public administration in the field of American political science: "Curiously enough, commentators on American political institutions have never produced a systematic analysis of our administrative system except from the point of view of the lawyer" (White, 1926: vii). Thus, they contended that a scientific analysis ought to be the major subject of public administration focusing on economy or efficiency of administration.

Thirdly, therefore, the early theorists of public administration seemed to believe that a scientific research could be made if the field of public administration departed from the domain of politics. The emphasis was laid on the influence of scientific methods in the study of administration. The study of public administration was expected to be capable of becoming a value-free science (White, 1926). And thus, economy and efficiency rather than the value-laden politics came to be a major subject to be analyzed in the public administration studies. White's definition of public administration properly depicts such characteristics: "Public administration is the management of men and materials in the accomplishment of the purposed of the state ··· The objective of public administration is the most efficient utilization of the resources at the disposal of officials and employees" (White, 1926: 2). 2)

<sup>2)</sup> Although White used to have been a proponent of the politics-administration dichotomy, he revised his view on the politics-administration dichotomy in the fourth edition of his book: "To assert therefore that politics and administration are separate and autonomous structures or processes in the American system is obviously incorrect. To argue that they should be separate and independent is hardly

## 2) Scientific Management Studies

The ideology of the early scholars of public administration was well supported by the studies developed as the 'scientific management theory.' Among others, Frederick W. Taylor, Henri Fayol, Luther Gulick, and L. Urwick represented this tradition. They had an assured belief that the universal principles of systematic management could be identified based on the scientific approach to the problems occurred in management. According to Taylor's seminal book of the scientific management, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (1911), the scientific management approach is the optimal solution for the management issues. Moreover, due to the nature of the scientific approach, i. e., free from the spatial and the temporal restrictions, he argued, the universal principles of management can be obtained.

The logic of the scientific management system approach was simple and straightforward. The objective of the approach is: (1) to identify inefficiencies in management; (2) to rely on the systematic management rather than on searching for some unusual or extraordinary man to resolve the inefficiency; and (3) to prove that the best management is a true science, resting upon clearly defined laws, rules, and principles, as a foundation (Taylor, 1911). 3) Thus, the theorists of the scientific management system developed a number of universal principles such as rules on the division of labor, on line and staff, on span of control, and on POSDCORB. Furthermore, the scientific management theories also imply a value judgment that such principles should be employed in any management system to achieve economy and efficiency.

defensible, given the nature of democratic government. These statements, however, do not mean that the whole public service is, or ought to be, politicized "(White, Leonard D., *Introduction to the Study of Public Administration*, 4th ed. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1955), p.8).

In this regard, the assumptions of the scientific management approach have commonality with those of the rational problem solving model.

In the sense that the scientific management approach focused on the impersonal management system rather than the personal and political leadership as its major subject, it seemed to provide the theoretical ground for the study of organization. In addition, since both the early theorists of public administration and the scientific management disciples emphasized a scientific or a value-free approach to the study of public administration, it seems to have some similarity to the organizational approach. However, due to its normative nature and the lack of scientific research, in spite of their apparent goal of the scientific research, the scientific management theory was severely criticized as the non-scientific approach by the young scholars of public administration in the late 1940s.

In summary, the early development of public administration, such as the politics-administration dichotomy ideology and the scientific management theory, is depicted as 'the orthodox theory' of public administration. The ambitious departure of the study of discipline, which focused on the non-politicized administrative issues and on the scientific approach to the public management, contained the identity crisis because only one aspect of public administration was overly emphasized. Moreover, due to the normative application of the scientific management approach, which was ironically contradictory to its emphasis on the scientific methods, to the actual administration, a more scientific approach was required.

## 2. Development of Organization Theory in Public 'Administration'

In the late 1940s, a chain of arguments appeared on the identity of the scientific discipline of public administration. Until the end of the war, the scientific management system had developed as a major subject of public administration theory without much challenge. However, after the war the methods and the application of the scientific management theory and the

proposition of politics-administration dichotomy began to be criticized. Upon this, two theoretical perspectives in the study of public administration emerged, i.e., the organization theory and the politics-in-administration approach. The criticisms provided the theoretical ground for the emergence of organization theory and the resurgent emphasis on the political aspect in the study of public administration. In this section, the emergence of organization theory from the criticism of the orthodox approach and its development in the study of public administration will be examined.

## 1) Emergence of Organization Theory

Although the scientific management study had shared its study with the organization theory in its domain, and in spite of the intermittent appearance of the pioneer works on the organizational phenomena in America such as Barnard's *The Functions of Executive* (1938) and human relations works such as Roethlisberger and Dickson's *Management and Worker* (1939), the full scale development of organization theory in the study of public administration should wait until the late 1940s. In this regard, the emergence of the organization theory is closely related to the criticism of the orthodox approach to the study of public administration.

In the late 1940s, many scholars began to pay attention to the validity of the orthodox approach in the study of public administration (Simon, 1948; Dahl, 1947; Waldo, 1948). Simon (1946; 1947) was a major critic on the scientific management theory. He argues that the principles of administration were logically inconsistent and unscientific. The principles of the management science should be rejected in the study of public administration because they were nothing more than proverbs (Simon, 1946). Since the principles were derived from assertions rather than from scientific assessment, he maintained, we could not develop a theory of public administration from such principles (Simon, 1947) 4). Simon concluded in his article, "The Proverbs of Administra-

## tion," as follows:

Because, apart from these scattered examples, studies of administrative agencies have been carried out without benefit of control or of objective measurements of results, they have had to depend for their recommendations and conclusions upon a priori reasoning proceeding from 'principles of administration.' The reasons have already been stated why the 'principles' derived in this way cannot be more than 'proverbs' (Simon, 1946: cited from Shafritz & Whitbeck, 1978: 83).

