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A historical overview of Korean public administration: discipline, education, association, international cooperation and beyond indigenization

Pan Suk Kim

Abstract

Modern public administration was introduced in Korea more than half a century ago. Over the past several decades, Korea has achieved substantial economic growth as well as the significant development of a public administration system. How, and in what way, has Korean public administration as a discipline grown rapidly? This article reviews the multiple dimensions of Korean public administration: the development of public administration as a new discipline, public administration education as a new channel of management knowledge, the development of professional associations and research institutes as a promoter of research and activities, and international cooperation as a development tool and a window of opportunity. After that, prospects based on an indigenization debate and concluding remarks will follow.

Points for practitioners

Public administration played a significant role in the development of South Korea. Korean public administration programs during the developmental process fostered a new class of civil servants and public management of the government. However, post-war Korean public administration has faced a problem of indigenization as it becomes more influenced by the Western world while attempting to hold on to traditional Confucian values. Thus, Korea needs to cope with such challenges creatively as it moves forward independently from its past.

Keywords

discipline, education, globalization, historical overview, indigenization, modernization, public administration, South Korea

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Introduction

Four major characteristics describe Korean public administration since its significant growth at the end of the Second World War. First, most four-year universities in Korea have a separate undergraduate-level public administration program so that the number of public administration programs at tertiary level is comparatively high. Public administration courses are offered in the Department of Political Science in many countries. However, the Korean situation is different because most Korean tertiary institutions have a separate department devoted entirely to public administration.¹ In comparison to other countries, Korea has the largest proportion of public administration programs in Asia (KAPA, 2006).² Second, many public administration professors in Korea studied overseas, particularly in the United States. For example, the majority of public administration faculty at leading universities in Seoul earned their doctoral degrees in the United States, while others studied in Korea, Europe (England, Germany,³ France, etc.), and other parts of the world. Third, the growing number of professional activities and the amount of research in Korean public administration and policy is correlated to the many professional associations and journals devoted to the field. Fourth, Korean public administration, as a relatively well-established discipline, is now looking for new outlets for global outreach and international cooperation.

Public administration played a significant role in the development of South Korea as a vehicle for its transformation from a Third World to a newly industrialized country in one generation (Cho, 2006; Huang, 1970; Kim and Kim, 1997). From the 1960s to the 1980s, the capacity and capability of public administration to implement national developmental plans have partially resulted in South Korea's rapid growth and social transformation into a competitive player in the world economy. During the development period, Korean government leaders and ruling elites have been more comfortable with public administration as a field in higher education than they may have been with other social sciences such as political science and sociology.

The development of public administration is affected by many factors. First, the historical evolution of governmental affairs and public administration studies is one of the key factors influencing the development of public administration. Second, the development of public administration education programs and related professional associations as well as their international activities are also significantly affecting the development of public administration. Along such lines, this article reviews the many facets of Korean public administration in the following four dimensions: (1) the development of public administration as a new discipline in Korea; (2) the development of modern public administration education as a new channel of management knowledge; (3) the development of professional associations and research institutes as promoters of research and activities; and (4) international cooperation as a development tool. This study will review these four issues based on a broad range of references.

The evolution of Korean public administration

The development of public administration as a new discipline

During the old dynasties, Confucianism substantially influenced the Korean Peninsula as well as the rest of East Asia and some countries on the Indochinese Peninsula including Vietnam (Deuchler, 1992; Frederickson, 2002; Kim, 2009, 2010; Weber, 1964). Ruling elites and scholars in the *Joseon* Dynasty (1392–1897) studied the Confucian classics including the Four Books and the Five Classics for learning and for entering into government employment. These Four Books and the Five Classics (Gardner, 2007) became the core of the official curriculum for the Royal Service Examinations in the *Joseon* dynasty.⁴ Civil service examinations (*gwa-geo*) have a very long history in imperial Korea.⁵ As originally developed in imperial China, the entrance examination was designed to select good government officials for the state's bureaucracy, and the modern civil service examination system for selecting government employees also indirectly evolved from the imperial one (Elman, 2000; Kim, 2010). Success in these examinations became the ticket to good government jobs, relatively high social status, and potential power in the future.

Between the late seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries, in response to the increasingly metaphysical nature of neo-Confucianism that seemed disconnected from the rapid agricultural, industrial, and political changes occurring in Korea, the Confucian social reform movement *Sil-hak* (practical learning) was developed in Korea from the late *Joseon* Dynasty in Korea (Kalton, 1975; Yang and Henderson, 1959). *Sil-hak* was designed to counter the 'uncritical' following of Confucian teachings and the strict adherence to 'formalism' and 'ritual'. *Sil-hak* scholars encouraged human equality and moved toward a more practical interpretation of Confucianism (Chong, 2010; Setton, 1997). At that time, Yak-yong Chong (or Yag-yong Jung or Dasan as a pen name: 1762–1836) was a leading Korean scholar on public affairs. He is commonly regarded as one of the greatest of the *Sil-hak* thinkers, who advocated that the formalist neo-Confucian philosophy of the *Joseon* dynasty should return to practical concerns. He wrote many important works on local and general administration (*Mokmin-simseo*), law and criminal justice (*Humhum-sinseo*), government and social reform (*Kyungse-yoopyo*), and a new reinterpretation of the Confucian classics, among many other subjects.

