

Social Network Analysis of Public Administration Articles in Korea

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Abstract

This paper aims to examine an overlooked area, the role of public administration and policy as a contributor to Korean national development using a social network analysis of public administration papers published in Korea. In addition, it suggests some future directions as to what Korean public administration system has to do both in the present and in the future. Korea has achieved an unprecedented rapid economic growth since 1948 when the Korean government was established. Nowadays, the developmental process which Korea has experienced has become a model for other developing countries. However, there has been a dark side to this process together with the light side associated with rapid economic development. These dark-side aspects include a gap between haves and have-nots, the gap between rural and urban areas, and social polarization. The analysis results show that to overcome these obstacles, the Korean government should make great efforts by coordinating policy objectives, policy priorities, policy tools, and the role of public administration, as Korea's governments have done in the past in order to attain the high rate of economic growth that has prevailed up until now.

Keywords: Korean public administration, social network analysis, Korean policy

1. Introduction

This paper is to examine an overlooked area, the role of public administration and policy as a contributor to Korean national development, from a historical point of view. In addition, it suggests a number of future directions, by following which the various challenges Korea might overcome that is confronting it. This paper begins by analysing articles published between 1967 and 2015 by the Korean Public Administration Review, the journal of the Korean Association of Public Administration, the academic association promoting studies of public administration and policy in Korea, with a view to identify the major issues relating to public administration and policy during a number of historical periods. It is expected that this analysis will provide us with crucial information concerning which public administration and policy issues were raised at specific times and how they were dealt with. This paper then offers a historical overview (again by period) of key practices and systems via which problems and issues relating to public administration and policy were addressed; and, finally, this paper puts forward a number of policy and theoretical suggestions as to how Korea might advance towards a high level of proficiency in public administration and policy.

2. Public Administration and Policy

2.1. Relationships between Public Administration and Policy

Before discussing the role of public administration and policy from a historical point of view, it is essential to define the two terms ‘public administration’ and ‘policy’, and to delineate the relationships between the two.

There are many different definitions of public administration, but behind them all is a conception of it as a series of activities concerned with the formulation, implementation and evaluation of government policy, and also as an academic discipline that studies policy-related issues. Its fundamental goal is to advance the policy process, ranging from policy formulation to policy evaluation and the associated management issues, so that the government can function effectively. Hence, public administration is centrally concerned with the organization of government policies and programmes, as well as with the behaviour of those officials (usually non-elected) who are formally responsible for their performance. Public policy can be defined as government actions undertaken by the executive branches of the state with regard to a variety of public issues. Accordingly, the relationship between public administration and policy suggests that the former is a series of supportive actions aimed at formulating, implementing and evaluating the latter, which are government actions undertaken to resolve public issues.

2.2. Importance of Public Administration and Policy

Even though the complex relationships between public administration and public policy cannot be completely delineated clearly because they overlap in practice, public administration and public policy play a crucial role in national development, since public administration is primarily concerned with the management of public policies, the translation of politics into the day-to-day reality of citizens, and the behaviour of government employees involved in the policy process.

2.3. Analytical Framework

Figure 1 presents the analytical framework within which the research question considered in this paper is addressed.

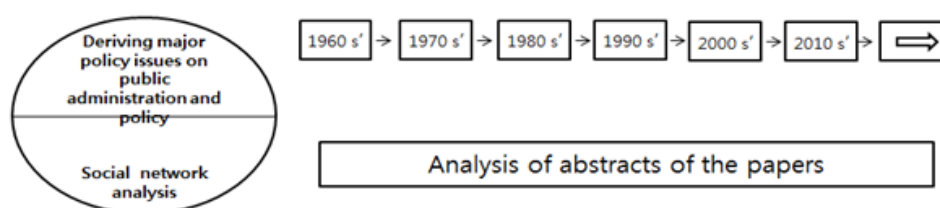


Figure 1. Analytical Framework

As indicated above, the research question here is to find major issues regarding Korean public administration and policy from a historical point of view. Major issues relating to public administration and policy are addressed via the social network analysis method. As a means of doing this, the papers included in the Korean Public Administration Review are analysed. The total number of papers published by the journal between 1967, when the Association began publishing, and 2015 is 1,612. The number of papers to be analysed per period is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of Papers to be Analysed per Period