The criticism on the management principles led Simon to proposing a more rigorous analysis of organizations. In particular, he suggested that the decision-making process should be a major concept or issues of the study of public administration. Influenced by the logical positivism and behaviorism, he emphasized the use of psychology and the scientific research of administrative behavior in the study of administration (Simon, 1947).

Simon's criticism on the orthodox approach coincidentally appeared with the translation of Weber's works and with the criticisms from other public administration theorists and political scientists (Waldo, 1948; Dahl, 1947). Particularly, the translated works of Weber's, such as H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds., From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology (1946) and Talcott Parsons, ed., Max Weber: The Theory of Social and Economic Organization (1947), stimulated American social scientists to be engaged in a value-free science. The Weberian influence promoted the behavioral revolution in the

<sup>4)</sup> Even Gulick admitted such problems: "Unfortunately, we must rest our discussion primarily on the limited observation and common sense, because little scientific research has been carried on in this field of administration (Gulick, Luther, "Notes on the Theory of Organization," in Luther Gulick & L. Urwick, eds., *Papers on the Science of Administration* (New York: Institute of Public Administration, 1937), pp. 31 ~ 32).

#### American social sciences.

These behavioral tradition facilitated the development of organization theory in the study of public administration. Two aspects of organization theory have been emphasized. One is the structural aspect of organization, the other is its procedural aspect. Thus, during the 1950s and 1960s, organization as a system and as a decision making process came to be major subjects of the study of public administration.

One example of this behavioral tradition appeared in the study of public administration is the famous textbook in the 1960s, *Public Administration* edited by Herbert A. Simon, Donald W. Smithburg, and Victor A. Thompson (1964). It argued that the study of public administration ought to focus three aspects: (1) it should analyze as to how the major governmental structures should be organized and reorganized; (2) it should examine the behavior of human beings in administration, i. e., psychology of administrative behavior; and (3) it should focus on the relationship between politics and administration (Simon, et. al., 1964).

According to Simon and his associates, the public administration theory should rest on two goals. One is to understand how people in organizations behave and how organizations operate. The other goal is to provide practical recommendations as to 'how agencies can be most effectively organized' (Simon, et. al., 1964:19). In other words, the behavioral aspect and the structural aspect of organizations are regarded as two major subjects of the study of public administration. However, their views did not totally deviate from the original ideas of the public administration study in the sense that the practical purpose of the study, i.e., efficiency of administration, was not disregarded. In this sense, the dissimilarity from the orthodox theories lies in that the more scientific analysis of the administrative behavior in organizations are proposed than a simple assertion of the management principles based on the limited observation.

In summary, the criticism on the orthodox theories in conjunction with the

introduction of Weberian ideology opened the door to the behavioral revolution in the study of public administration. The behavioral tradition has in turn greatly facilitated the development of organization study in the public administration field. The organizational process and structure have become major issues in the administration studies. The social psychological studies for the administrative behavior have been particularly emphasized.

## 2) Development of Organization Theories

The criticisms on the orthodox theories and the behavioral tradition have led the public administration to engage in the study of organization. Among others, three major approaches are conspicuous. One is the decision making process approach. Another is the systems theory approach. The other is the human relations approach.

## (1) Decision Making Theories

As reviewed in the previous section, Simon criticized the orthodox principles of management. Instead, he suggested that the principles in the normative connotation should be replaced by the choice statement. He argued that the analysis of choices in organizations would satisfy the scientific analysis of public administration. Therefore, unlike the scientific management theorists, Simon held the position that the administration study should not involve in any value judgment. Rather, "the decision-making process must start with some ethical premise that is taken as 'given'" (Simon, 1947:50). Granted a certain ethical condition or value judgment, how to deal with the organizational problems ought to be the major concern of the administration.

However, he rejected the notion of the instrumental rationality. Due to the cognitive limitation of the human behavior, decision making in organizations is restrained. Instead of economic rationality, he suggested the concept of 'bounded rationality.' Maximization of utility based on the economic calculation

cannot be achieved, but a 'satisficing' decision is usually adopted in administration due to the bounded rational nature of human behavior. In addition, the bounded rational characteristics facilitate the organizational decision making to be routinized.

Simon's impact on the administration theory is enormous. His focus on the cognitive limitation of human behavior in decision making has led to the introduction of psychology in the analysis of organization. And also since he focused on the bounded rationality of human behavior, he distinguished the organizational study from the pure economic model of utility function. But the value and fact dichotomy survived in his study of administration, which was believed to enable the scientific analysis of administrative behavior. In this regard, his approach is often called as the neo-classical theory of public administration.

Several characteristics can be identified in the development of this tradition. First, the decision making tradition has mostly developed in the study of private organizations rather than public organizations. As will be examined in the limitation of the organization theory in the study of public administration, business firms and private organizations have been the major subjects of this research. March and Simon's *Organizations* (1958) and Cyert and March's *A Behavioral Theory of the Firm* (1963) are the major theoretical achievement in this approach.

