Table of Contents

Unit 1: Administrative Theory

HPRCA Teacher (Public Administration) · English Medium · 2026 Edition

Core Notes: Introduction to Public Administration

Plain Overview and Definitions

What Is Public Administration? — The Big Picture

Public Administration is the vehicle through which government promises become real. When a parliament passes a law on free education, it is Public Administration that builds the schools, hires the teachers, and delivers the service. As both an **academic discipline** and a **field of practice**, it studies and executes the implementation of government policies. Think of it as the 'engine room' of the state — where political decisions (made by legislatures and executives) are translated into everyday results for citizens. Without it, even the wisest policy remains a dead letter.

Etymology — Where the Word Comes From

The term administration comes from the Latin roots **'ad'** (to, towards) and **'ministrare'** (to serve, to manage). Literally, it means **'to serve or manage public affairs'**. This origin reveals the essence: public administration is fundamentally about **service** — not command or profit, but attending to the collective needs of citizens. The prefix 'public' adds the sphere: it is administration carried out in the **public interest**, under public law, and accountable to the people.

Definition Bank — Five Standard Formulations (learn as paraphrases)

1. Woodrow Wilson (1887) — "The detailed and systematic execution of public law."

In his seminal essay "The Study of Administration", Wilson separated administration from politics. For him, PA was the technical, neutral machinery that carries out the will of the legislature.

2. L. D. White (1926) — (paraphrase) the coordinated management of people and materials to accomplish public purposes. The popular "men and materials" wording is also attributed to Waldo in some texts and has not been verified against the original edition, so it should not be quoted as White's exact words.

White emphasised the **managerial** dimension — PA as the practical art of coordinating human and physical resources to achieve governmental objectives.

3. Luther Gulick (1937) — (paraphrase) the part of the science of administration that has to do with government, and therefore chiefly with the executive branch.

Gulick narrowed the scope to the executive function, coining **POSDCORB** (Planning, Organising, Staffing, Directing, Coordinating, Reporting, Budgeting) as the core managerial activities.

4. Dwight Waldo (1955) — "The art and science of management as applied to the affairs of the state."

Waldo broadened the definition to include both the **scientific** (systematic knowledge) and **artistic** (practical skill) dimensions, while retaining the state as the context.

5. F. A. Nigro & L. G. Nigro (1980) — "The cooperative group effort in a public setting… covering all three branches – executive, legislative, and judicial – and their interrelationships."

This newer definition expands PA beyond the executive and highlights the collaborative, multi-branch nature of governance.

Plain English Restatement: Public Administration is the process of **organising people and resources to implement government policies** — from building a road to running a hospital — in a way that is lawful, efficient, and fair.

Two Core Distinctions — Integral vs. Managerial, Public vs. Private

Integral View versus Managerial View

Aspect	Integral View (Broad)	Managerial View (Narrow)
What it includes	All activities of government – policy formulation, implementation, clerical work, and even political decision-making.	Only the **managerial functions** – planning, organising, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, budgeting (POSDCORB).
Key Proponents	**L.** D. White, Dimock, Gladden	Luther Gulick, Urwick, Fayol
Example	A clerk filing papers is part of PA (integral); the same clerk is 'non-administrative' in the managerial view.	Only the manager who plans and supervises is doing PA.
Criticism	Too broad – blurs boundaries with politics and management.	Too narrow – ignores the operational core and the value of routine work.

Exam Point: The **integral view** is the older, more inclusive perspective; the **managerial view** emerged with the scientific management movement and shapes most modern public administration curricula.

Public Administration vs. Private Administration

Basis	Public Administration	Private Administration
Primary Motive	Service motive – welfare of citizens.	Profit motive – maximisation of shareholder returns.
Accountability	Multiple – to legislature, courts, media, citizens.	Narrow – to board of directors and shareholders.
Source of Funds	Taxation (compulsory).	Private capital, revenues from sales.
Nature of Work	Rule-bound, bureaucratic red tape, emphasis on legality and due process.	Flexible, efficiency-driven, cost-conscious.
Decision-making	Open to public scrutiny, subject to RTI.	Confidential, internal.

Basis	Public Administration	Private Administration
Scope	Universal – services for all citizens (e.g., police, education).	Selective – consumers who pay.
Example	A government hospital treats all, regardless of payment.	A private hospital may deny emergency care if not paid.

Trap Alert: Do not assume private administration is always efficient — many public services (like disaster response) cannot be measured by profit alone.