One of the most popular books written by Chong in 1821 is *Mokmin-simseo* (Admonitions on Governing the People) on local and general administration (Chong, 2010; Setton, 1997).⁶ This book is a detailed manual for district magistrates on how to govern better and calls for overhauling the old ruling system, and it deals with many different subjects (assuming office, self-discipline, public service, love of people, personnel administration, taxation, rites and ceremonies, administration of military affairs, administration of justice, public works administration, famine relief, and replacement and transfer). Chong's great contributions to the development of the basis of administrative sciences in Korea is comparable to that

of German public administration scholar, Lorenz von Stein (1815–90), who also made substantial contributions to the development of administrative sciences in Germany as well as other countries (Yoon, 1986).⁷

After the *Joseon* Dynasty (1392–1897) and the Greater Korean Empire (1897–1910), Korea's colonial period under Japanese rule lasted from 1910 to 1945. When Japan annexed Korea in 1910, it established a military dictatorship: of the eight governors-general who successively controlled Korea, seven were army generals and one was an admiral (Kim, 2007). During this period, the colonial bureaucracy expanded rapidly. Starting in 1910 with roughly 10,000 officials, by 1937 the bureaucracy employed 87,552: 52,270 Japanese and 35,282 Koreans (Eckert et al., 1990: 257). During the Japanese colonial period, Korea was substantially influenced by the Japanese political and legal systems. During this period, a legal approach was also substantially introduced in Korea.

From 1945 to 1948, the American occupation army ruled Korea and it set up a formal United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) and introduced a number of American administrative systems including job classifications and the general schedule (GS). Economic and social reforms under American military rule reflected USAMGIK's basic political orientation toward the right, but the US military was largely unprepared for the challenge of administering the country in post-colonial Korea, arriving with little knowledge of the sociopolitical situation in Korea. Thus, the lack of preparation and understanding resulted in frequent policy changes, deviations, lack of coordination, and unintended destabilizing effects (Cho, 1967: 61–62; Eckert et al., 1990: 337–338; Kim, 2007: 28).

Moreover, during the Korean War from 1950 to 1953, American military forces helped Korea along with the UN forces. After the Korean War, Korea was widely influenced by the United States in terms of its politics, security, economy, trade, and education. America's strong influence on Korean society has continued for decades. In the 1950s, modern public administration as a new discipline was introduced into Korea. Before the 1950s, public administration courses were taught at universities, but the content was mostly based on administrative law and other legal studies rather than public management. Such a transition from a legal orientation to management studies was reinforced by the American influence. During this period, the United States International Cooperation Administration (ICA) provided substantial rehabilitation and technical assistance to Korea including funding for public administration education programs. Consequently, many Korean students have been to the United States for graduate studies, leading to some degree of dependency on the American public administration system. Such dependency can also be seen in other East Asian countries.

In the early 1960s, a military junta took political power and General Chung-Hee Park (1917–79) became the President of Korea. President Park initiated several phases of economic development plans and utilized public administration education as a means for governmental modernization, transforming the nature of public administration from the execution of the law to administrative sciences.⁸ During this period, public administration in practice was associated with strong central

leadership under President Park and the logic of a centralized system was more prevalent than democratic participation, consensus, decentralization or distribution. President Park promoted the developmental state in utilizing public bureaucracy as a development agency as well as making the developmentalist coalition with business leaders (Lee, 1965, 1968; Woo-Cumings, 1999).⁹

In the 1970s, the central government adhered to the economy-first policy for modernization and took on developmental functions to catch up with developed countries, playing a critical role through its industrial policy and state control of finance. Moreover, scholars of public administration have provided a broad range of policy advice and consultation to government officials for national development. In particular, development and comparative administration programs were greatly expanded during this period as a means for changing traditional administration and administration of development, although such trends lessened a decade later (Heady, 1966, 1995; Kim and Kim, 1997; Kim, 2009; Riggs, 1971, 1997, 2000).¹⁰ When President Park's authoritarian regime ended in 1979, new demands from various quarters explosively erupted from all segments of Korean society. Around this time, Korean scholars realized some differences and limitations of the imported knowledge of public administration and since then a new attempt has been increasingly made to indigenize or localize Korean public administration.

In the 1980s, which was an era of transition (in search of more democratic polity, but still struggling with post-Park authoritarian regimes), policy studies were widely introduced in Korea as the Korean economy improved substantially and the nature of public affairs became more complicated.¹¹ In particular, as social policy issues such as social welfare and public health became major political agendas, many public administration programs opened up public policy courses at undergraduate and graduate levels. Moreover, new policies for social minorities and policies for improving administrative procedures and service delivery were widely introduced along with a reform movement in the public sector. Notably, when Korea gained an almost full scale of democracy in the middle of the 1980s and successfully held the Summer Olympic Games in 1988, the public demand for political and administrative reforms significantly increased. Consequently, many scholars and students utilized a greater degree of problem-solving in a Korean context seeking more feasible and reformative policy options for Korean society. Moreover, many public administration programs began to leave the colleges of law and were moved into the colleges of social sciences.

In the 1990s, particularly when two democratic leaders (Young-Sam Kim and Dae-Jung Kim) became President of South Korea in 1993 and 1998, respectively, civil society became stronger and influential in Korea, and governance studies were widely introduced in Korea. Civil society significantly increased and major advocacy NGOs including the Citizens' Coalition for Economic Justice (CCEJ), the People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD), and the Korean Federation for Environmental Movement (KFEM) began to play a significant role in the agenda-setting and policy-making process. When the full scale of local autonomy was also reintroduced in the early 1990s, local autonomy and

decentralization were widely expanded, and research on local politics and the management of local government also increased significantly. Furthermore, when the Asian financial crisis hit a substantial level of the Korean economy in the late 1990s, New Public Management (NPM) was introduced broadly, based on a neo-liberal perspective. The bailout from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was especially seen as a sign or signal, that South Korea needed to practice more prudent financing and that the top bureaucrats needed to be tougher as they 'speak truth to power'. At the same time, the critique of NPM has increased due to its obsession with managerial and economic solutions to complex social problems (Jun, 2009; Kim, 2009).

