Fairness, Globalization, and Public Institutions

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CHAPTER 23

Education, Training, and Research

Christopher Grandy and Dick Pratt

The authors of this chapter are colleagues in the Public Administration Program at the University of Hawai‘i, Mānoa. Dick Pratt has been with the program since its inception in the mid-1980s and comes from a background in political science. Chris Grandy has taught in the program for a number of years and was trained as an economist. These differing backgrounds give rise to differing perspectives on many issues in their classes and, as might be imagined, sometimes lead to lively debate. For example, they have differing, though not necessarily incompatible, views on public institutions.

Pratt understands public institutions foremost as arenas in which public-regarding principles compete with various interests to shape, for good or ill, actions that have public authority. He values a competitive market, but sees its limitations. He thinks that public life is valuable in itself and is not just another kind of market activity. Grandy sees public institutions as mechanisms for resolving problems that arise from, or are poorly handled by, markets. He shares the value of competitive markets and the recognition of its limitations. He sees public life as the place where those limitations are dealt with. For Grandy, public authority provides a necessary framework within which private arrangements can promote people’s well-being. For Pratt, that framework can often be co-opted for special, as opposed to general, interests. Their perspectives also differ in several respects on the net effects of globalization. Grandy tends to see the positive effects, while Pratt is less enthusiastic, though neither sees the globalization issues as black-and-white.

Introduction

Globalization is a pervasive force for the foreseeable future, and both public administrators and public administration education must adapt and respond to that force. This chapter begins by reviewing some current thinking about the
issues that globalization presents to public administration education and training. Next is a proposal for the content of that education, followed by an argument about what should be beneath the provision of content. Finally, the chapter concludes with a pedagogical illustration of what this looks like in practice.

Globalization and Public Administration Education: Some Issues

This section briefly reviews some current thinking about the issues that globalization presents to public administration education as a prelude to the proposals we offer in the next section.

In the early 1990s, Morton Davies and his colleagues conducted an international survey to assess the degree to which public administration education was being changed by the new managerialism that had become a global phenomenon. They surveyed 141 institutions engaged in education and training. While the response rate was only 21 percent, the results were provocative.

The authors found a wide variation in curriculum content, reflecting change, new terms masquerading as change, and insufficient attention to emerging issues. A “managerial revolution” had, in fact, impacted the education and training of many institutions. At the same time, it appeared that fashionable terminology was being used to describe classroom practices that had in fact not changed. They referred to this difference between rhetoric and reality in education and training as an “implementation gap” that might affect the ability of administrators to deal effectively with globalization-related changes. Finally, the authors questioned the degree to which appropriate information technology training, women’s perspectives, and the administrative aspects of environmental concerns were finding their way into the cores of curricula.

In 2001 Nick Manning came to somewhat different conclusions with respect to the managerial revolution. A senior public-sector management specialist with the World Bank, Manning’s review of the impact of the New Public Management (NPM) in developing countries serves as a useful follow-up to the earlier work of Davies et al. Manning wanted to know whether “in a fashion-prone industry does [NPM] stand out from the other relatively minor twists and turns of public management?” He concluded that NPM has not become the dominant school of management thinking and has not been nearly the cure-all that some of its proponents forecasted. Indeed, he argued that we have been lucky that NPM’s sometimes formulaic approach to complex problems has not actually damaged public organizations. Manning did note that NPM succeeded in broadening the range of choices, opening up “interesting, albeit untested, possibilities.”

Donald Kettl highlighted the emerging need for indirect management tools as a result of globalization. Kettl, who has written extensively about changes in public administration and public affairs internationally, observes that globaliza-
tion has meant that more government programs are being offered through non-governmental partners. This implies the need for indirect management tools. These “indirect tools of government require different management approaches, and those approaches are substantially different from the traditional authority-based models that dominate the study and teaching of public administration.”

Lester Salamon’s large collection of essays underscores these themes and offers a common set of criteria to describe and assess a range of approaches to both direct and indirect government.