Public Administration as an Art and a Science

- **As an Art** — PA requires practical skills: negotiation, leadership, discretion, judgment. No textbook can fully prepare a civil servant for a riot or a budget crisis. Experience and intuition are irreplaceable.
- **As a Science** — PA uses systematic methods: empirical research, statistical analysis, organisational theory. Principles like division of work, span of control, and hierarchy can be taught and tested.

Integration: Most scholars (Waldo, Simon) argue it is both — a science in its principles, an art in its application. Simon's Administrative Behaviour (1947) pushed hard for a science of administration based on decisions, but conceded that human values (the art side) remain central.

Relation to Other Social Sciences

Discipline	Linkage	Example
Political Science	PA is a sub-field; it studies the **implementation** of policy (the 'how'), while political science focuses on **policy content** (the 'what') and power dynamics.	Wilson wrote PA as a branch of political science.
Sociology	Organisational culture, bureaucracy, and informal structures.	Max Weber's ideal-type bureaucracy is a sociological model adapted by PA.
Economics	Resource allocation, cost-benefit analysis, public finance.	Budgeting in PA uses economic tools like marginal analysis.
Law	PA operates within a legal framework; administrative law governs procedures.	Article 311 of the Indian Constitution protects civil servants from arbitrary dismissal.
Psychology	Motivation, leadership, decision-making biases.	Maslow's hierarchy explains why salary alone does not motivate public employees.

Contemporary Linkage: The rise of **behavioural public administration** draws on psychology to design 'nudge' units (e.g., India's Nudge Unit in NITI Aayog).

Newer Definitions — The Shift to Governance

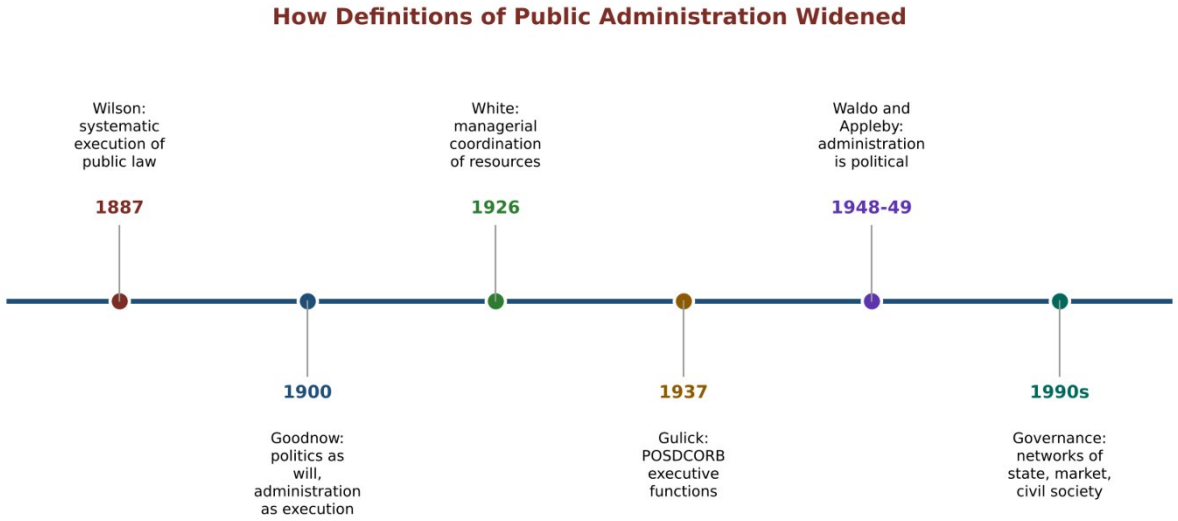
Since the 1990s, definitions have moved away from state-centric, hierarchical models toward **governance networks** and **citizen-centricity**.

1. Donald Kettl (2000s) — PA is "the coordination of networks of public, private, and non-profit actors to achieve public purposes."

2. New Public Service (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2007) — PA is about "serving citizens, not steering society" — emphasising participation, collaboration, and democratic values.

3. Bovaird (2005) — "Co-production of public services by users and professionals together."

Why this matters for exams: competitive increasingly asks about **governance over government** — the move from 'rowing' (direct service delivery) to 'steering' (facilitating networks) as described by Osborne & Gaebler (1992) in Reinventing Government.



Teaching model. Definitions are paraphrased; exact quotation wording should be checked against original editions.