From 2000 to the present, as information and communication technology (ICT) rapidly changed, literature on electronic government and electronic governance experienced a phenomenal increase along with the development of knowledge management and public sector reform.¹² When Moo-Hyun Roh became the President (2003–08), participatory governance was heavily emphasized along with good governance agendas and dismantling of authoritarianism. During the years 2003–08, public sector reforms became popular topics. After that, however, the movement toward public sector reform diminished, while economic recovery became the main agenda during an economic recession under President Myung-Bak Lee (2008–13). For research in public administration, theoretical and normative studies had been dominant in much of the literature up until the 1990s, but then the number of problem-solving and prescriptive studies substantially increased. Moreover, quantitative empirical studies have increased while normative studies have declined. During the years 2005–09, 'governance' was the keyword appearing most commonly in the *Korean Public Administration Review* published by the Korean Association for Public Administration, followed by terms such as 'network, social, trust, local government, administrative reform, public administration, politics, institution, organization, administration/management, and others' (Choi and Park, 2011).

Modern public administration was introduced into Korea after independence and it has grown through several steps: the era of introduction and imitation in the 1950s; the era of growth and development in the 1960s–70s; the era of political transition and disciplinary readjustment (i.e. pulling away public administration program from the college of law to the college of social sciences at many universities) in the 1980s; and a new era in search of maturation assured further development since the 1990s. Overall, the domain of public administration has certainly expanded, and public administration programs have grown significantly in both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. Also, the scope of public administration has widely expanded to include not only central and local governments but also public bodies (public authorities, public enterprises, public–private partnerships, and the third sectors) and civil society. Historically, the Korean government had a strong elite-oriented bureaucracy, but current government bureaucracy has been substantially democratized and depoliticized over time. Public administration mainly dealt with normative issues based on administrative law and other legal

studies in the early period, but its approaches were then expanded widely to more managerial, reformative, and prescriptive dimensions.

Public administration education as a new channel of management knowledge

Modern public administration education began in Korea after independence from Japanese colonial rule. During the Japanese control, the governmental powers and top operational responsibilities were dominated by Japanese officials, and Koreans had limited public job opportunities to learn administrative techniques and skills. If a broader calculation of all public and private positions important to the colony is made, the totals for 1937 would be 246,000 Japanese and 63,000 Koreans (Eckert et al., 1990: 257). In 1909, there were 790 Korean students in Japan, and by 1912 the number of Korean students had increased to 3171 (Eckert et al., 1990: 275). In Japan, a public administration course was offered in the department of political science in the College of Law at the then Imperial University of Tokyo from 1882 to 1890, and German instructor, Karl Rathgen taught this course (Muramatsu, 1994; Nishio, 1993).¹³ After that, the law college at two imperial universities in Tokyo and Kyoto offered public administration courses from 1921.¹⁴

Teaching materials on public administration were gradually introduced in the middle of the 1950s. In 1955, the first textbook on public administration entitled *Introduction to Public Administration* was published in Korea by In-Hung Chung, who graduated from Kyoto University in Japan in 1941, and returned to Korea to teach an introductory course in public administration at Seoul National University in 1954.¹⁵ As a leading national tertiary institution, Seoul National University established the public administration department in the College of Law in 1948; just after it opened up the law department in 1946. At that time, however, no professors were ready to professionally teach public administration, so public administration education was taught based on public law. In 1954, In-Hung Chung began to teach a new course entitled 'Introduction to Public Administration' in the public administration department in the College of Law at Seoul National University, but the public administration department was replaced by the public law department after Chung left Seoul National University. In 1954, Pusan National University established the public administration department in the College of Law, followed by Korea University and Chung-Ang University in 1955. In 1958, Yonsei University established its public administration department similar to an American program based more on management courses than legal ones, followed by three other universities (Hanyang, Kyunghee, and Dongguk) in 1960.

After the Second World War, the US International Cooperation Administration (ICA) assisted several developing countries to establish a public administration education and/or training program.¹⁶ In Asia, for example, the Philippines and Turkey opened up schools of public administration in 1952 and 1953, respectively. The US-ICA decided to assist the National Officials Training Institute (NOTI) in 1958 so that the University of Minnesota along with the US-ICA program sent an

advisor, Jack Kern, to NOTI and he advised it on various matters including pre-service and in-service training (Draheim, 1959).¹⁷

In fact, Korea was also a latecomer in opening up a graduate school of public administration. In 1959, the Graduate School of Public Administration was established at Seoul National University with assistance from the University of Minnesota through the US-ICA's program.¹⁸ The founding of the Graduate School of Public Administration at Seoul National University was part of a major cooperative aid program undertaken for the economic and social rehabilitation and development of Korea (Frederickson, 1981; Mauck, 1962; Short, 1962).¹⁹ Management courses have been widely adopted due to American influence, while the legal orientation has diminished in public administration education.