Second, the decision making approach tradition has its theoretical basis on the bounded rationality of administrative behavior. A number of concepts concerning administrative behavior have been developed based on this assumption, such as problem factoring, searching, uncertainty avoidance, standard operation procedure, and satisficing behavior in the organizational choices. It has further developed to the random choice approach. For instance, organized anarchy, garbage can model, and ambiguity of choices have come to be one of the major depictions of organizational decision making (Cohen, et. al., 1972; March & Olsen, 1976).

Third, since it has focused on the conditions of organizational man, psychological factors in administrative behavior has attracted research interests in this field. The psychological aspect of decision making process not only had impact on the development of the human relations approach but enabled the development of the cybernetic model in the organizational problem solving (Steinbruner, 1974).

Finally, the satisficing organizational behavior mixed with the pluralist assumptions developed in the political science field has evolved to the study of incrementalism in bureaucracy (Lindblom, 1959; Braybrooke & Lindblom, 1963).

Studies of the decision making in the organization theory have been abundant. However, since the Simon's tradition has not yet expanded its scope to the relationship of organizations with their environments (Harmon & Mayer, 1986), its application to the study and the practice of public administration has been strictly limited. Only a limited number of applications have been noticeable in the case study of the policy making process in public organizations. Steinbruner's cybernetic approach to the foreign policy issues (Steinbruner, 1974) and Allison's analysis of the Cuban missile crisis (Allison, 1971) are major achievements in this field. Although the policy analysis developed in the political science field owes its ideological underpinning to this tradition, the direct utilization of the knowledge developed in the organizational decision making models to the bureaucratic policy making has been sparse.

## (2) Systems Theory Approach

Another major development of organization theory which is applicable to the study of public administration is the systems theory approach. Although systems approach derives its main origin from sociology, it has enormous implication in the study of public administration. First, the systems approach began to include the organizational environment in the major subject of studying organization theory. It does not consider organization as a closed system, but as an open system. In this sense, the systems theory approach

may provide a new horizon to the public administration field, since the traditional public administration and the bureaucracy studies had not taken environment into consideration. Traditionally, the internal functions of public organization used to be the major concern of this field. Size, span of control, hierarchy, and internal conflict have served as the major subjects in the study of public administration. In this vein, bureaucracy was regarded as the closed system, where the instrumental efficiency was simply emphasized.

Second, the systems theory views an organization as the organic unity. Criticizing the traditional approach to the organization where individuals are conceived as existing in a social vacuum, the systems theorists emphasize the holistic approach to the organizational analysis (Katz & Kahn, 1966). In short, an organization is regarded as an unity responding and adapting to the dynamic process of environmental challenges.

Third, influenced by the general systems theory (Von Bertalanffy, 1968), an organization is understood as an unity surrounded by certain environmental conditions. From the organizational environment, the input of resources enters into the system, the given resources are possessed or transformed within the system, and the output is produced from the system to the environment. In turn, the output is interpreted in the environment and reacted to the system through the feedback process. In a nutshell, organizational process is understood as a system's input, through-put, output, and feedback process. In this process, the specific goal or purpose of organization is not exogenously given, but rather formulated through a dynamic process to achieve a homeostasis and equilibrium state of the system. More focus is laid on the adaptation to the environmental challenge for its survival and the constant growth than on the efficient management of the given goal.

The systems theory approach has been extended and developed with the main emphasis on the relationship between organization and environment. James D. Thompson's *Organization in Action* (1967) adopted environment and technology as the major variables to explain the organization, and he

developed many propositions on the adaptive strategies for the organization in order to achieve organizational rationality. But for him, organizational rationality is not the rigid calculation of decision makers for the utility maximization for the given goals in a closed system, but the adaptability of the organization to uncertainties and contingencies in the environment.

On account of the emphasis on the open nature of the organization, a number of studies have developed with regard to the relationship between organization and environment. The studies on the organizational environment itself (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967), interorganizational network issues (Evan, 1966; Weick, 1976; Benson, 1975), and organizational design (Galbraith, 1973) have developed as the major issues in the organization studies. From these issues, the resource dependence model (Pfeffer, 1981; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) and the population ecology model (Hannan & Freeman, 1977) have evolved in terms of how to react to external conditions for the survival and constant growth of the focal organization.

The systems theory approach in the organization study has provided a new perspective to the study of public administration. The instrumental efficiency of the public organization developed in the orthodox tradition and the closed perspective of the bureaucracy have come to be a less valid argument than the interorganizational approach and the approach to consider the organizational environments.

However, the application of the systems theory does not seem to have solved the problem of the identity crisis in the study of public administration. First, the systems theory has been seldom utilized in the analysis of public administration. The consideration of organizational environment in the study of public administration has been less emphasized. Such environmental factors as congress, presidency, interest groups, and mass media have been neglected in the study of public administration. Rather, as will be examined, most theories on the political process between the bureaucratic organizations and the other political institutions have been more developed in the field of political science

than in public administration. Second, the methods and the concepts of the systems theory have been rarely applied to the analysis of environmental factors of public organizations. One of the reasons may lie in the fact that while the concepts of organizational environment in organization theories often consist of abstract terms such as technology, complexity, uncertainty, and others, the concepts in political process are more concrete entities such as congress, presidency, interest groups, and so forth. Here, the application problem arises because the abstract concepts have limitation of their utility in the actual analysis of the political process. Third, in the study of public administration, the inclusion of the concept of environment may raise another problem of identity crisis. For instance, if we follow Thompson's logic of the adaptability to the environmental situation, the adaptability issue in the public administration field would imply in many ways the accountability to the public. However, it turns the study of public administration back to the normative question which is not generally considered by the systems theorists (Harmon & Mayer, 1986: 193).