Objective Exam Focus

Exam Fact Cluster (MCQ-Ready)

1. Woodrow Wilson wrote "The Study of Administration" in **1887** — considered the founding text of PA as a discipline.

2. L. D. White presented PA as the coordinated management of people and resources for public purposes in his book Introduction to the Study of Public Administration (1926).

3. Luther Gulick coined the acronym **POSDCORB** in his 1937 paper "Notes on the Theory of Organization".

4. The Latin roots **'ad'** + **'ministrare'** literally mean **'to serve'**.

5. The **integral view** of PA includes all activities of government (Dimock); the **managerial view** limits PA to POSDCORB functions (Gulick).

6. Public Administration is both an **art** (practical skill) and a **science** (systematic knowledge) — consensus view.

7. The **service motive** distinguishes PA from private administration's profit motive.

8. Newer definitions emphasise **governance networks** and **citizen-centric service delivery** — reflecting New Public Management and New Public Service approaches.

9. Dwight Waldo (1955) argued PA should be studied as a **political process**, not just neutral management — a break from Wilson's dichotomy.

10. The **Code of Conduct for Civil Servants** in India (based on the All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968) operationalises the service motive.

Exam Trap Alerts

- **Wrong:** Gulick's POSDCORB includes 'Policy-making'.

Correct: POSDCORB has no 'P' for policy; Gulick deliberately excluded policy formulation from administration.

- **Wrong:** L. D. White was the first to use the term 'Public Administration'.

Correct: Woodrow Wilson is credited with establishing it as a field of study. White wrote the first textbook.

- **Wrong:** The managerial view of PA is broader than the integral view.

Correct: The integral view is broader (includes all government activities); the managerial view is narrower (only management functions).

Key Facts to Memorise

- **1887** – Wilson's "The Study of Administration".
- **1926** – L. D. White's first textbook.
- **1937** – Gulick & Urwick's Papers on the Science of Administration (POSDCORB).
- **1955** – Waldo's The Study of Public Administration (political view).
- **Etymology:** ad + ministrare = to serve.
- **Core motive:** Service (public) vs. Profit (private).
- **Two views:** Integral (broad) vs. Managerial (narrow).
- **Three branches:** PA covers executive, legislative, judicial (modern view).
- **Governance shift:** From 'rowing' to 'steering' (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992).

Common Confusions & Examiner Traps

Confused Pair	The Deciding Distinction
PA vs. Political Science	PA studies **implementation** and organisation; Pol. Sci. studies power, policy content, and institutions.
Integral vs. Managerial	Integral = every government action is PA; Managerial = only the 'managerial' functions (POSDCORB).
Art vs. Science	PA is both — systematic principles (science) applied with judgment (art).
Public vs. Private	**Primary test: motive** (service vs. profit), not ownership alone. Some public bodies have profit motives (PSUs); some private bodies have service goals (NGOs).
New Public Management vs. Governance	NPM brought private-sector tools into government (efficiency); Governance focuses on networks, collaboration, and citizen participation.

One-Look Revision Capsule

Public Administration = implementation of government policy (Wilson 1887). Etymology: 'to serve' (ad+ministrare). Core definitions: Wilson (execution of law), White (managerial coordination of people and resources), Gulick (POSDCORB). Two perspectives: integral (all govt activities) vs. managerial (only management functions). Distinction from private: service vs. profit. Art + science. Related to Pol. Sci (policy), Sociology (bureaucracy), Economics (resources). Modern shift: governance networks, citizen-centricity. Exam key: exact years (1887, 1926, 1937), acronyms (POSDCORB), and thinker→definition pairs.

End of Section

Newer Definitions: Governance, Networks, and Citizen-Centric Administration

The traditional definitions (Wilson's "execution of public law," White's managerial view of coordinating people and resources, Gulick's "executive-branch focus") have been steadily **widened and decentred** since the 1990s. The core shift is from **government** (a single, hierarchical, state-centred actor) to **governance** (a plural, networked process involving state, market, and civil society). This redefinition responds to four forces: globalisation, fiscal crisis, the rise of contracting-out, and citizens' demand for personalised, accountable service.