In order to provide teaching materials, KAPA translated Leonard White's textbook (*Introduction to the Study of Public Administration*) into Korean in 1958 and also published the *Lexicon of Public Administration Terms and Phrases* in 1959 with the support of the Korea-US Economic Commission (KAPA, 1958, 1959, 1973, 2006; Weber, 1996). At about that time, the National Officials Training Institute (NOTI) also delivered various courses on public administration and leading foreign experts delivered guest lectures. For example, Fred Riggs, born in China and trained in the USA, was the then resident-advisor of NOTI in Seoul.

In the past, legal studies were dominant subjects in the civil service entrance examination. Before modern public administration education was introduced in Korea, public and administrative law had been a major element of public affairs education. Even in the Japanese colonial period, administrative law and other legal studies were dominant. This tradition has continued until today, although the degree of such orientation has declined substantially over the years. In the fast-track civil service entrance examination as well as in the Grade 7 and Grade 9 entrance examinations, for example, administrative law is still one of the required subjects in the written essay test.

Starting in 1962, however, there was a rapid growth in public administration education geared to the civil service examination which began to include public administration as a core subject in the examination. As compared with political science or business administration, it is fair to say that public administration education was historically incentivized by its place in the civil service entrance examination, although such incentives have reduced over the years. In 1970, there were approximately 20 departments of public administration at universities and colleges and four professional graduate schools apart from the graduate school of arts and sciences, a reflection of the growth of the administrative state (Kang, 1970). The then President Park pushed strongly for national economic growth through the development of heavy-chemical industries, mobilizing young energetic bureaucrats as development agents. Courses on development and comparative administration were increasingly delivered in the 1960s–80s, although such courses have diminished since the 1990s. Common subjects of public administration (public personnel management, public financial management, organization theory, etc.) were taught broadly at university level. During this period, public administration programs

served well for developing potential civil servants, supplying the knowledge of public management for the operation of government.

Currently, most universities in Korea have public administration programs and/or related programs including public policy, local administration and other related areas. As of 2008, there were 137 undergraduate public administration programs (more than half of them have graduate programs in public administration) at four-year universities and approximately 30 programs at two-year colleges (KAPA, 2008).²⁰ It is considered that the over-expansion of public administration education programs over the years in Korea was the consequence of three major factors: (1) the American influence after the Korean War; (2) the relatively high importance of public administration in the civil service entrance examinations; and (3) a combination of the philosophy of the developmental state and technocratic managerialism of public administration during the President Park administration. However, enrollment in public administration and political science has become somewhat stagnant over the years compared to increasing enrollment in business management, also widely offered at most universities in South Korea. Accordingly, Korean public administration education might need structural readjustment to meet new challenges and must continuously modernize its curriculum, pedagogy and its quality control, for its further sustainable development.

The development of professional associations and research institutes as promoters of research and activities

It is worthwhile reviewing the critical role that professional associations and research institutes had in the process of the development of public administration research and education. The International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS) was established in 1930 and is the oldest one in the field (Fisch, 2005; Raadschelders, 1998). The American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) was established in 1939 as a result of growing concerns about the management of the federal government and the report of the Brownlow Committee (Fesler, 1987). However, Korea was a latecomer in terms of organizing a professional association in public administration. On 12 October 1956, a small group of academics and practitioners established the Korean Association for Public Administration (KAPA) in order to study and research the theory and practice of public administration (*Korea Daily*, 14 October 1956; Yoon, 1986) and, at that time, nearly 80 professionals (both academics and practitioners) attended the first inaugural meeting which took place in the National Officials Training Institute (NOTI) in Korea.²¹ In 1961, it was expanded more broadly as a leading association in the field of public administration.

In the middle of 1956, Fred Riggs visited the National Officials Training Institute and shared his view on the need for a professional association in public administration. When he revisited Korea in October 1956, he was able to participate in the inaugural meeting of KAPA.²² Moreover, it was known that Carlos Ramos, then Dean of the College of Public Administration at University of the

Philippines, also discussed the need for a professional organization during his visit to Korea in 1956. Since then, KAPA has grown significantly. As of January 2010, KAPA had 1833 members. KAPA has published a main journal entitled the *Korean Public Administration Review (KPAR)* in Korean since 1967. KAPA also began to publish a journal in English entitled *International Review of Public Administration (IRPA)* in 1997.²³

In the field of policy studies, there was no separate membership association until the 1980s, so the Korean Association for Policy Studies (KAPS) was established in 1992 becoming independent from KAPA, and KAPS publishes its own journals in Korean and English. Later, several other membership organizations or sections were established in almost every subject area: organizational management, personnel management, financial management, policy analysis and evaluation, local administration, electronic government, administrative history, and others. There are also a number of regional or local professional associations and chapters. Each of these associations publishes its own journal so that there are now many scholarly journals in the field of public administration, public policy and related areas in Korea.

There are two important research organizations in Korea: one supported by local governments and the other supported by the central government. First, the Korea Research Institute for Local Administration (KRILA) was established in 1984, financed by local governments in Korea in order to conduct research and promote policy development for the establishment and development of local autonomy and decentralization, as well as to support local governments in response to the changing administrative environments. Second, the Korea Institute of Public Administration (KIPA) was established by the central government in 1991 and is a government-sponsored organization devoted to independent research on public policy and administration. In addition, there are many other government-sponsored research institutes including the Korea Development Institute (KDI) established in 1971 and the Korea Institute of Public Finance (KIPF) established in 1992.