Ali Farazmand urges a more comprehensive response to globalization by public administration educators and practitioners. He sees the need for education and training that

- helps engage citizens in the work of public institutions while maintaining a balance between serving the economic interests of national or global corporations and broader public interests;
- makes visible the high performance capabilities of public organizations and the failures of the private sphere;
- carries a strong public service ethic that is resistant to forms of corruption that might accompany privatization;
- does not allow the idea of “citizen” to be replaced by the idea of “consumer”;
- is more sensitive to the differing forms of administration that may prove successful in diverse cultural and societal contexts; and
- acts as a conscience and protector of “global community interests” against inequities and political repression that globalization may spawn or not undo.

How educators provide information can be as important as the content. The familiarity of Marshall McLuhan’s phrase “the medium is the message” suggests that we understand this point, but the insight, for a number of reasons, often is ignored in practice. During much of the post–World War II period in the United States, little attention was given to the significance of how to deliver education. That began to change in the 1980s, and today phrases like “designed learning environments,” “student-centered learning,” “teaching versus learning,” and “active learning” are fairly common throughout the educational system.

Sensitivity to the impact of delivery on learning (what we might label the process issues) is less common elsewhere. Often both content and delivery are relatively unchanged over time. In places where content is altered to incorporate new knowledge (perhaps knowledge made available through globalized networks), the way teachers communicate that knowledge to learners remains unchanged.
Yong-duck Jung in this volume (chap. 18) addresses this issue and its significance for responding to factors associated with globalization. He observes that students being prepared for work in public institutions in South Korea still must memorize what is written in textbooks and write down what they are told by lecturers. The type of exams required to enter civil service reinforces this system. Jung observes that this method of learning is incompatible with the kind of critical and innovative thinking necessary for public institutions to effectively function in an era of globalization.

Public Administration Education and Training in a Globalizing World: A Proposal

Given the reality of globalization-induced changes, the role public institutions might play in shaping those changes in socially valuable directions, the need for new institutional forms and the idea of a response to globalization appropriate to a specific social-cultural-institutional setting, and the difficult choices about the most needed education and training, what do people in public roles need to know to be effective in the face of increasing globalization?

Our response to the question comes in two parts. The first part addresses content areas; the second deals with the educational process or orientation to content.

With respect to content, we suggest nine areas of special importance in the face of globalization.

1. **Critical economics.** Though other factors are important in globalization, the pursuit of economic interests and the interpretation of globalization by mainstream economic analysts are central. By “critical economics” we refer to an understanding of the primary tenets of mainstream, contemporary economics, as well as an awareness of the field’s assumptions and values (both explicit and implicit) and their limitations. We also emphasize the differences between economics and business as fields of study and practice, in particular in their orientation to the role of the market and their differing focus on societal versus individual outcomes. For example, where the field of business education may focus on how to increase profits by moving production away from the host country, the field of economics would focus on whether the net benefits (benefits less costs) to society are positive or negative as a result.

2. **Organizational capacity.** Globalization is associated with changes in the resources available to public institutions as well as ideas about how public organizations should operate. By “capacity” we refer to knowledge that
is most likely to maintain or create public organizations, especially governmental organizations, capable of balancing the conflicting values of responsiveness, public accountability, and equity. We emphasize learning that contains positive images of public organizations appropriate to local environments as well as knowledge of strategies most likely to give those images reality. For example, opportunities for higher-quality training and education in public-service work, enabled by exposure to international programs, will encourage employees to become constructive change agents in their organizations.

3. **Inter-organizational relations.** Globalization will present more social problems that require coordinated responses among public agencies, both governmental and nongovernmental. Often these problems reach across national boundaries, originating in one nation-state but heavily impacting others. This learning emphasizes how to create effective vertical and horizontal partnerships and responding to the challenges of collaboration while maintaining core organizational functions. For example, environmental nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) concerned with the destruction of unique natural habitats may work with local governments to regulate, or provide new economic incentives that ameliorate, environmental damage from economic activities.