Key contemporary definitions:

Source / Thinker	Core Definition	Emphasis
Kooiman (1993)	"The totality of interactions in which public and private actors solve societal problems."	Social-political governance; **networked interactions**
Osborne & Gaebler (1992) – Reinventing Government	Government should **steer rather than row**; the public sector catalyses solutions, not produces all services.	**Entrepreneurial government**, market-friendly, results-driven
Denhardt & Denhardt (2000) – The New Public Service	Public administration should serve citizens, not customers; uphold democratic values, shared leadership.	**Citizen-centric**, public interest, collaborative leadership
Moore (1995) – Creating Public Value	Public managers must create **public value** (what the public values, and is good for them) through strategic management.	**Value creation** within a political-authorising environment
Rhodes (1996)	Governance means a **network of organisations** that are interdependent, self-organising, and resist central steering.	**Network governance**, hollowing out of the state

These definitions replace the old **command-and-control** imagery. Public Administration now is less about internal management of a bureaucracy and more about **orchestrating partnerships**, **managing contracts**, **engaging citizens** in co-production, and ensuring **accountability across organisational boundaries**.

Example: In India, the **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)** system moves from traditional department-based delivery to a technology-enabled **governance network** that links multiple ministries, banks, telecom operators, and beneficiaries — demanding skills in coordination, data management, and grievance handling far beyond POSDCORB.

Exam angle: Expect statement-based questions linking thinkers (e.g., "Who said 'steer not row'?") or matching definitions to contemporary trends. A useful analytical framing: how newer definitions address the failures of the traditional hierarchical model.

The Politics-Administration Dichotomy: A Persistent Definitional Debate

The classic **Wilsonian dichotomy** (1887) separated **politics** (value-setting, law-making) from **administration** (value-neutral, rule-executing). This was the foundational definition of the field's independence from Political Science. Over a century, the dichotomy has been critiqued, demolished, and partially revived.

Phase	View	Key Proponents
Classical (1887–1930s)	Dichotomy is real and desirable; administration is purely technical.	Wilson, Goodnow, Willoughby
Rejection (1940s–1960s)	Administration is inherently political; administrators exercise discretion and shape policy.	Appleby (Policy and Administration, 1949), Simon (Administrative Behavior, 1947), Waldo
Synthetic (1980s–present)	Dichotomy is false as description but valuable as **normative ideal**; we need both formal separation and actual interdependence.	Rosenbloom, Svara (2001 – "complementarity model")

The **Appleby-Waldo critique** argued that administrators are deeply involved in policy formulation — drafting rules, interpreting law, making trade-offs. **Simon** added that even "factual" decisions involve value premises. Thus the field could not be defined as merely "execution of public law."

Svara's complementarity model (2001) is now widely accepted: politics sets mission and oversight, administration provides expertise and implementation feedback — they are **distinct but overlapping**, each reinforcing the other.

Example: India's **Election Commission of India (ECI)** formally implements election law (administration), but its quasi-judicial powers and model code enforcement involve political value judgments — a clear hybrid role.

Exam focus: The dichotomy is a core revision theme, often studied by comparing Wilson and Appleby. A useful analytical question is why the dichotomy remains relevant even after being debunked; the answer lies in its role in legitimising administrative neutrality and preventing politicisation of career civil services.

Public Administration vs. Private Administration: Beyond the Obvious

Earlier notes may have covered the basic differences (profit vs. service, accountability, red tape). Here we add **subtler distinctions** that examiners often test:

Dimension	Public Administration	Private Administration
Goal complexity	Multiple, conflicting, shifting (e.g., equity, efficiency, due process)	**Single, stable:** profit maximisation or shareholder value
Time horizon	Long-term, intergenerational obligations (e.g., climate policy)	Short to medium term (quarterly results)
Accountability	Vertical (legislature, courts, media, citizens) – **many "bosses"**	Vertical (board, shareholders) – **one clear master**
Risk tolerance	Very low – public mistakes are scandals	Moderate – calculated risks accepted

Dimension	Public Administration	Private Administration
Basis of authority	Legal-rational (Weberian bureaucracy) + political mandate	Ownership/shareholder mandate; managerial authority
Measurement of success	Not just output but **outcome** and **fairness**; hard to quantify	Profit, market share, ROI (easily metricised)

Critical insight: The terms "private" and "public" are blurring under **New Public Management** — many public services (health, education, prisons) are run by private contractors. The distinction now lies in **ultimate accountability** (to the public != to shareholders) and the **presence of non-market values** (justice, equality, voice).

Example: A private security firm contracted to run a prison must still meet public-law standards of humane treatment; its "profit" is regulated by public contracts. The administration is hybrid.