International cooperation as a development tool and a window of opportunity

International cooperation is an important development tool that helps countries to promote needed changes in their productive systems and practices. Immediately after the Korean Association of Public Administration (KAPA) was organized in 1956, KAPA had its first official contact with the Brussels-based IIAS and became a member of the National Section of IIAS in 1957 (IIAS, 1957).²⁴ Since then, frequent information exchanges have taken place as well as official visits. For example, when IIAS's journal (IIAS, 1957, 1968) reports its sections and members, the Korean National Section's report is included from time to time. Over the years, there has been frequent contact between KAPA and IIAS, although active ongoing exchanges between KAPA and IIAS have not always taken place. In 1984, the

[Korean] Local Government Officials Development Institute (LOGODI) joined the IIAS's affiliated entity, the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration (IASIA).²⁵

Contact with American scholars was accelerated by liaising with the Comparative Administration Group (CAG) of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) and the East–West Center in Hawaii. When the CAG seminar was held in Berkeley, California in 1965, a small group of Korean experts led by Hahn-Been Lee, who earned his MBA degree from Harvard University in 1951, officially joined the CAG seminar (Lee, 1965).²⁶ Since then, cooperation with American scholars and ASPA has gradually increased. The growing interest in ‘how to manage development’ called for studies on comparative and development administration (Huang, 1970; Lee, 1968).²⁷ In the US, the most notable forum for engaging with foreign countries was the creation of the Comparative Administration Group (CAG) in 1962, but its grant period expired in 1969. In 1973, ASPA's Section on International and Comparative Administration (SICA) was established as a product of the merger of the International Committee and CAG (Pugh, 1988; Uveges and Keller, 1998). Needless to say, a number of Koreans have continuously participated in SICA's activities.

Until the 1990s, there had been no active exchange with Asian professional associations in Asia except EROPA, although individual experts joined the meetings from time to time. The Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration (EROPA, based in Manila) is one of the old professional institutions in the field of public administration in Asia, which was established in 1960. Korea joined EROPA in 1962. In 1966, EROPA established the ‘the Development Administration Group’ (DAG), which was a product of ‘the Comparative Administration Group’ (CAG), which grew out of an earlier ASPA Committee on Comparative Administration (Riggs, 1997). Korea has also actively participated in the activities of the Association of Development Research and Training Institutes of Asia and the Pacific (ADIPA), which was formed in 1973 in order to provide a forum for interaction among experts in the Asia-Pacific region.

In 1996, KAPA initiated cooperation with the Japanese Society for Public Administration (JSPA).²⁸ As a result, KAPA's official delegates joined the JSPA's annual conference for the first time in 1996. Since then, they have sent a small group of delegates each year to join the annual meeting. KAPA's official contact with the Chinese Public Administration Society (CPAS) also took place in 2001, although individual-level exchanges had been active since the introduction of China's open door policy in 1978. The Asian Association for Public Administration (AAPA) was officially established in Tokyo on 30 January 2010, and many Asian professors are now actively participating in the AAPA's activities.²⁹ Furthermore, the Asian Group for Public Administration (AGPA) was established in Beijing on 30 May 2011 as a sub-entity of IIAS. These kinds of new networks could promote the development of an epistemic community in Asia and a global research network.

Discussion and prospects: beyond indigenization

As reviewed in the previous section, Korean public administration has grown exponentially in various ways, but the voices for indigenization of public administration have been echoed by both students and scholars for a long time, as happened in other social sciences as well. The term 'indigenization' refers to an attempt to transform what is externally influenced to fit the local culture. Since there was a period of imitation in introducing modern public administration developed in, mostly, the Western world including the United States and Western Europe immediately after the Second World War, the reaction to such imitation might be a natural consequence in the field of public administration. However, indigenization should not be interpreted as a mere return to old Confucian values. Instead, it could be seen as a way to find Korean's own identity and realization of remaining relevant with a reasonable synthesis between domestic and foreign ideas.

Regarding a relevance or contextual dimension to modern public administration, a number of researchers (Ahn, 1982; Black et al., 1977; Lee, 1982, 2003; Mendoza, 1977; Seddon, 1985) have raised questions on the transferability of Western management concepts and programs. For example, Bjur and Zomorrodian (1986) have emphasized the development of indigenous theories of administration, and the call for indigenization has often arisen in many developing countries. Thus, Korean public administration has had similar pressures for indigenization for a long time. Since the late 1970s, a number of experts have demanded that the Korean public administration community should make a stronger commitment to the indigenization of Korean public administration, asserting that Korean scholars should develop their own theories, without simply imitating or merely importing theories developed overseas (Lee, 1982). A number of senior scholars have urged the Korean public administration community to indigenize, or transform public administration theories in Korea, and develop a unique theory based on the Korean experience (Ahn, 1982; Bark, 1961; Kim, 1968; Lee, 1982). This issue has regularly arisen in the academic circle of Korean public administration so that it has almost become an ongoing ritual in the past.

Consequently, a voice emphasizing the need for indigenization of Korean public administration has been delivered repeatedly in a number of professional meetings and publications from two different perspectives: (1) reaction to the Western orientation; and (2) affection for an ethnocentric orientation (Jun, 1983). Many home-grown experts have criticized the Western orientation of Korean public administration, which is characterized as an uncritical acceptance of theories and methods developed by Western scholars. Since the intellectual milieu was in part shaped by the influence of American public administration, this has resulted in a number of experts being preoccupied with translation or illustration of foreign concepts, and who believe that Korean administrative problems can be solved through the adoption of management solutions used in Western settings. In contrast, ethnocentrically oriented scholars tend to analyze past Korean administrative systems and assume that Korea needs a public administration firmly rooted in its

own culture to enable Korean society to gain a full understanding of its own essential character (Bark, 1961; Jun, 1983; Kim, 1968).