4. **Public-private relations.** In a world reshaped by the dynamics of globalization, public organizations increasingly will find themselves in a variety of working relationships with private organizations. These relations take many forms and are heavily couched in contractual language. Taken together they are called indirect or third-party government. Whatever the specific form of the relationships, if they are to be effective and public regarding, then public officials will require new kinds of knowledge. Such knowledge will include the ability to recognize the incentives and likely outcomes embedded in privatization contracts and generate ideas for realigning incentives in poorly designed contracts to support socially desirable outcomes.

5. **Partnering and citizen empowerment.** Broad citizen involvement will prove critical in maintaining legitimacy if public institutions are to respond appropriately to narrow, but powerful, global economic interests. Such involvement will also give authority to local priorities in relation to global initiatives. This learning focuses on the importance of organizational transparency and citizen participation, as well as the ways in which public organizations can encourage public deliberation and develop citizens as partners. For example, in the environmental arena, international agreements can put transnational corporations on collision courses with
local communities over restrictions on business activities. People in public positions must play a delicate role in sorting through the laws, interests, and values, while legitimating citizen involvement in the future of their community.

6. Public-service ethics. Ethics studies the ways in which value conflicts are handled, especially the conflicts among values held by a single individual or group (e.g., the choice between duty to one’s workplace or one’s family, or between loyalty to the group and the desire for promotion). The focus here is on the value conflicts that globalization’s differentiated rewards raise for people in public-service roles and the tools that can be used to help resolve those conflicts in publicly responsible ways. For example, conflicts arise between the desire to protect cultural values from global homogenization and concerns that “local values” may merely cover specific parochial interests.

7. Futures orientation. Because globalization is a powerful, far-reaching, and (potentially) long-lasting force, it is in many ways about competing views of the future. Will globalization lead to as yet unimagined prosperity for all? Or will it bring environmental catastrophe and huge gaps in income and wealth? Learning in this area focuses on developing capacity for futures-oriented thinking, a sensitivity to identifying alternative futures in a globalizing world, and how public institutions can help move toward futures seen as desirable from the largest number of perspectives.

8. Technology for public purposes. Individuals in public roles can be taught to use information technology in ways that serve several purposes especially significant in a globalizing world. One purpose is to help individual organizations that are moving toward greater connectivity to share information and coordinate actions. Another purpose is to link practitioners to methods in other places that may deal more effectively with common public problems. For example, it is now possible for someone in Mongolia to learn about reform initiatives in Great Britain and to communicate with a knowledgeable official about specifics of the initiative’s outcomes. A third, and emerging, purpose for information technology is to link together individuals in different parts of the world in their citizen roles, thereby helping to create a basis for global public interests and global citizenship.

9. Indigenous issues. Nowhere does the local/global dichotomy emerge with more force than with respect to the issues of indigenous peoples. Indeed, in a real sense, the effects of globalization define indigenous issues. How do we balance the interests and duties of indigenous and other citizens when responding to globalizing forces? Concerns of temporal and spatial priority arise in conjunction with conflicts among unique cultures, justice, and responses to external influences. Public administrators must become adept
at seeing issues from indigenous eyes and learn to develop and manage processes that resolve conflicts in ways that build communities and a shared sense of citizenship.

Despite its importance, the content of curricula is only part of the education and training challenge; the other part requires ways of thinking that give public administrators the skills to successfully respond to situations their teachers have not yet imagined. This shift of focus to look beneath the content of public administration training and education comes in reaction to what we observe in many education and training settings: after going through an education or training program, individuals find themselves acting in ways that do not support, or even undermine, what they have learned. This pattern may develop especially in places where the organizational and/or professional subcultures emphasize top-down relations, the importance of certainty, and avoiding public differences of opinion. However, as we have shown, individuals in public roles can expect to deal with an increasingly complex, multilayered environment that demands an equally complex outlook to be effective. This means that we need to understand how people obtain this mental complexity and build its attainment into public service education.

There are a number of ways of understanding how human beings shift from more rigid, categorical ways of thinking about the world toward more complex processes capable of sorting through conflicting information, values, and emotions to reach decisions and take action. We find especially helpful the understanding that William Perry, Jr., developed initially to describe how young adults who were facing an increasingly pluralistic world adapted, or failed to adapt, their mental structures to that world.