Exam angle: Revise the features in comparative form. An analytical framing: "In the era of public-private partnerships, is the distinction still meaningful?" — answer by stressing that public accountability and non-market values remain defining.

Critiques and Rejoinders: The Identity Crisis

Since the **Minnowbrook I Conference (1968)**, Public Administration has been in a self-reflexive crisis about its own definition. Key criticisms:

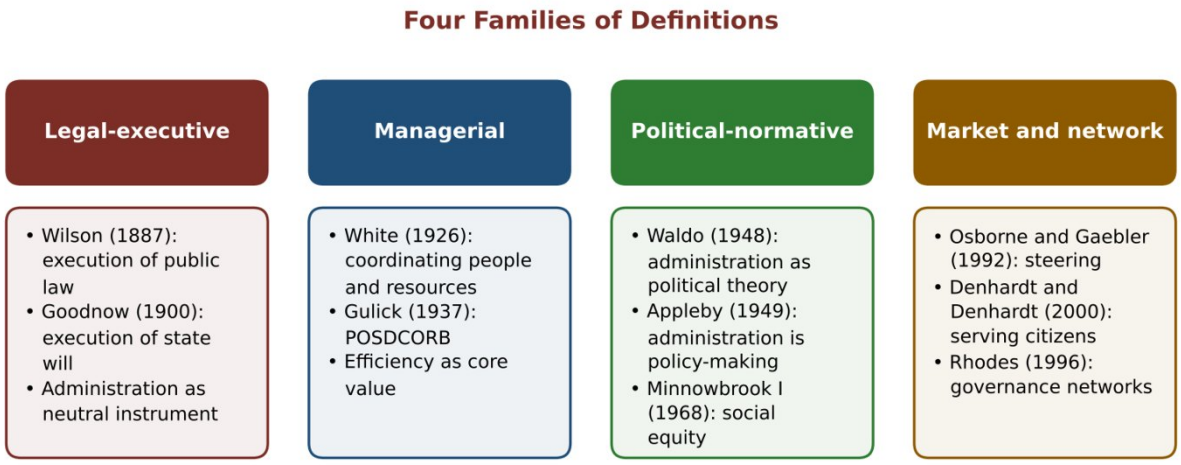
Critique	Source	Rejoinder
Too narrow – overly focused on internal management	**Frederick C. Mosher (1968):** "No separate knowledge base"	Field has expanded to governance, networks, and public value
Too applied – lacks theoretical rigour	**Vincent Ostrom (1973):** The Intellectual Crisis – too tied to Weberian orthodoxy	New institutionalism, democratic theory now ground it
Too American – definitions are U.S.-centric	**Hofstede, Dwivedi (1994):** "Western bias in public administration theory"	Post-colonial and comparative approaches now emerging (Dwivedi, 1999)
Too fragmented – no core definition	**Waldo and later commentators:** a recurring "identity crisis" of the field	Pluralism is a strength; the field evolves with context

The New Public Administration (Minnowbrook I, led by **Dwight Waldo**) called for **relevance**, **social equity**, and **action**. It rejected value-neutral definitions and insisted that administrators must actively correct societal inequalities. **Minnowbrook II (1988)** and **III (2008)** added concerns of **democratic governance**, **globalisation**, and **e-government**.

Example: In India, the **Satyam–Somnath committees (2012)** on civil services reform explicitly recommended redefining the administrator's role as a **facilitator of welfare delivery**, not just a regulator — echoing Minnowbrook's equity orientation.

Exam focus: Minnowbrook I, II and III are core revision items. An analytical angle: the 'identity crisis' can be read as a sign of disciplinary maturity, given the field's capacity for self-correction. A related link connects Waldo's call for relevance to the rise of governance networks.

Summary of the Definitional Evolution



Teaching model grouping definitions by emphasis; families overlap and are not strict successive stages.

Key takeaway for candidates: Modern definitions have moved from **instrumental** (how to do) to **normative** (what to do, for whom), from **state-centric** to **pluralistic**, and from **managerial** to **governance**. The older definitions are not wrong — they are incomplete without the newer layers. The comprehensive answer to "What is Public Administration?" must synthesise all these dimensions.

Etymology and Meaning

Plain Overview

Public Administration is the branch of social science concerned with how governments carry out their functions—making policies, delivering services, and regulating society. At its simplest, it is the "what" and "how" of government in action. The term itself tells a story: it comes from Latin roots that mean "to serve" (ad + minister), so the whole idea of public administration is built on serving the public interest, not private profit. Understanding its etymology is the first step to grasping its identity as both a practical activity (running public programs) and an academic discipline (studying that running).