In the 1990s, the issue of the Koreanization of public administration arose in the Korean public community in addition to indigenization. The terms indigenization and Koreanization sound similar, but have slightly different connotations. Oh (2005) defines the term 'indigenization' as an attempt to accept a study developed overseas and revise it based on the indigenous needs, while Oh sees 'Koreanization' as an independent effort to create a new theory based on the Korean context and hopefully disseminate it overseas. Ahn (2005) indicates that 'indigenization' has passive self-defensive characteristics, while 'Koreanization' has a more flexible and active orientation in conducting more context-based studies. In general, Koreanization implies that the pattern of development needs to reflect the Korean values and behavioral factors of Korean administration.

Modern public administration was introduced into Korea more than half a century ago, but the debate over indigenization and/or Koreanization still remains in Korea, although to a lesser degree over the years. Interestingly, a new perspective has emerged in some academic circles. Byung-Sun Choi (2006) and Young-Pyung Kim (2009) reject the notion of a national boundary in academic discourse. Instead of focusing on the pros and cons of Koreanization and indigenization, their argument goes beyond these terms, asserting that the matter of indigenization or Koreanization is up to the individual to decide on their own course of study. Particularly, Young-Pyung Kim (2009) asserts that a psychological complex (public administration studies in Korea are not necessarily better than in other advanced countries) or a core-periphery-based argument does not help the development of Korean public administration. Instead, Young-Pyung Kim (2009) emphasizes the development of a new theory that would be possible to disseminate overseas or share Korean experiences with others through knowledge-sharing programs, implying that Koreans should cope with the pressures of indigenization or Koreanization.³⁰ Accordingly, broader transformation from Koreanization to Asianization and/or Asianization to globalization might be needed in the future. In other areas of Korean social sciences, the debate over indigenization has declined substantially over the years. For example, the topic of Korean indigenization in the field of business management, which continued through the 1980s, is currently in decline because a number of Korean companies such as *Samsung*, *Hyundai* and *LG* have reached a world class standard.

At present, an independent view is arising in Korea, with Koreans asking if, and for how long, indigenization will remain relevant. The background behind such a new movement is the realization that the foundation of the Korean public administration (i.e. a large number of public administration education programs at both undergraduate and graduate levels, a wide range of scholarly research and publications, and numerous professional associations in diverse sub-fields and their active outreach activities) is relatively well established. In other words, this article asserts that a basic indigenization has been completed. Such a realization is a mature sign of Korea's public administration engaging in critical reflection of its

intellectual reorientation and past accomplishments (Jun, 2006). Consequently, there is a growing recognition that it is time to go beyond indigenization and to emphasize 'universalization' or 'globalization' as a new direction for Korean public administration, although it will take more time to be fully realized in the field. There might be many universal features of public administration across international boundaries. Universalization or globalization of Korean public administration can be a new beginning for Korean scholars to break out of the box and pursue universal values based on their local contexts and interpretations in a global perspective.

In order to do so, experts in the Korean public administration community may need to play a more active role, openly engaging with more Asian nations and other continental and global partners for mutual interests and common causes. Moreover, it is necessary to improve overall qualities of Korean public administration. In the past, Jun (1983) indicated four major limitations to Korean public administration: (1) people tend to focus on already popular topics rather than exploring new and complex issues; (2) administrative research in Korea has been dominated by a few major universities; (3) most grants and research activities are colored by the interests of government agencies (Ahn, 1982); and (4) researchers tend to pursue government research projects as sources of extra income rather than as opportunities to generate knowledge that will improve policies and administration. Over the past several decades, many things (research, education, publication, etc.) have improved, but it is important for Korean scholars to conduct more rigorous creative and/or critical studies rather than relying on a tradition of exegesis (Kang, 1970).³¹ Furthermore, public administration education must be improved or reoriented because current public administration education is largely aimed at the professional training of administrative technocrats and it faces severe challenges due to a declining number of students majoring in public administration over the years, particularly at local colleges.³²

Finally, it is worth noting that Korean public administration was developed in the shadow of over half a century of undeclared war and a stalemate with regard to North Korea, which might be quite unique in a comparative sense. Since the Korean War (1950–53), the tension between South and North Korea has been frequently escalated by North Korea so that national security was one of the prime national issues. Consequently, the role of the military has significantly influenced not only national security but also politics, the operation of government, and public administration. For example, young military officials who had some experience, after graduation from the Military Academy were recruited for civilian administrative positions in government: between 1977 and 1987, it was known that 736 military officials were appointed in mid-managerial positions in government through a special examination system (Lee, 2010). In 1988, however, the special examination system for military officials in administrative positions was abolished as a part of democratization or de-militarization. North Korea needs to institutionalize public administration education programs as China and Vietnam did, but there is no such signal that this will happen in North Korea at the moment.

Concluding remarks

In almost one generation, Korea has gone from being a recipient of international development assistance a half century ago to becoming a donor of official development assistance to many developing nations. In such a compressed developmental process, public administration as a new discipline in Korea has contributed to fostering prospective civil servants and the efficient operation of the public sector.³³ In doing so, Korean public administration has grown substantially over the past half century in both quantitative and qualitative dimensions.