### (3) Human Relations Approach

The main stream of organization theories, whether they are Weberian bureaucracy, the Taylorian scientific management, or the Thompsonian adaptability to organizational environment, has considered the organization rather than a human being as an unit of analysis to understand organizational administration. Organization was the subject to analyze the logic of organizational activities than individuals who comprise organizations. Human relations approach, by contrast, emphasizes the human factors in the organization, arguing that the democratic values such as individual freedom and choices ultimately facilitate the long-term organizational efficiency or the effectiveness.

The human relations approach has developed from the results of the Hawthorne experiments (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939). At the outset, the

subjected to harsh criticism as the Hawthorne experiments were non-humanistic approach of the industrial psychology. Following Taylorian scientific management tradition, Elton Mayo and his disciples engaged in the discovery of the relationship between productivity and working conditions of employees. Since it was an experiment in which the subject was a human being, and since the outcome of the experiment results could be utilized to increase the workplace efficiency by dehumanizing the workers, the Hawthorne experiments were difficult to evade such criticism from the ethical point of view. However, the results of the experiments unexpectedly became the starting point of the development of the later human relations approach, where the human aspect of the organizational activity is greatly emphasized. Since the major findings of the experiments implied the fact that workers' morale is crucial to the high productivity, the human aspects in the organization theory became focused. Accordingly, the study of informal groups rather than formal organizations and hierarchy has drawn attention in the human relations approach.

The shift of interest from organization to individuals has enabled the organization theory to focus on the analysis of the psychological aspect of human being. How to integrate the human factors with the organizational efficiency came to be a major issue in the human relations approach. Maslow's self-actualization theory based on his need hierarchy model (Maslow, 1954), McGregor's Theory Y argument (McGregor, 1960), Argyris' organization development or OD and sensitive training or T-groups (Argyris, 1957; 1964), and Bennis' organizational democracy (Bennis, 1970) represent this tradition. Later the ideological underpinning of this approach passed its baton on the so-called 'New Public Administration.'

However, the influence of the human relations approach on the study of public administration has not helped to resolve the identity crisis but to worsen the situation. As Harmon and Mayer maintain, "Without intending to, the later human relationists have provided public administration with more dilemmas

than answers (Harmon & Mayer, 1986: 236)." The meanings of democracy and the individual freedom are obscure. The normative implication of the approach hinders the scientific analysis of the organization, which was the original purpose of the study of public administration. The approach may encounter the same fallacy of normative assertion as the principles of scientific management met. In addition, the applicability of propositions developed by the human relations theorists to the study of public administration is practically limited. For instance, Argyris and his associates' efforts to apply OD method to the State Department's ACORD Program ran across the severe difficulty in the implementation of the program (Warwick, 1975).

In summary, as Altshuler observes, the public administration research in the postwar period can be characterized as "the interdisciplinary approach of organizational behavior with its focus on the social psychology of men in organizations (Altshuler, 1968: 68)." However, as will be evaluated in the following sections, the application of the organization theory to the public administration phenomena has a strict limitation. Waldo's comment is appropriate for the limited application of organization theory in the study of public administration:

Obviously, those identified with and who are taking the lead in identifying Theory of Organization either are (1) unacquainted with the work of political scientists and public administrationists, or (2) if acquainted with it have a low estimate of it, or (3) if they have a high estimate of it do not regard it as part of or relevant to Theory of Organization (Waldo, 1969: 23).

#### 3. Politics In Administration

Another predominant feature in the study of public administration in the postwar period is the inclusion of the political aspect in the study of public administration. The criticism on the orthodox approach to the study of public administration not only led the discipline to the development of the organization theory but to the reconsideration of political aspect in the study of public administration. In this regard, two points are noteworthy. One is the emphasis of normative aspect. The other is the inclusion of political institutions in the study of public administration.

Waldo, pointing out the fundamental inconsistency, ambiguity, and problems of the orthodox theories, maintained the importance of relating public administration to democratic values. In his book, *The Administrative State: A Study of the Political Theory of American Public Administration* (1948), Waldo criticized the narrow focus of the study of administration in the orthodox theories, where the issue of administration had been only focused on efficiency and regarded as separated from the general problem of political democracy. Instead of such narrowness, he suggested the conciliation of normative and objective efficiency: "[T]he descriptive or objective notion of efficiency is valid and useful, but only within a framework of consciously held values" (Waldo, 1948: 203; original emphases).

A political scientist, Dahl also pointed out three problems of the study of public administration, reviewing the orthodox approach (Dahl, 1947). First, the study of public administration is problematic because of the frequent impossibility of excluding normative considerations from the problems of public administration and of the indistinguishability of means and ends in the study of public administration. Second, he admitted that a science of public administration must be a study of certain aspects of human behavior. However, since the study of human behavior has several problems such as

impossibility of experiment, limitation of the uniformity of data, and the often misleading the implication of the findings due to the complexity of data, the study itself tends to weaken the reliability of all 'laws of public administration.' Third, he rejected the validity of the universal principles of public administration because the principles were constructed from too narrow and too parochial perspectives. It seems difficult for him to argue that a principle of public administration has equal validity in every nation state. Instead, he suggested the study of comparative public administration: "as long as the study of public administration is not comparative, claims for 'a science of public administration' sound rather hollow" (Dahl, 1947:8).

