INNOVATIONS IN GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC SERVICE TO ACHIEVE A HARMONIOUS SOCIETY

Building Up the Practical Public Administration Premise for Chinese Socialist Harmonious Society
— from the Perspective of Public Administration Reform

Zhou Feng
Vice-Professor
The Philosophy Department of GuangDong School of Administration

Zhou Xia
The Administration Department of GuangDong Polytechnic Normal University
Guangzhou city
[Abstract]: By analyzing the intrinsic logic in the evolution of public administration theories, the paper argues that a harmonious public administration system is the premise to a harmonious society. Confronted with the impacts of world-wide modernist and post-modernist public administration practices, the Chinese governments must conduct some necessary reforms on its public administration functions from the following three aspects so as to construct a solid foundation for its socialist harmonious society: 
(1) reforming the pre-modernist mixed public power mechanism; 
(2) holding on and making perfect the good-governance and constitutional-governance; 
(3) fostering the spirit of public administration and civil society.

[Key words]: socialist harmonious society, building up, public administration practices, reform

“There must be justice. If there is no justice, the order and harmony would be destroyed, that is the worst evil”.——Pythagoras

Since the 1990s, Chinese public administration theory has been challenged by modernist and post-modernist public administration theories from outside world. Consequently, the public administration of Chinese government has been turning gradually from its pre-modernist class ruling function into modernist governance and service function; Further more, the notions of multi-governance and participation governance based on post-modernist public administration practices in western world is trying to play some more and more important roles.

However, whatever the public administrative functions of Chinese government turns into, once we diachronically and synchronisedly observe the developing history of public administration theory, and the changing of values and functions of public administration in western capitalism countries, we could clearly draw out the following role inner them: the final value changing is aimed to provide the basic institutional guarantee in superstructure for realizing the harmonious society from public administrative side.

1. Reading of the Modernist and Post-modernist Public Administrative Function

Since Goodnow and Wilson established dichotomy of politics and execution, and Webber founded the bureaucracy of officers, the practices of public administration was doomed to be modernistic. Because the dichotomy of politics and execution provided the reasonable logic pattern of the definition of the function about public administration, that is the political function of government becomes socialized, open and democratic more and more; and the bureaucracy set up more rational public administrative organization and rule of public officers that made all administrative affairs became countable and maneuverable by reason, what them leaded to was that the function of public administrative organization was settled into efficiency itself but not the fair and value of society. The situation broken by the two world wars and changed into the oppoenacy of modernity and post-modernity after 1950s.

We could find the point easily. The two World Wars did huge harms to the practices of public administration, and the reforms started in capitalist countries after the second world war promoted a new discussion discourse about public administration pattern, all of which shook the foundation of the dichotomy of politics and the bureaucracy , the people in the countries began sharply doubting about the basic value brought by the capability of the government under the belief of efficiency and reason counting. The fact was uncovered by people: the dichotomy and the strict bureaucracy increased the efficiency of public administrative organization, but that removed the value foundation of society: to realize the people’s value needs ---that is the base of public organization could exist. So, the traditional public administration theory fell apart, some new theory sprung up such as the ecological public administrative theory, the entrepreneurial public administrative theory, and so on. All those new public administrative theories have common sense: to combine the efficiency of government itself with the universal value needs of society and civics so as to realize the good governance, build up the authentic administrative ethics, to help people actively take part in the democratic politics.
The following three discourses of public administration theory today could represent the tendency of the above we talked.

1. **Constitutional governance and Institutionalism.** Constitutional governance has two kinds: the classical and the modernistic. The classical suggests to set up a system in which the civics could manage affairs by themselves so that the public power could be limited. But the modernistic wishes to find “whether the constitutional governance is a empty promise as an effort of making political life better”(1). But all of them leadded the governmental governance into embarrassed situation. On the other hand, institutionalism tried to turn the abstract constitutional governance into concrete life order so as to help administrative organizations realize their function and promise in concrete system-planning, but the practicing process of public institution of government made the system much rigid than ever.

2. **Communalism and civiclism.** The dichotomy and bureaucracy of administration brought out the abstract subject of public power and value when the modernistic public function of administrative organization took itself as the spokesperson of society value. So the Communalism wanted to built up collective view of value and interests to replace citizen or individual political call, but it was clearly an illusion(2). Post-modernistic public administration wishes to set up the civiclistic administrative practice pattern to take place the abstract public administration by affirming the identity and right of civics and encouraging the democratic politics.