However, during the developmental process, Korean public administration has received the following criticisms: lack of indigenization, lack of Koreanization, lack of creativity and maturation, and lack of materials written in English and other foreign languages. For a self-assessment dimension, such criticisms and arguments could stimulate researchers and educators to conduct more rigorous advanced works and relevant applications of knowledge in a local and global context. However, if such criticisms continue, it could generate negative externalities because such arguments do not always help the development of Korean public administration. In a long-term perspective, it does not help Koreans to improve their confidence in Korean public administration. Therefore, it is a time for liberation from an 'indigenization debate trap' and to pursue the development of more universal and global theories of public administration.³⁴

Over the years, the public policy environment and policy context have changed significantly within Korea. Multiculturalism is a new issue in Korean society. Once known for its homogeneity, Korea has gradually become a more multicultural society as the number of incoming foreigners increases, along with more foreign students and migrant workers, to provide a needed workforce for various industries. As such, Korea's school curriculum should reflect these demographic changes. University faculty needs to be diversified with more non-native Koreans and women. In addition, Korea's elderly population has increased significantly. As a consequence, Korean public administration needs to be able to address a new set of socioeconomic issues in the coming years. Past successful public administration and public policy do not guarantee further sustainability and utility. Therefore, it is clear that Korean public administration needs to evolve continuously (Ascher, 1986) for sustainable development.

Based on a historical overview of the development of modern Korean public administration, this article proposes a number of tasks to fulfill in the future. In fact, there are currently plenty of prescriptive studies in Korean public administration, but philosophical, interpretive, and critical studies are still lacking and need to be developed substantially in the future. Furthermore, Korean public administration has been criticized for being narrowly focused on the functionalist and positivistic ways of knowing social phenomena (Jun, 2006), and lacking attention to socio-political issues. Accordingly, creative, critical, interpretive, and diverse (macro-, meso-, and micro-level) approaches should be conducted fairly with expanded boundaries of the intellectual perspectives and practice of ethnographic and

qualitative research along with methodological and epistemological pluralism. Moreover, Korean institutions may need to diversify their academic exchanges with different parts of the world.³⁵ Finally, more multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary studies along with open and critical discourse should be encouraged domestically and internationally in order to advance Korean public administration and public administration in Asia. Since the role of the state has changed from a hard state to a soft state over the years, the nature of public administration has also changed from a political and legal orientation to an economic orientation and sociological orientation, covering broader boundaries. Thus, it is expected that public administration in Korea needs to reflect such changes creatively and independently in the future.

Notes

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1. As of 1981, there were 50 undergraduate degree programs and 24 graduate programs in public administration, while there were only 17 degree programs in the field of political science in Korea (Jun, 1983). Unlike public administration programs, however, the establishment of political science programs was not favored by the then authoritarian regime.
2. Syracuse University established the first MPA program in 1926. Over the past 80 years or so, the United States has established more than 200 MPA programs (Frederickson, 1981; Pugh, 1988), while China has founded approximately 100 MPA programs in the past eight years (Holzer and Zhang, 2009: s5). In Korea, there are currently over 100 undergraduate public administration programs at four-year universities and also a substantial number of similar programs at two-year colleges (KAPA, 2008).
3. For example, the German University of Administrative Sciences Speyer, founded in 1947, has produced a number of Korean graduates in the past.
4. Under the *Joseon* Dynasty education system, *Sungkyunkwan* (or *Seonggyungwan*) was Korea's oldest institution of higher learning located in the capital *Hanseong* (modern-day Seoul). It was established in 1398 to offer memorials to Confucius and his disciples, and to promote the study of the Confucian canon.
5. The *gwa-geo* gained importance in the *Goryeo* Dynasty and was the centerpiece of most education in the *Joseon* Dynasty.
6. This book was translated into English in 2010 for the first time (see Chong, 2010).
7. In 1882, a Japanese delegation met Lorenz von Stein at the University of Vienna. After that, he became an advisor to the Meiji period of Japan.
8. According to a study on overall evaluation of all South Korean Presidents, President Park received the highest score in terms of vision, agenda-setting, appointments, managerial skill, crisis management, commitment, integrity, and achievement (Kim, 2007: 390).
9. Chalmers Johnson (1982) conceptualized well the concept of the developmental state based on his book entitled *MITI and the Japanese Miracle*, explaining the phenomenon of state-led macroeconomic planning in East Asia.
10. After the Second World War, developing countries adopted a strategy of development based on the transfer of know-how and technology from developed countries. As a result, development administration became one of the most popular subjects in many