Not only the lack of normative issues but the exclusion of political factors in the study of public administration became problematic to the critics. As Seidman argues, "(e) conomy and efficiency are demonstrably not the prime purpose of public administration" (Seidman, 1980: 29). Instead, politics, position, and power should be the major concepts to understand the institutional behavior of the government agencies. Schick goes on to maintain that the recognition of the political aspect in the study of public administration can resolve the identity problem of the discipline: "(P) erhaps the study of administration is just another expression for the study of politics. If this is so, it will require a theory of politics to resolve the intellectual crisis of American public administration" (Schick, 1975: 161).

Such revisionists' claims for the inclusion of the political aspect in the study of public administration have facilitated the development of another tradition of the study of public administration. Although the intermittent arguments for the significance of political aspect and the normative concern in the study of public administration existed as early as the 1930s, such as Marshall E. Dimock's criticism of the politics-administration dichotomy in his article, "The Meaning and Scope of Public Administration" (1936), 5) the full scale development of such

<sup>5)</sup> Although Dimock admitted the isolation of the administrative process from the political

tradition is the outcome of the postwar revision of the study.

This tradition has shifted the attention of public administration from productivity or efficiency of the management of public organizations to a set of questions concerning power, control, conflict, and survival of government organizations. "These questions focus, not on the process of internal management and control, but on the strategy and tactics of organizational survival, the factors accounting for differences in power among agencies, and the impact of the struggle for power among executive agencies upon the shape of public policy" (Peabody & Rourke, 1965: 818).

Two aspects are noteworthy in the development of the politics-in-administration tradition. One aspect is that efficiency or economy has been replaced by the concept of power as the major unit of analysis in the study of public administration. As a pioneering advocate of this approach, Long properly argued, "(t)he life blood of administration is power ··· Administrative rationality requires a critical evaluation of the whole range of complex and shifting focus on whose support, acquiescence, or temporary impotence the power to act depends" (Long, 1949: 257).

The other aspect is that the public organization is considered as means of

process on research purpose, he rejected the fundamental argument of politics-administration dichotomy in the orthodox approach:

<sup>(</sup>T) he danger today is in going too far in the formal separation between politics and administration. Scholars working in the field of Public Administration must take care lest by unduly separating the techniques of execution from the content and problems of government they make Public Administration detached and unreal. In the growing tendency to draw a sharp line between politics and administration, there is constant danger of giving too little weight to the propulsions, policies, and attitudes which run throughout government and which influence administration as well as legislation ··· Public Administration is to be isolated from the whole process of government only for the sake of convenience in research, teaching, and training [Dimock, Marshall E., "The Meaning and Scope of Public Administration," in John M. Gaus, Leonard D. White, & Mashall E. Dimock, eds., *The Frontiers of Public Administration* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1936), pp. 3~4).

the political process than goals to achieve efficient management. In other words, the bureaucracy is rather regarded as a mere instrument to achieve political goals in a battleground of dynamic political process than as a rational organization to achieve efficient management. Thus, public administration system is more often regarded as a symbolic instrument in the political process (Edelman, 1964). Programs and policies of public organizations are not the execution of the government goal, but often serve as a goal itself. "In political government, the means can matter quite as much as the ends; they often matter more" (Neustadt, 1960: 47). The goals of public organization are neither specified nor unambiguous: "Federal programs are likely to have multiple purposes ... Major purposes cannot be ascertained by scientific or economic analysis" (Seidman, 1980: 21). Reorganization programs are formulated for the purpose of organizational control as often as on account of the achievement of organizational efficiency (March & Olsen, 1983; Heclo, 1977).

In this approach, the functions of public bureaucracy have been expanded and the inclusion of other political institutions in the analysis of public bureaucracy has been emphasized. First of all, unlike the traditional notion of bureaucracy, the functions of bureaucracy are not limited to the execution of public policies but expanded to the policy formulation. The policy making came to be included in the realm of public administration. Appleby was a pioneer in this tradition. In his *Policy and Administration* (1949), Appleby argued that it was a fallacy to believe that "(c) ongress has an exclusive responsibility for policy-making" (p. 5). Administration ought to be understood as a broad concept including policy-making as well as execution (Appleby, 1949). Thus, he expanded the scope of public administration to "intermingling of policy-making and management which occurs below the levels of legislative, judicial, and popular-electoral policy determination" (Appleby, 1949: 25).

Pluralism has provided the ideological background of the policy making in the dynamic process of politics. The preeminent concept developed from this approach is the incrementalism of the bureaucratic policy making. In the muddling through process of interest aggregation, the policy makers often resort to the incremental resolution (Lindblom, 1959). A typical application of incrementalism appears in the budgetary process of the government agencies (Wildaysky, 1979).

Not only the policy formulation but the policy implementation attracted the focus of public administration students during 1970s (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973; Bardach, 1977). Lack of attention to the political and environmental factors in the policy making process often hinders the effective operation of the policy. Despite the successful establishment of a public program, if it is not properly operated, the policy turns out to be of no use. Thus, the execution of public policies ought to be considered as a political process rather than a mere administrative process. Intergovernmental bargaining becomes a significant function for the effective policy implementation. Unless the appropriate arrangement is not procured, delay of the process, withdrawal of the previous commitment, and administrative control over the process often prohibit the efficient operation of the policies.