Etymology and Core Meaning

The word "administration" derives from the Latin administrare: **ad** (toward, to) + **ministrare** (to serve, to manage). The root minister means "servant," so the original sense is "to serve or manage for another"—not for oneself. This servant-origin is crucial: it embeds the idea that administration exists to carry out the will of a principal (the sovereign, the legislature, the people). In ancient Rome, administratio meant the management of public affairs by magistrates. Over time the prefix "public" was added to distinguish government service from private business management.

Modern meaning divides into two levels:

- **As an activity:** the entire process of governing—planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, budgeting (POSDCORB model, Luther Gulick, 1937)—in public organizations.
- **As a discipline:** the systematic study of that activity, covering theories of organization, bureaucracy, policy implementation, and public accountability.

The word "public" in the compound is not just a sector label—it signals distinctive values: **public interest**, **democratic accountability**, **rule of law**, and **equity**. This contrast with "business administration" is a recurring exam focus.

Definition Bank

Scholar	Definition	Key Emphasis
Woodrow Wilson (1887)	"The most obvious thing about public administration is that it is government in action; the executive, the operative, the most visible part of government."	Action-oriented; government as active agent
L.D. White (1926)	**Paraphrase**: coordinated management of people and materials to accomplish public purposes (exact wording and attribution unverified; also credited to Waldo).	Managerial; resources for state goals
Herbert Simon (1947)	"The activities of administration are those groups of activities concerned with the carrying out of policy decisions."	Decision-implementation link
M.E. Dimock & G.O. Dimock (1953)	**Paraphrase**: administration concerns what government does and how it does it. (The "fulfilment or enforcement of public policy" definition belongs to White.)	Policy enforcement
Nicholas Henry (1975)	**Paraphrase**: a broad combination of theory and practice aimed at better public policy and management.	Efficiency + practice

Plain-English restatement: Public Administration is how government actually does its work—implementing laws, providing services, and regulating society—and the academic field that studies how to do that work better.

Historical Evolution (Key Thinkers and Years)

The evolution of the concept can be traced through a series of paradigm shifts:

1. Ancient roots (Kautilya's Arthashastra ~300 BCE): early treatise on statecraft and public finance—administration tied to kingship.

2. European cameralism (17th-18th centuries): German and Austrian systematic management of state finances—foreshadows efficiency orientation.

3. Woodrow Wilson (1887): father of the discipline. His essay "The Study of Administration" argued for separating administration from politics to make it professional like business. Coined the **politics-administration dichotomy**.

4. Frank Goodnow (1900): Politics and Administration—reconciled the dichotomy by saying politics "expresses" the state will, administration "executes" it.

5. Luther Gulick & Lyndall Urwick (1937): Papers on the Science of Administration—introduced POSDCORB (Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Coordinating, Reporting, Budgeting) as universal administrative functions.

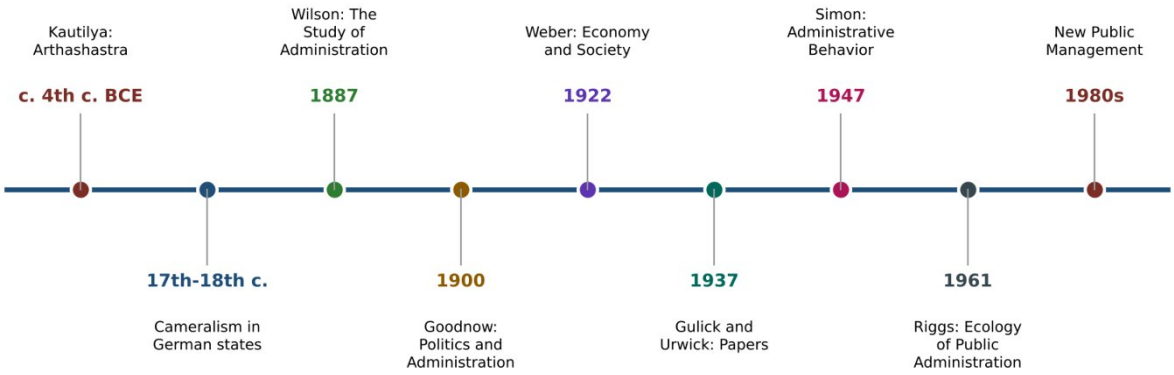
6. Max Weber (1922, posthumous English 1947): Economy and Society—ideal-type **bureaucracy** as rational-legal authority; hierarchy, rules, impersonality, merit. Foundation of modern organizational theory.