- Asian countries including South Korea. However, the development administration course has not been offered recently at many universities (Kim, 2009).
11. The first Korean textbook on policy studies appeared in 1963 (Lee, 1963).
 12. According to the UN E-Government Survey (UN, 2010), the Republic of Korea received the highest score, followed by the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.
 13. From 1882 to 1890, Karl Rathgen taught public law, statistics and administration science at the Imperial University of Tokyo and was also an adviser to the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce. His lecture note was published in Tokyo. Later, he became the first Chancellor of the University of Hamburg.
 14. Instructors from two major Japanese universities published two books: (1) in 1925, the then instructor Tokuchi Tamura (1925) at the Imperial University of Kyoto published his book entitled *Public Administration and Legal Studies*; and (2) in 1928, then instructor Masamichi Royama (1928) at the Imperial University of Tokyo published his book entitled *Introduction to Public Administration*. In comparison, the first textbook of public administration in China, *Theory and Practice of Public Administration*, was published by Jinjian Zhang in 1935. In the early 1950s, social sciences including public administration were eliminated from universities. In the late 1970s, Deng Xiaoping supported the resumption of the pursuit of teaching social sciences (Holzer and Zhang, 2009: s6).
 15. His book was substantially influenced by Japanese and American scholars among others: Tokuchi Tamura (1925), Leonard White (1926), and Masamichi Royama (1928).
 16. The International Cooperation Administration (ICA) administered aid for economic, political and social development purposes. It was later succeeded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).
 17. The name NOTI was changed to the Central Officials Training Institute (COTI) in 1961.
 18. The US State Department invited Fred Riggs to go to Korea to give lectures in a training program. Fred Riggs said that he was able to put the group in touch with a representative of the University of Minnesota at the American aid office, and they prepared a contract which paved the way for training the faculty of the Graduate School of Public Administration at Seoul National University (Riggs's autobiographical narrative at <http://www2.hawaii.edu/~fredr/autobio3.htm>).
 19. Nineteen young professionals from Seoul National University participated in a program at University of Minnesota in the late 1950s: Hae-Kyun Ahn (1957–58), Dong-Suh Bark (1957–59), Suk-Choon Cho (1958–60), Chong-Ki Choi (1958–59), Kwang-Pil Choi (1958–60), Pyung-Kun Kang (1958–60), Hae-Dong Kim (1957–58), Tae-Choon Kim (1957–59), Woon-Tai Kim (1957–58), Joung-Sik Lee (1957–58), Sang-Jyo Lee (1957–58), Woo-Hyun Lee (1958–60), Woong-Keun Lee (1957–58), Jong-Han Park (1958–60), Hae-Won Rhee (1958–59), Yung-Hee Rho (1957–58), Bong-Chan Suh (1958–59), Won-Woo Suh (1957–59), and Hoon Yu (1957–59). Ten advisors and staff from the University of Minnesota stayed at the Graduate School of Public Administration at Seoul National University in the late 1950s and early 1960s: Stuart MacCorkle (1958–60), Leigh Hunt Jr (1958–60), William Farber (1958–59), Elsie Hagelee (1959–61), William Larsen (1959–61), John Dettmann (1959–60), Elwyn Mauck (1959–62), Glenn Paige (1959–61), Arthur Borak (1959–60), and Lloyd Short (1961–62) (Mauck, 1962).
 20. However, the number of public administration programs including related public affairs programs would be substantially higher than this figure.

21. Not all participants were members of KAPA. According to the IIAS' journal (*IRAS* 27: 113–114), KAPA had 18 members from the beginning and its membership increased to 26 (10 members to be chosen from the civil service and 16 from university professors) in 1960. In comparison, several associations of social sciences also were established in the 1950s: the Korean Economic Association (KEA) in 1952; the Korean Political Science Association (KPSA) in 1953; the Korean Academic Society of Business Administration (KASBA) in 1956; and the Korean Sociological Association (KSA) in 1957.
22. In addition, William Warne also delivered a congratulatory speech at the inaugural meeting. He was the Economic Coordinator of the US International Cooperation Administration (ICA) in Korea.
23. Its original title was *Korean Review of Public Administration*, but it was changed to *International Review of Public Administration* in 1999.
24. *International Review of Administrative Sciences (IRAS)* 23: 433.
25. From a concept first articulated in Vienna in 1962, the Association, which is a constituent organ of the IIAS, was formally incorporated in Rome during the IIAS Congress of 1971 (<http://www.ias-iisa.org>). IASIA's first president was Donald C. Stone (United States) from 1974 to 1982.
26. Hahn Been-Lee's book (1968) entitled *Korea: Time, Change and Administration* has been widely read among Asian scholars.
27. Hahn-Been Lee, who became the Dean of the Graduate School of Public Administration at Seoul National University in 1968, introduced a handbook of development administration curriculum. After that, a development administration course was widely introduced at some universities in Korea.
28. For more details, visit its homepage at <http://www.js-pa.org>.
29. On 30 January 2010, the inaugural meeting of the Asian Association for Public Administration (AAPA) was held in Tokyo, Japan. For more details, visit its website at <http://www.ied.edu.hk/cgc/aapa/>.
30. Foreign observers often argue that Korea is relatively homogenous and has a strong common culture based on language, history, music, art, and Confucian customs and traditions, so that the influence of American or European public administration might be limited; and Koreans may use the language of American and/or European public administration, but they engage in the practices of Korean public administration.
31. Korea has a deeply rooted tradition of exegesis, an explanation or interpretation of a text, originating from the old dynasties. In particular, the pattern of Confucian textual exegesis is for pre-modern classical scholars to quote what Confucius said and then explore the meaning of the text. Such a tradition still remains in modern Korea regardless of one's religious affiliations.
32. The concept of a 'professional school' was relatively underdeveloped in Korea although Korea has many MPA programs. There are substantial differences in the level of knowledge between undergraduate public administration and graduate programs, but there is no significant difference in the curriculum between the two programs.
33. In fact, there are two different views on this issue. There is a general consensus that Korean public administration, particularly with its orientation of development administration, made a positive contribution to the administration of economic development. From a political perspective, however, there is criticism that public administration in the past has been a tool for maintaining the authoritarian regime.
34. In fact, the notion of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Thomas and James, 2006) is useful because it could be more applicable to

practical problem-solving and to facilitating a more intellectual understanding of social reality.

35. Daniel Martin (1987, 1988) challenges the viewpoint that public administration is an American invention. Martin asserts that virtually every significant concept that existed in the American literature as late as 1937 had already been published in France by 1859. For example, Charles-Jean Bonnin's book entitled *Principes d'administration publique* (1812) influenced the development of American public administration.

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