In Perry’s interpretation, all of us have the potential to evolve the way we view our environments—what he referred to as our mental structures. He described this evolution as going from “dualistic thinking” to “committed relativism.” Dualistic thinking is an orientation that divides issues into good or bad, right or wrong, true or false and relies heavily on authority figures for The Answer. “Committed relativism” denotes an orientation that views the world as highly contextual and in which change is continual. This is an outlook that contains a self-understood capacity to make meaning and, in the light of that meaning, to take action. Here, as in dualism, authority and shared meanings provide an important source of knowledge and understanding, but there is no expectation that authority can, or should, know everything or that shared meanings lie beyond question.

Perry places “relativism” between dualism and committed relativism. A person oriented to the world through relativism is neither dualistic nor capable of sorting through different ways of seeing things. As a consequence, a relativist
is left to make choices on the basis of what is personally, socially, or politically comfortable or expedient.

For example, it is not difficult to find individuals who embrace globalization as all “Good” or reject it as all “Bad.” Others are unable to figure out exactly what they think or how to act: a person may read about child labor in a clothing factory one day and buy an inexpensive shirt imported from that factory the next. Committed relativists will see the same, or more, complexity in the issue, but have the inclination and the tools to come to their own conclusions. Thus a committed relativist may favor this instance of globalization because it provides higher wages but be keenly aware of the possibilities of abuse and the need for some regulations.

An orientation of committed relativism contains two qualities especially important for public administration roles in a globalizing environment. The first quality is the convergence of intellectual and ethical development. These two go together because a committed relativist neither depends upon authority figures to know what to think nor feels overwhelmed by contradiction, ambiguity, or change. Instead, opinions and actions are self-consciously connected to a process for understanding. For example, a committed relativist would neither completely rely on nor dismiss the official interpretation of a cross-border transmission of disease. Instead, one would deliberately go through a process that weighs other relevant information before coming to one’s own opinion. It is this process and the taking of personal responsibility that makes the orientation ethical.

We refer to the second quality as “committed openness” (a slight but, we think, useful variation on Perry’s committed relativism). In committed openness the meaning of action has changed. Where a dualist finds certainty in what an authority advocates and a relativist relies on familiarity or expediency, committed openness creates a state of tension. The tension lies between the need to make meaning and take action in complex situations and the need, because of that very complexity, to remain open to reconsideration of what is thought and done. Opinions and decisions are taken seriously but are not considered final. They instead are the result of a process the individual “owns” that necessitates both commitment to one’s views and openness to changing them.

The movement from dualism to committed openness, as portrayed by Perry, takes place through a series of steps that do not occur simply as part of aging or physical/emotional maturation. It happens because the way the individual sees things (the mental structure) is challenged. A person living in a world of homogeneous values, shared interpretations, and unquestioned authority is not likely to change the way she or he thinks. On the other hand, the same individual living in a more pluralistic, change-oriented world will be challenged. Because of globalization, more and more of the world’s population will be confronted with challenges to how they view their world. This is especially true, and socially
significant, for those who work in public-service positions. Creating education and training environments that recognize and help individuals to creatively deal with these challenges will help foster movement toward committed openness.

**Fair Trade**

In this section we illustrate our suggestions for public-service education using an important issue associated with globalization. The phrase “fair trade” gained public prominence during the events surrounding the 1999 World Trade Organization (WTO) protests in Seattle, Washington. The phrase is commonly posed as an alternative to the “free trade” slogan that has played an important part in economists’ thinking since the days of Adam Smith and David Ricardo.

We refer to fair trade as a set of “side agreements” to international trade compacts that attempt to ameliorate what some see as the negative consequences of international trade. The most familiar of these agreements are labor, and environmental standards. Labor agreements include measures governing working hours, child labor, and working conditions. Environmental standards such as carbon emissions restrictions also could be made part of such agreements. From an economic perspective, fair trade refers to any terms attached to trade agreements that add conditions or regulations concerning the indirect effects of trade. From a political perspective, “fair trade” denotes rules attached to economic transactions that influence the way the benefits and costs of those transactions are distributed.