7. Herbert Simon (1947): Administrative Behavior—attacked Gulick's proverbs; introduced **bounded rationality** and decision-making as core. Separated facts from values.

8. F.W. Riggs (1961): The Ecology of Public Administration—comparative framework linking administration to its social, economic, cultural environment (prismatic-sala model for developing societies).

9. New Public Management (NPM) since 1980s: Osborne & Gaebler (1992 Reinventing Government)—shift from rule-bound bureaucracy to entrepreneurial, results-oriented, customer-focused management. Emphasizes competition, contracting, performance measurement.

Landmarks in Administrative Thought



Weber's Economy and Society was published posthumously in 1922; its English translation (1947) is a separate date.

Major Theories and Thinkers (Core Arguments)

• **Wilson's Politics-Administration Dichotomy:** argued administration is a neutral instrument; separation of spheres (policy-makers vs executors) was necessary to make government efficient and to insulate it from political corruption. **Criticism:** later scholars (Appleby, Waldo) showed administration is inherently political; policy-making and implementation intertwine.

• **Weber's Bureaucracy:** the most efficient form of organization—hierarchy, written rules, full-time officials, separation from ownership of means. **Exam point:** Weber's model is an ideal type, not a description of any real bureaucracy; it has been criticized for rigidity and dehumanization (Merton's "bureaucratic personality").

• **Simon's Decision-Making:** rejected the classical "administrative man" with perfect rationality; proposed **bounded rationality**—administrators satisfice (choose good enough solutions) because they have limited information, time, and cognitive capacity. **Contemporary:** foundation for behavioral public administration.

• **Riggs's Ecological Approach:** public administration must be understood in its setting—developed countries have "diffracted" (modern differentiated) systems; developing countries have "prismatic" (mixed traditional-modern) systems, where formal rules coexist with informal norms (nepotism, patronage). **Exam angle:** frequently used in comparative administration questions.

• **New Public Management:** core argument—apply private-sector management techniques to public sector; focus on outcomes, competition, citizen as customer. **Thinkers:** Hood (1991), Osborne & Gaebler (1992). **Criticism:** neglects equity, democratic values; creates cherry-picking of profitable services.

Paradigm Comparison: Traditional vs New Public Administration (as a table)

Dimension	Traditional Public Administration (c. 1900–1980)	New Public Management (c. 1980–present)
Focus	Process, rules, procedures	Results, outcomes, performance
Structure	Hierarchical bureaucracy	Flat, decentralized, networks
Motivation	Public service ethos, tenure	Incentives, competition, contracts
Citizen role	Subject to authority	Customer of services
Accountability	Compliance with rules	Value for money, results
Key thinker	Weber (bureaucracy), Wilson (dichotomy)	Osborne & Gaebler (reinventing)

Analytical Frameworks and Application

The "Public" in Public Administration: This is a conceptual framework distinguishing PA from private administration on three bases:

1. Public Interest: PA must serve the collective good, not profit. This introduces **equity and social justice** as criteria.

2. Democratic Accountability: PA operates within a framework of constitutional values—rule of law, transparency, legislative oversight, citizen participation. **Example:** right-to-information laws (India's RTI Act 2005) enforce accountability.

3. Political Context: PA is embedded in political system; elected officials set policy, administrators implement—but the line is fuzzy. **Example:** senior civil servants in India (Secretaries) advise ministers and draft policies; they are not neutral cogs.

The Scope Debate: Locus vs Focus – A typology from Schachter (1989) and others:

• **Locus** = institutional location (the government departments where PA happens).

• **Focus** = the specialized knowledge (management techniques, policy analysis) used.

Traditional PA emphasized locus (government is PA; outside is not). Modern PA emphasizes focus—public management techniques can be applied to non-profits, even private firms delivering public services (contracting out).

McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y – Applied to Public Administration:

- **Theory X** (traditional PA with Taylor and Weber): workers lazy, need close supervision, rules, hierarchy. Basis for classical bureaucracy.
- **Theory Y** (McGregor, 1960): workers self-motivated, creative; given autonomy, they perform better. Basis for participatory management and NPM's empowerment.