The second notable development is that the political environments of public organizations have become the major consideration of the study of public administration. Public policy is not an output of the enclosed bureaucratic agency's actions. Rather, political and environmental factors are more significant that efficiency in the study of the political organizations. As Seidman argues, "(a) pplication of 'economy and efficiency' as the criteria for government organization can produce serious distortions, if political and environmental factors are ignored" (Seidman, 1980: 16).

Upon this ideological backup, the inclusion of the political influence of the legislative branch, presidency, and interest groups in the realm of public administration became salient. In the formulation and the execution of public policy, the functions of political institutions should not be minimized. For instance, the legislative oversight over the programs of the public agencies (Arnold, 1979; Dodd & Schott, 1979), the presidential power over the

government agencies (Neustadt, 1960; Randall, 1979; Moe, 1982), and the input of interest groups influence and the symbiotic relationship among Congress, bureaucracy, and interest groups (Fritschler, 1975; Bendor & Moe, 1985) exert the significant impact on the operation of the policies in public organizations.

The inclusion of political aspect in the study of public administration has broadened the scope of understanding of public administration. However, unfortunately, both organization theories and politics-in-administration theories have failed to exert their efforts to incorporate two contrasting issues, i. e., 'publicness' and 'administration.' The politics-in-administration approach is rather segregated from the development of the organization theory in the study of public administration. For instance, the implication of the organization theory in the politics-in-administration approach is strictly limited. While some jargons and concepts have been borrowed from the organization theory, the direct application of the organization theory to the analysis of the characteristics of public organizations has been rare. "Though the government-organization game is played in the vocabulary of this variety of organization theory, the real game, as the knowledgeable see, is a political game or else a combined political-administrative game of a variety for which we lack an adequate conceptualization and vocabulary" (Waldo, 1980: 72).

The reasons for such lack of application are based on the fundamental differences in their characteristics between the organizational approach and the political process approach to the study of public administration. First, the organization theory focuses on the administrative aspect of the public administration, but the politics-in-administrative emphasized on its political aspect. In the politics-in-administration approach, power, control, conflict, and bargaining in the dynamic political process have been more emphasized than the functions of administration and the administrative efficiency. Moreover, the incorporation of the political aspect into the analysis of internal administration issues of public organizations has not been well developed in the politics-in-administration tradition.

Second, the characteristics of analysis for the politics-in-administration approach are more descriptive, but those for the organization theory imply a normative connotation as well as description. Any organizational theory has some implication of the amelioration of the organizational conditions and efficient management. Efficiency is embedded in the analysis of organization theory. Human relations approach assumes that the individual freedom and choice would facilitate the organizational efficiency; the systems approach, such as Thompson's, implies the efficient adaptation to the environmental challenges; and the decision making approach presumes the satisficing, if not the maximizing, solutions under the bounded rational conditions of human behavior. Even the garbage can model implies some utility of the model in the efficient administration of the organization (March & Olsen, 1986). However, the politics-in-administration approach hardly considers the utility of the theory. It rather describes what is actually happening in the political process. Therefore, one may raise the question about the status of the politics-inadministration approach in the study of public administration. Since 'administration' or the 'administrative efficiency' is rarely discussed in this approach, it may be argued that it is not 'a theory' of public administration.

To sum up, in the politics-in-administration approach, the effective operation of the public policies in the government agencies is not a matter of administrative process but that of political process. Without proper understanding of the political process, the organizational behavior of government agency cannot be fully grasped. However, the emphasis on the political aspect in the study of public administration raises another question as to whether the development of such approach has been facilitated by the public administration theorists. And to what extent the theories developed in the politics-an-administration approach can be utilized in the practice of public administration is another problem. Therefore, one may even argue that due to the emphasis of political process in this approach the study of public administration has been incorporated again into a subfield of political science, and ended up with its

identity loss.

# 4. Contributions and Limitations of Organization Theory: Another Identity Crisis of Public Administration

In the postwar development of the study of public administration, the organization theory and the politics-in-administration approach have been highlighted as two major alternative theories to the orthodox theory of public administration. Particularly, the organization theory has been expected as 'a theory' of public administration. However, the contribution of organization theories to the public administration study and the impact of the public administration study on the development of organization theory are left to be questionable.

Numerous scholars (Altshuler, 1968; Schick, 1975; Waldo, 1969) both in public administration and in political science fields have pointed out the limitation of the application of the organization theory to the analysis of public administration phenomena. As Schick aptly described, "(b) ut for all its utility and excitement, organization theory revealed the intellectual difficulties of the discipline. One tipoff was that the literature was not a literature of public administration but rather a literature that attracted the interest of public administration researchers and teachers" (Schick, 1975: 169~170). 6) Although the concepts and methods of the organization theory have provided better

<sup>6)</sup> By the same token, the study of public administration has not contributed to the development of the organization theory: "It is my impression that the literature in Public Administration has contributed almost nothing to major advances in either that analysis or the normative understanding of complex public organizations" [La Porte, Todd R., "The Recovery of Relevance in the Study of Public Organization," in Frank Marini, ed., Toward a New Public Administration: The Minnowbrook Perspective (Scranton, CA: Chandler Publishing Company, 1971), p. 17).

understanding of the internal functions of public organization, their application to public sectors has been limited.

