

## Recenzie

### **KLIMOVSKÝ, Daniel: Základy verejnej správy (Fundamentals of Public Administration)**

2<sup>nd</sup> edition Bratislava: Wolters Kluwer, 2014. 455 p. ISBN 978-80-8168-002-1

The teaching textbook „*Fundamentals of Public Administration*“ is primarily aimed at bachelor students in the university course of public administration. But the multidimensionality of the field of public administration itself and actual need of administrative practice create the conditions in which the issued textbook can be utilized. The textbook can also address some professionals working at different tiers of the public administration who are interested in improving their professional competence and qualifications.

The first edition of the publication was released in 2008. The reviewed teaching textbook is its second, revised and extended edition with almost double number of pages and more elaboration of many briefly introduced buzz-words from the first edition. Objectively, it is a result of the author's permanent process of knowledge and practice gaining during studying and lecturing, as well as participating and working on internship abroad and taking an active part in various academic and professional events.

A large number of bibliographical resources has proved how much the author is acquainted with the subject of public administration. The bibliography is a challenge and shall attract the readers' attention and shall be a guide in studying the issue of public administration. We agree with the author's opinion that offering a complex view of public administration cannot be the main goal of the textbook. Understanding the issue of public administration is a life-long process and the presented publication is the first step in this process.

The textbook comprises thirteen chapters; the first three of them are dealing with the fundamental issues that belong to the study of public administration and its role in the system of social sciences. Another three chapters define the classical dichotomies in the system of general theory of public administration (private – public issues, state – society, politics – administration). The chapters that follow highlight the most important dimensions of the public administration: the dimension normative, of management, the dimension of organization and ethics. Next two chapters describe the history of the Slovak public administration from the Middle Ages to the split of Czechoslovakia in 1993. The appendix that would be an integral part of the first edition and offered the organizational scheme of the Slovak system of the public administration has is updated due to the latest reforms in the Slovak self-government and local government, and is processed as the final chapter of the textbook.

The first three chapters are an adequate introduction to the study programme of public administration, as they provide a comprehensive view of the concept of public administration and its ambiguity and multidisciplinary character. A substantial part of

the introductory chapters deals with the complex process of institutionalizing the study of public administration and the chapters describe the scientific principles and approaches towards building up the information and knowledge in this autonomous field of social science. Klimovský employs historical perspective and thus reviewed text can be characterized by logical consistency enabling readers to understand the specific theoretical terms of reference in studying the issue of public administration. Through a comparative approach the field of scientific research in public administration is discussed inspiring those ones who are interested in public administration. We appreciate the author's approach to avoid the traditional Eurocentric perception that can be traced while analysing the oldest stages of the public administration development and its theoretical reflection. Thus, the theoretical background of the public administration and its role in the society that were discussed by the classics such as Webber, Mosca, Fayol are complemented by some non-European authors such as Wilson, Litchfield, Appleby, etc.

The classical dichotomy between the issues public vs. private, state vs. society and politics vs. administration is the key concept of the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> chapters. They enrich the general theoretical basis of public administration in its multidimensional and interdisciplinary framework. The author of the textbook emphasizes at the very beginning of his book that the public administration as a separate field of study has followed a very ambiguous development for a long time, which has resulted into a generally accepted academic discipline at a relatively late stage of its development. It was caused by the fact that the individual aspects of public administration were subjects of many traditional scientific disciplines reflecting their particular interest in interconnection between the managerial and administrative activities of the government and the multiple factors having impact on the characteristics of the state operation. Defining the main aspects of the dichotomies takes the author into the fields of economics, sociology and political science making explanation of the dichotomies between public and private, state and society, politics and administrative extremely difficult. However, the text itself represents an excellent tool for finding proper responses to basic inquires and it enables to understand the needs to study the field of public administration as an academic field.

Due to the fact that theoretical approach to public administration in the second edition is illustrated at a slightly larger number of pages than the total number of pages in previous edition, most theoretical issues are discussed in the way that the reader is able to understand the interconnections profoundly. Diverse dimensions of the public administration are discussed and are offering an overview of basic aspects of the academic field. Articulating the basic terms of reference attracts the attention of the readers' who are offered an easy form of explanation. The author successfully utilizes a comprehensive view of wide range of issues and broader aspects of the topic.

The middle chapter of the textbook focuses on the judicial approach to the academic field of public administration and is in link with the symbolic central position of the administrative law within the public administration. The author considers the administrative law to be the basis of the public administration.

Fulfilling the tasks of the public administration is discussed from the managerial and organizational point of view in the following two chapters. The author describes

the link between the management and administration and points out the key role of planning, controlling, employment, coordination, assessment, information and setting up a budget in a modern public administration. Dealing with public administration as an organized system that is not perceived as a number of organizations operating within the system, the author emphasizes the characteristics of the organizational elements and mechanisms. In this context the key role of administrative decentralization is discussed in the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter.

Readers appreciate that an adequate part of the textbook addresses the ethics applied in public administration. The chapter No. 10 deals with the ethical principles, discusses the theoretical aspects of ethics as a discipline of philosophy including its normative system. The author focuses his attention at the ethical issues within the public administration that often form a barrier in its effective operation. The issues such as corruption, nepotism, conflict of interest, prejudice, intolerance or bullying in the workplace are presented as hindering the democratic principles in the modern public administration. The author attempts not only to unveil the background and causes of the unethical behaviour and its consequences, he also suggests possible and necessary technique how to eliminate it.

The last three chapters written on almost eighty pages discuss the most important changes and reforms in the Slovak public administration that have been introduced by various regimes since the Middle Ages. Due to this approach the reader is acquainted with the past experience that the Slovak citizens have had with the local self-government and the central government. In this way readers can build up their knowledge about the current system of public administration. The historical development of public administration enables to understand the current situation in the Slovak public administration. The textbook offers information about the important transformation that has been carried out during past six years. The original version of the textbook did not discuss the central government transformation ESO. The ongoing reform of the central government was significantly missing and thus limiting the use of the teaching textbook at present.

The textbook „*Fundamentals of Public Administration*“ became an aid in the process of studying public administration immediately after it was published in 2008. The textbook has logic and clear organization and it is a stimulating introduction to studying various aspects of public administration. The style and composition of the textbook is at a high level. Except for this, it contains a huge amount of references as reading enabling students to find the best approaches towards different points of view of public administration. The second updated edition of the textbook eliminates the limit that the original edition was facing and that was its limited space and the year of the edition.

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