**A Dualistic View**

As an illustration of dualistic thinking about fair trade, consider two opposite positions on the issue. A dualist might argue that any side agreements are inappropriate because they reduce the optimal benefits provided by free trade and market-based economies. This view supports a strongly pro-market orientation and sees little or no role for the public sector, especially in international trade agreements. A person holding this view, not uncommon among the owners or managers of businesses, would object to any international framework and would simply support direct negotiations between firms or countries (bilateral trade negotiation).

Another dualistic view, quite different from the first, sees unregulated free trade leading to unambiguously negative consequences for the world. In this orientation, side agreements are required if trade is to have socially positive outcomes. This was the view of some of those protesting in Seattle. This perspective might also be consistent with those who argue that international trade simply benefits large corporations and makes the rich richer. Indeed, one can
imagine that those advocating this view might see international trade as so bi-
ased that it would be better to halt all of it so that countries would move toward self-sufficiency.

Both of these examples present extreme positions, which allows us to make another point. We do not argue that extreme positions are necessarily dualist. It is possible to adopt an extreme position after having considered the issues and having constructed good arguments against the alternatives. At the same time, moderate positions are not synonymous with committed openness. A dualist might adopt a “reasonable” position merely because an authority figure has es-
poused it or it is dominant peer opinion.

We work hard in encouraging students to self-consciously adopt differing perspectives as lenses through which they can interpret complex issues. One way we do this is to link the “economic perspectives” and “political perspectives” learning using a modular format. Using this format we ask students to apply some of the tools of economic and political analysis to a single topic, such as fair trade. At the end of the first of these two modules the participants write a “thought piece.” This relatively informal, analytic piece allows them to develop an understanding of the module’s major concepts when applied to fair trade.

At the end of the second module, the participants write a more formal paper in two parts. The first part also applies that module’s major analytical concepts to fair trade. The second part of the paper asks the writer to think about the similarities and differences in interpretation and possible action steps suggested by the two disciplines. In short, we want them to be skilled in using different perspectives and to be aware of what it means to do this.

We now summarize the process we use to accomplish these goals.

**Economic Perspective**

We start the economic perspectives module by reminding participants of mainstream economic arguments for free trade. This involves a discussion of “com-
parative advantage” and the argument that specialization combined with trade can make all countries better off in the specific sense that world production of goods and services rises and each country ultimately gets more of each good to consume.

We then begin to look at the economic concepts that are relevant to criti-
cisms of trade (which also apply to market transactions more generally). For instance, one participant routinely will ask about the potential environmental costs of trade that occur, for example, when a less-developed country special-
izes in mining activity. This might lead to a conversation about externalities and how economists think about unintended environmental damage that arises from market transactions.
We would point out that a well-accepted role for government in this area involves either imposing emissions taxes on activity that generates pollution or granting subsidies for limiting pollution. We might then discuss the possibility raised by the Coase Theorem for resolving such problems via negotiation and that this might be possible within the bargaining over an international trade agreement. Thus we might find ourselves talking about an approach that looks something like “fair trade.” The negotiations over environmental issues may not lead to government-like regulation, but may still involve negotiations over how environmental costs will be borne.

Other questions may focus on labor issues, such as child labor, or even slavery. This could lead to a discussion of market power on the employer’s side, the employees’ side (unions), or both, and the question of whether existing alternative economic activity in less-developed countries makes some types of child labor desirable. The discussion of slavery also provides the opportunity to emphasize the voluntary nature of market transactions, making the point that by definition slavery is not voluntary for the enslaved. Thus slavery would fall outside the boundaries of the usual positive welfare conclusions of mainstream economics because it violates the fundamental premise of voluntary exchange.

**Political Perspective**

We ask students to continue thinking about issues raised in the economic perspectives module as they move to the political perspectives module, but now we ask them to apply the conceptual tools of principles, interests, and strategies to examine issues, including fair trade.

We commonly start by noting that political analysis and political action are about how things of importance are distributed in society. We point out that trade is a good place to ask the fundamental political question: who gets what, when, and how?