The contribution of the organization theory to the public administration study can be evaluated in two respects. One is whether the organization theory has provided some analytical tools to explain the practical nature of public administration. The other is as to whether the theories can be utilized for the efficient operation of public organizations. The former is related to the 'scientific' aspect and the latter is to the 'art' aspect of the study of public administration.

From the methodological or the scientific perspective, the organization theory has contributed to a greater extent to the development of public administration study. The organization theory has provided the theoretical perspective how to approach to the phenomena of public administration. Major concepts in the organization theory, such as organizational goals and means, hierarchy, size, complexity, internal conflicts and power, and human behavior in organizations, have facilitated the understanding of public administration. Particularly, the internal functions of public organization have gained better understanding owing to the development of organization theory. For instance, decision making theories have facilitated the development of public policy studies. Public policy is regarded as the organizational output of the bureaucracy. Since any public policy formulation and implementation involves organizational consideration, the potential, although it has been limited in practice, to apply organizational theories to the analysis of public policy is enormous: "The contribution of organization theory to all of this is that it has the potential for increasing our understanding of the formulation and implementation of public policy" (Hall & Quinn, 1983: 17).

However, in spite of the greater possibility of the theoretical application of organization theories to the public administration study, the actual application of organization theory to the study of public administration has been limited. The major reason for the limited application lies in that the organization theory

has evaded the analysis of public organizations. Instead, it has focused on private organizations. As Altshuler aptly observed, "[n] early all of the organizations examined have been nongovernmental, however, and few scholars working in the field have considered political relevances a noteworthy criterion of research significance" (Altshuler, 1968: 69). While organization theorists have dealt with the private organizations for their analysis of organizational phenomena, the public administration theorists have failed to incorporate the organization theories in their analyses of the public administration issues. (7) Instead, it has been the political scientists who have been more interested in the political process of the public bureaucracy operations, but not the public administration theorists.

The limited analysis of public organization in the field of organization theory is not only due to a simple negligence of organization theorists for public organizations but also because of the practical difficulty of the analysis of public organizations. Several reasons can be identified. First, research is difficult because the administrative process of public organizations is often complicated, informal, and less publicized. Since the research on the public organizations "ought to deal with the great mass of secret, routine, and informal decisions as well as the few that become subject of widespread public controversy" (Altshuler, 1968: 67), the outsiders cannot obtain necessary information to analyze the public organizations.

Second, the characteristic of organization goal in the government agencies may prevent the researchers from the analysis of efficient management of public organization. Unlike private organizations, public organizations lack the

<sup>7)</sup> Altshuler attributed the decline of the discipline in the postwar period to the incapacity of public administration theorists: "Public administration itself has failed to replace 'efficiency' with a set of concerns more closely related to the central concerns of modern political science" (Altshuler, Alan A., "The Study of American Public Administration," in Alan A. Altshuler, ed., *The Politics of the Federal Bureaucracy* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1968), p. 68).

concrete organizational goal. Organizational goals of many government agencies are often uncertain and symbolic. Sometimes they contain multiple purposes. Measurement of efficiency is extremely difficult due to the uncertain characteristics of organizational goals. Peabody and Rourke maintain: "In part, the relative paucity of research in this area might reflect the amorphorous goals of many governmental agencies" (Peabody & Rourke, 1965: 808).

Third, the limited cases of the comparable public policies and organizations prevent the research from conducting rigorous methodological analysis on public administration. Major significant public policies such as foreign policies are often non-repetitive and non-comparable. Thus, the important policies are often analyzed by the method resorting to case study. Only the lower level public organizations and their policies have been often selected as the object of the analysis. This may account for the relative abundance of the research on the public organizations such as education, health, postal agencies among others.

Fourth, as a more practical reason, one may indicate the lack of research funds for the analysis of public bureaucracy. Unlike the private organizations, government agencies are unwilling "to provide the necessary funds to carry out large-scale research on problems of this kind" (Peabody & Rourke, 1965: 808).

In terms of utility of organization theory in the study of public administration, it should be mentioned that, first of all, the public administrators usually do not pay much attention to organization theories. Since organization theories often disregard the practical reality or political context of public policies, they cannot be a useful strategy for the public administrators. In addition, unlike organization theorists, "practicing executives view administration or management as an art rather than as a science" (Hall & Quinn, 1983: 18). Bureaucrats often show a strong distrust against the public administration theorists because of the lack of reality of organizational researches. Due to the complexity and non-publicity, the outside researchers cannot obtain the sufficient information on the inside operation of the government agency. The application of OD

methods to the reorganization program of the U.S. State Department can be a typical example. Warwick analyzed the failure of the Argyris' ACORD Program form this perspective: "Argysis could be criticized for failing to consider the larger organizational system of State. One suspects that his diagnosis, which is mainly inner-directed, is based more on his work with big business organizations than on a thorough analysis of the agency at hand. And, whatever the accuracy of the diagnosis, there is a natural tendency for agency employees to resent and reject critical interpretations made by outsiders" (Warwick, 1975: 212).

Hall and Quinn (1983) also pointed out several reasons for the problems of the utility of organization theory in the study of public administration. First, it became problematic because the research on the interorganizational interactions among public institutions have been rare. Second, evaluation of the public policy has been beyond the scope of the organization research. Since the research on success and failure of public programs has been neglected in the study of public administration, the utility of organization theories became problematic. Third, organization theories have not been useful because most organization theories disregard the issue of the purpose of the public policy. It has not been the organization theories' concern to whom the programs are beneficial.