Exam Mastery Block (Objective)

Objective Exam Focus

Exam Fact Cluster:

1. The term administratio was used in ancient Rome for management of public affairs by magistrates.
2. Woodrow Wilson wrote "The Study of Administration" in 1887 – founding essay of the discipline.
3. L.D. White is considered the father of American public administration as a field of study; his 1926 textbook Introduction to the Study of Public Administration was the first comprehensive text.
4. POSDCORB acronym was coined by Luther Gulick in the 1937 Papers on the Science of Administration.
5. Max Weber defined bureaucracy as an ideal-type based on rational-legal authority; his work Economy and Society published 1922 (posthumous English 1947).
6. Herbert Simon won the Nobel Prize in Economics (1978) for his theory of bounded rationality in Administrative Behavior (1947).
7. Dwight Waldo critiqued the politics-administration dichotomy in The Administrative State (1948), arguing administration is inherently political.
8. F.W. Riggs developed the prismatic-sala model in The Ecology of Public Administration (1961).
9. NPM is traced to the 1980s; key text Reinventing Government by Osborne and Gaebler (1992).
10. The word **public** in PA distinguishes it by: public interest, democratic accountability, rule of law, and equity.

Exam Trap Alerts:

- **Wrong:** "POSDCORB was formulated by Max Weber." **Actually:** POSDCORB was formulated by Luther Gulick in 1937; Weber's contribution is bureaucracy.
- **Wrong:** "The politics-administration dichotomy was proposed by Herbert Simon." **Actually:** It was proposed by Woodrow Wilson in 1887; Simon later critiqued it and introduced a fact-value distinction.
- **Wrong:** "New Public Management rejects all managerial techniques from business." **Actually:** NPM explicitly advocates importing private-sector management techniques (competition, contracting, performance pay) into the public sector.

Key Facts to Memorise:

1. Latin root: ad + minister → to serve.
2. Wilson's 1887 essay founded discipline.
3. Goodnow (1900) distinguished politics (will) and administration (execution).
4. Gulick's POSDCORB (1937) – 7 functions.
5. Weber's bureaucracy – rational-legal authority, hierarchy, rules.
6. Simon's Administrative Behavior (1947) – bounded rationality.
7. Riggs' prismatic-sala model (1961) – comparative ecology.
8. NPM 1980s – results, competition, customer.
9. "Public" adds interest, accountability, law, equity.
10. Dwight Waldo (1948) – The Administrative State.

Common Confusions & Examiner Traps:

- **Public Administration vs Business Administration:** often tested as a distinction—profit motive vs public interest, accountability to market vs to citizens, political context vs autonomy. **Trap:** Both can use POSDCORB; the difference is not functions but values and environment.
- **Bureaucracy (Weber) vs Bureaucracy (colloquial 'red tape'):** Weber's is a neutral ideal-type; red tape is a pathology. **Trap:** Do not attribute red tape as Weber's definition.
- **Dichotomy (Wilson) vs Separation (Goodnow):** Wilson argued for strict separation; Goodnow allowed for some interrelationship but maintained distinct functions. **Trap:** Goodnow is not a pure dichotomist.

One-Look Revision:

Public Administration = government in action (Wilson) + academic study of that action. Etymology: Latin ad + minister = to serve. Three key anchors: (1) Wilson (1887) – dichotomy; (2) Weber (1947) – bureaucracy; (3) Simon (1947) – bounded rationality. Later shift to NPM (1980s, results/competition). The word "public" adds three dimensions: public interest, democratic accountability, rule of law. Distinction from private administration is a frequent MCQ trap.

The Public-Private Distinction: Critiques and Expansion

The conventional demarcation—**Public Administration** as pursuit of the public interest with legal accountability vs. **Business Administration** as profit-driven efficiency for shareholders—has been increasingly challenged. **Waldo** (1948, The Administrative State) argued that administrative values cannot be separated from democratic ones; the claim that public administration is merely "management" applied to government is a positivist reduction. **NPM** theorists (Hood 1991; Osborne & Gaebler 1992) deliberately imported private-sector techniques (performance contracts, competition, customer orientation) into government, blurring the boundary. Critics (Box, 1999) countered that the NPM's "customer" metaphor undermines citizenship—a public administrator serves rights-bearing citizens, not consumers. The **Contemporary Governance** literature (Frederickson 1997) further dissolves the line: contracting-out, PPPs, and third-party government mean that private actors now perform quintessentially public functions, yet are not bound by constitutional due process. Thus the simple distinction, while still taught, is now treated as a continuum rather than a binary.