3. **Building up administration and governance simultaneously.** Obviously, we could find that they were trying to change the function of public administration in modernism and post-modernism, that was to say , turning the ruling governance into the public governance of society life. In past 100 years, the public administrative function of capitalist countries was making their efforts in two sides of administration and governance all along, in other words, the pattern of public administration of western countries was the struggle between modernist and post-modernist. Administration means efficiency and science, and governance means justice and goodness. So the post-modernist public administration continuously doubted and criticized the modernistic “efficiency” just in order to establish the fundamental base of post-modernistic “justice” and realizing “good governance” and a harmonious civics society in public administration aspects. But, as far as the ideas held by post-modernist is concerned today, there are no gap existing between modernist and post-modernist that could not be bridged.

2. “**Toward a Harmonious Society**”——the Reforming Role of Public Administrative Practices

By analyzing the logic of public administrative theory, we could tell that the reforming role of function of modern public administration is trying to build up a harmonious relationship between society and civics. Public administration directly takes the burden of democracy and legitimacy, justice and equality, freedom and development of society and people, whether the good or bad of public administrative function is that reflects the living situation of civics under the governance of government.

Essentially, whatever the organization and constitution or structure of governments would be, to build up a harmonious society is the basic goal of the governmental function. The development history of western public administrative theory could prove it.

The theory of Social Contract advanced by Luke and Rousseau told that the people wished giving out their rights to somebody on unanimous agreement for establishing a public organization that could help people properly constitute laws and rules and use public power to realize social harmony. The theory of “separation of the three powers” raised by Montesquieu also wished “using the power to limit power” to ensure rightly applying public power to society and civics; and the modern scholar Nozick used the Utopia theory to settle the relationship among the nation, government and civics, he also wanted to realize a harmonious society from the public administration side.

Even in the post-modernistic public administrative theory we can find the logic. The ideas of service and governance they put forth are aiming at the realization of harmonious society: by making the public power serving people well, building up the good governance of government, improving and perfecting the
market mechanism. So, the “harmonious society”, in perspective of public administrative theory, is firstly
to use public power justly, protect and promote the public interests of people.

In the view of post-modernistic public administrative theory, the ideas of efficiency and science held
by the modernist just noticed one side of administration function and ignored the “public”. In post-
modernist, the “public” is the most important side of administration function, because the power of
government lent from the people not given by the “God”, the interests and calls of society and civics must
be reflected in the policies and practices of governmental function. In one word, we must break away the
dichotomy of execution and administration, and set up a communicative system or mechanism among
the nation and the cивics, the government and the market, the politics and human life, only by which could we
establish the base for constructing a harmonious society in modern world.

3. The Practical Public Administration Premise for
Chinese Socialism Harmonious Society

According to the reforming logic of administrative theory and function, we could understand the
political claim——“building up a socialism harmonious society”—-put forth by Chinese government, the
claim clearly reflected that Chinese government is trying to construct a harmonious interests mechanism
to balance the tension relationship between the public power and the civil society.

So, confronted with the impacts of worldwide modernist and post-modernist public administration
practices, the Chinese governments must conduct some necessary reforms on its public administration
function from the following three aspects so as to so as to construct a solid foundation for its socialist
harmonious society:

Firstly, reforming the pre-modernist mixed public power-mechanism. Depending on the comprising of
ethics, public power and political will to administrate whole country is strongly characteristics of
contemporary Chinese public administrative practices, which is rooted into the thousands years of
Chinese federal tradition. To develop what is useful and discard what is not of the pre-modernity
traditional administration is the premise.

Secondly, holding on and making perfect the good-governance and constitutional-governance.
Good-governance seeks the better practices of public administrative function, constitutional-governance
pursues the social justices and equality under legal spirit. Although Chinese government has been
practicing modernism public administration function since 1949, the relationship between government and
market, state and citizen, democracy and liberty, justices and fairs had not been essentially resolved. In
other words, the reforming logic of modern Chinese government should universally put public right and
social value into its administrative working.

Thirdly, fostering public administrative spirit and civil society. In postmodernist, public administrative
spirits includes justices, equality, democracy, liberty and efficiency, what lack in Chinese government is
just the spirit. The lacking of the spirit directly results in the vulnerability of civil society in modern China,
and without a strongly civil society that leads the relationship between citizens and state into
unharmonious. So, to foster better administrative spirit and develop strongly civil society is the most
important work in the administrative reforms of modern Chinese government.

Only by forcefully and effectively reforming the administrative function of modern Chinese
government, could we establish a strongly bases for constructing socialism harmonious society.

[i] (USA) Stephen L. Elkin, Karol Edward Soltan edited, New constitutionalism: Designing the Political