Time period	Number of papers	Number of volumes
1967–1969	44	3 (vols 1–3)
1970–1979	123	10 (vols 4–13)
1980–1989	185	10 (vols 14–23)
1990–1999	560	10 (vols 24–33)
2000–2010	448	10 (vols 34–43)
2010–2015	252	6 (vols 44–49)
Total	1,612	

In this analysis the abstract of every paper are examined, in order to identify keywords, and the characteristics of the networks containing them, relating to public administration and policy. By this means, the issues that were prevalent or dominant in the journal during each period are identified and the laws and institutions that were introduced in each period are described

3. Major Issues Regarding Public Administration and Policy

The social network analysis of the abstract of the papers included in these journals is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Major Policy Issues Identified for Each Period

	1960–1969	1970–1979
Papers	Number of papers 44	123
Papers	Number of volumes 3	10
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – rural development as a national aim – economic effectiveness as a policy priority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – emphasis on the role of public employees – emphasis on development goals and on Saemaul (new community development policy) – responsibility in policymaking
Centrality network		
	1960–1969	1970–1979

Keywords dendrogram			
Laws	Public administration		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation on delegation of authority (1970)
Laws	Public policy		
		1980–1989	1990–1999
Papers	Number of papers	185	560
Papers	Number of volumes	10	10
Characteristics		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – emphasis on evaluation in the policy process – role of a committee of experts in the policy process – emergence of the term 'local autonomy' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – role of citizens – efficient local government – leadership of local councils in public policy
Centrality network			
		1980–1989	1990–1999

Keywords dendrogram			
Laws	Public administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation on administrative efficiency and collaboration (1991) Administrative Procedure Act (1996) Administrative Regulation Act (1998) Government Agency Act (1999) 	
Laws	Public policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation on Policy Advisory Committee (1981) 	

		2000–2009	2010–2015
Papers	Number of papers	448	252
Papers	Number of volumes	10	6
Characteristics		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> importance of networks in local government service governance as a mechanism for administrative reform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> linkage between evaluation and incentives emphasis on participation and governance emphasis on the importance of stakeholders
Centrality network			
		2000–2009	2010–2015

Keywords dendrogram		
Laws Public administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e-Government Act (2001) • Residents' Recall Act (2006) • Administrative Investigation Act (2007) 	
Laws Public policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulation on National Suggestion (2006) • Government Affairs Evaluation Act (2006) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulation on National Policy Coordination Council (2013) • Regulation on Policy Collaboration Council between Central and Local Government (2015)

The analysis results may be summarized as follows. In the 1960s, rural development became the chief national aim and economic effectiveness was regarded as a policy priority. During the period 1960–69, it is believed, there were no significant or remarkable regulatory acts of public administration and policy. In the 1970s, by contrast, the role of public employees was emphasized along with development goals, and accordingly the Saemaul policy (new community development policy) appeared to gain traction. In the 1980s the term ‘evaluation’ emerged, and it seems to have been at this time that the evaluation system was adopted as part of the policy process. In this period, too, the role of a committee of experts was seen as important in terms of the democratic policy process. Likewise, the term ‘local autonomy’ was prevalent, implying that systems of local autonomy were being debated. In the 1990s, the role of the citizen was seen as important in the policy process, and local government efficiency also became a much-debated and controversial issue. In the same context, local council leadership was assumed to be an important issue in terms of the policy process. In the 2000s, by contrast, the terms ‘network’ and ‘governance’, which are still dominant today, emerged, the belief apparently having been that governance can be an effective mechanism in terms of administrative reform. Finally, in 2010, evaluation appears to be linked with incentives, and it is believed also that participation and governance are crucial in terms of both public administration and the policy process.

4. Conclusion: the Way Forward

Based on the social network analysis of the public administration articles in Korea, we can say that Korea has achieved unprecedented rapid economic growth since 1948 when the Korean government was established. Nowadays, the developmental process which Korea has experienced has become a model for other developing countries. However, there has been a dark side to this process together with the light side associated with rapid

economic development. These dark-side aspects include a gap between haves and have-nots, the gap between rural and urban areas, and social polarization. To overcome these obstacles, the Korean government should make great efforts by coordinating policy objectives, policy priorities, policy tools, and the role of public administration, as Korea's government have done in the past in order to attain the high rate of economic growth that has prevailed up until now.

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