Within this context we begin by identifying the most organized and influential players involved in the fair trade issue: developed-country corporations, unions, environmentalists, less-developed-country businesses, unions, national governments of various types, the WTO, and so on. We encourage students to understand that all of these players (and others not listed) have particular interests at stake in the fair trade debate. These players also will espouse value-based principles that they adhere to, or at least put forward. Some of them will act strategically, that is, with a considered course of action, as they engage in the debate and as they pursue their interests. We point out the importance, and the difficulty, of separating principles from interests and of identifying strategies that must be concealed in order to be effective.

In considering the environmental standards component of fair trade we
might note the interests of some of the parties: higher profits and/or management income for multinational corporations, environmental cleanup for users of natural resources in a developing country, profits and income for developing-country companies, jobs for workers in both developed and developing countries, and so on.

We would then try to identify the various principles put forward by the parties. Multinational corporations might argue for the virtues of free trade, unimpeded by “government bureaucracy.” Developing-country companies and unions might argue for the right of open access to developed-country markets and the rights of sovereignty of each country to manage their resources as they see fit. Environmentalists and users of natural resources from developing countries might raise the issue of ecological sustainability and the value of preserving plant and animal species.

In discussing labor issues through the political lens we might contrast the principle of voluntary associations in a labor market put forth by economists with the interest employers have in retaining enough control over the labor force to keep employee costs low. We introduce the idea of “structural coercion” and encourage a discussion of whether a person with no employment options who must accept low wages and poor benefits can no longer be said not to have a voluntary choice.

For each topic students would be encouraged to identify the strategies used by the parties and the likely sources of power. We might point to lobbying, campaign contributions, and efforts to influence rule making as some of the strategies of multinational corporations, thereby implicitly recognizing the power of income and wealth. We might note the use of publicity by environmentalists in appreciation of their power that comes from use of the mass media and the appeal to “universal” interests. And we might note the use of the free-market argument by developing-country companies and unions to gain access to developed-country markets and the power derived from the position of the “underdog.”

A Committed-Openness View

We believe this process helps bring our students to an outlook that incorporates the processes associated with committed openness. Of course, there is no single “committed openness” view on fair trade (or, indeed, on any complex issue). People may agree completely or disagree sharply, but we would hope they do so after looking at the issue from a variety of perspectives and engaging the compelling arguments on other sides.

So it is quite possible to find someone coming out of this process dedicated to the position that, suitably structured, free trade agreements are desirable. This person may recognize that economic incentives can lead to environmental degra-
dation or unsafe working conditions. But they may see the imposition of blanket trade conditions as undermining the economic possibilities of poorer countries. The person may believe that many of the environmental and labor-condition issues will resolve themselves as income and wealth are produced through open international trade.

A colleague may disagree, arguing that environmental degradation may be irreversible and must be prevented. The individual may note that the “winners” of free trade agreements in developing countries are a small subset of the local population and that income and wealth inequalities will only become exacerbated in the absence of appropriate side conditions, a development that can undermine the possibilities for open and democratic societies.

The two people defending these views may or may not find resolutions to their disagreements. Yet being openly committed to their positions means that they listen carefully to each other’s arguments and attempt to honestly address them from their perspectives. Where appropriate, each may modify their position in light of the arguments put forward by the other or by new information they encounter at a later date.

Conclusion

Factors associated with globalization are having, and are likely to continue to have, profound effects on the size, form, and purpose of public institutions. Whatever those effects, these institutions will play a critical role in determining who benefits and who loses from globalization, both within nations and between them. That is, public institutions will help shape the public consequences of globalization.

How public institutions engage fairness in the face of globalization will depend on a number of factors, some of which are seemingly beyond anyone’s control. One of the factors we can control is how we educate and train people in public roles. Globalization will make the work of public administrators more complicated, while at the same time increase the demands for leadership at all levels. Paying careful attention to the content of public-service education, as well as the more subtle but powerful process issues associated with that education, can have large public benefits.

Notes

2. Ibid., 77.
4. Ibid., 308.
6. Ibid., 215.