The above reasons may account for the lack of organization theories in the public administration field. Such constraints on the research has not attracted the interest of the organization theorists. Thus, it is not surprising that the research interest of the organization theory has been naturally inclined to the analyses of the phenomena of private organizations.

one exceptional attempt to link the organizational factors and the political aspect of public bureaucracy is Warwick's analysis on the reorganization of the U.S. State Department (Warwick, 1975). Warwick attempts to incorporate the political environments in the analysis of internal structure and operations of public bureaucracy:

There is no shortage of books and articles that purport to explain organizatoinal behavior on a universal basis and even offer prescriptive statements based on such 'general theory.' But as of the time of writing there is not a single general work on organization theory that pays systematic attention to the distinctive features of public bureaucracy and makes a serious effort to incorporate the findings of the many case studies reported in the literature of public administration (Warwick, 1975: 190).

As other public administration theorists, he starts his argument by criticizing the lack of interest in public bureaucracy from the organization theory: "Despite their ubiquity, size, and pervasive impact on national and international life, federal executive agencies have received scant attention in organization theory (Warwick, 1975:189)." In addition, Warwick maintains that the earlier studies of public bureaucracy has been heavily biased toward internal structures and processes. More specifically, the researches have focused on the internal conditions of the organization, such as size, functional complexity, professionalization, and internal conflict. Thus, his research attempts to focus on "the effect of political control and influence on the internal structure and operations of an organization" (Warwick, 1975:191). In this regard, he has contributed to the study of public administration by incorporating the political aspect with the administrative aspect in the analysis of public organization.

To sum up, the organization theorists have contributed to the study of public administration with regard to the theoretical perspective, conceptualization, and methodology. However, the actual application of the organization theory to the analysis and the practice of public administration has been strictly limited due to the unique characteristics of 'public' organizations. The lack of application of organization theory has been somewhat supplemented by the emphasis of political process in the study of public administration. However, since it has gone too far to the realm of political science, the problem of the identity crisis of public administration is yet to be resolved. In

a nutshell, while the organization theory has not focused on the 'public' organizations, the politics-in-administration approach has neglected the 'administrative' aspect of the public bureaucracy. Either approach has failed to fill the gap between the issues of 'publicness' and 'administration.'

### 5. Conclusions

No discipline may have more suffered from the identity crisis than public administration. Public administration has not established a set of theories in its own domain. Concepts, methodology, and theoretical framework have been borrowed from other disciplines. Thus, the interdisciplinary approach is often suggested as the only plausible approach to deal with public administration. Apparently two irreconcilable issues, i. e., 'publicness' and 'administration' may not be well amalgamated in the study of public administration.

In this review paper, the identity of public administration has been explored. From the birth of its study, various paradigms have emerged in the study of public administration, which have evolved in a dialectical way. The politics-administration dichotomy, the scientific management tradition, organization theories, the politics-in-administration approaches, and the New Public Administration have shared the position of main stream in the study of public administration. However, any approach has hardly represented the discipline.

Organization theory among others has been expected as the major theory to provide the conceptual framework to the study of public administration. But its contribution to the study of public administration has been evaluated negatively in terms of 'description' as well as 'prescription' of public administration. Direct application of organization theory to the analysis of public administration is limited. The utility of organization theory in the practice of public administration is limited as well.

The lack of concern for 'public' aspect in organization may have been resolved by the development of the politics-in-administration approach. The study of public policy as one of the major subjects of public administration and the inclusion of other political institutions in the analysis of bureaucracy have expanded the scope of the study of public administration. However, as for the case of organization theories, the inclusion of public aspect has not been developed by the public administration theorists but by the political scientists. Accordingly, the attention to the 'administrative' aspect has not been paid, and the incorporation of political issues into administration phenomena has not been achieved in the politics-in-administration approach with satisfaction.

Looking back to the development of the study of public administration, it seems to be difficult to establish a public administration theory to incorporate both aspects of public administration. Neither Simon's decision analysis nor Ostrom's democratic administration may be a solution for the identity crisis of the public administration study. Due to the unique nature of the discipline which is simultaneously encompassing multiple issues, for instance, the study of public administration seems to have to take extreme solution by jettisoning one aspect in order to develop another.

New Public Administration was such an attempt to focus only on the normative aspect, i.e., public accountability, in the study of public administration. Radically deviating from the efficiency issue, new values such as social equity and accountability dominate the subject of New Public Administration study. Elden comments on such development: "It is an end to the 'administration' emphasis in public administration and a beginning of an emphasis on 'publicness' (Elden, 1971: 38).

In order to resolve the identity crisis of public administration study, we may resort to various approaches. We may focus on one aspect of public administration as a New Public Administration pursues. Or, in spite of difficulty, we may try to incorporate the political issues in the research of administrative phenomena of public organizations. Or we may take a practical, although

somewhat pessimistic, suggestion by Waldo in order to resolve the identity crisis of public administration: "What I propose is that we try to act as a profession without actually being one and perhaps even without the hope or intention of becoming one in any strict sense" (Waldo, 1968:10; original emphasis). Whatever the choice will be, the identity crisis of the discipline will persist as long as 'public' and 'administration' remain as two main subjects of the study.

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