

# A Framework of Modernizing Public Management Philosophy in China

Longlong Zhao

School of Philosophy, Renmin University of China; Member of the Public Administration Research Group of the Department of Political Science, University College London (UK)

e-mail: longlong.zhao.19@ucl.ac.uk.

**Abstract:** This article makes three main contributions. They first expound on the theoretical basis of modernizing public management philosophy in detail from directional guidance, primary structure and reasonable interpretation. Secondly, through objective demand, subjective motivation, and institutional advantage, analyzing the endogenously driven force of the modernization in public management philosophy. Thirdly, combining the current situation of public management philosophy, drawing on and absorbing the endogenous logic of Chinese new development pattern, then defining the framework of modernizing public management philosophy as exploring the internal dynamic cycle, investigating the environmental evolution outside, and researching the benign interaction between them.

**Keywords:** public management philosophy, modernization, macro-management, micro-management, circular exploration

## 1. Introduction

The domestic and international dual-cycle development pattern points out how to gradually deepen Chinese "Supply-side Structural Reform" (Dong et al., 2020). It provides insights into the development of public management philosophy from a macro-management perspective. By rationally promoting the sound and scientific development between the internal and external dual-cycles of Chinese macro-management, it will help improve the efficiency of management practice in various fields in China and deliver its effect of the circular exploration on public management philosophy. Thereby, under the background of a specific era, stimulating the research of public management philosophy to acquire new ideas and new vitality is achieved (Li et al., 2018). In addition, the proposal of new ideas for modernizing public management philosophy not only further expands the research object from the original micro-management (referring to the management of a specific field or industry, such as industrial management or enterprise management, etc.) to the macro-management (such as national governance), and even "super-macro" management (such as international relations).

Regarding the current status of Chinese public management practice and theory, it is a bold attempt to introduce new ideas of modernizing public management philosophy, as research on public management philosophy is relatively scarce (Jiang et al., 2020). From the perspective of modernization, this paper tries to show a basic framework of modernizing public management philosophy in China.

The remainder of this article will be developed as follows: Section 2 from the direction of the primary guidance, core framework, and reasonable interpretation to elaborate the theoretical basis of the modernization of public management philosophy. Section 3 from the objective needs, subjective dynamics, and institutional advantages to analyzing the endogenously driven force of modernizing public management philosophy. Section 4 from the internal and external circulation of public management and the benign interaction between the two perspectives to make a tentative inquiry into the ideas of modernizing public management philosophy. Section 5 summarizes the conclusions.

## **2. Theoretical Basis of Modernizing Public Management Philosophy**

Based on the construction practice of the new development pattern currently being carried out in China, using the epistemology of dialectical materialism, the comprehensive social contract theory and the dialectical principle of internal and external causes (Yan et al., 2018), this chapter analyzes the theoretical basis of modernizing public management philosophy in directional guidance, primary structure and rational interpretation.

### **2.1 Dialectical materialism epistemology: directional guidance**

The conception of new ideas for modernizing public management philosophy may be tentative. For a long time, research on public management philosophy has been criticized by the academic and practical circles as it seems impossible to solve practical problems in public management practice. Nevertheless, this is not the case. As a philosophical reflection and a continued exploration of the ultimate purpose of public management practices, the common good should be the supreme target of public management philosophy. Therefore, modernizing public management philosophy is an attempt that aims to achieve and defend the common good. Circular inquiry is a boost that could promote the process of modernization according to the current practice carried out in China (Wang et al., 2020). Likewise, the theory of management philosophy nurtured from this will undoubtedly promote the further development and virtuous circle of various public management practices in China.

### **2.2 Comprehensive social contract theory: primary structure**

In the early 1990s, Thomas Donaldson and Thomas Dunphy proposed a novel theory to efficiently deal with ethical conflicts in global business activities (Duane, 2018), that is, integrated social contract theory, based on inheriting the theoretical achievements of many outstanding philosophers from Aristotle to Rawls. The integrated social contract theory divides the social contract into the "super-norm" (the highest norm), the macro-social contract, and the micro-social contract, pointing out and arguing that there is a "moral freedom space" in two areas (between the highest norm and the macro-social contract, between the macro-social contract and the micro-social contract). Under the premise of fully drawing on the analytical logic of the comprehensive social contract theory, following the guidance of dialectical materialist epistemology, Thomas divided the management principles into three categories: "ultra-macro" management norms, macro-management principles and micro-management standards, which correspond to the global dimension, a country dimension and a particular industry dimension in a specific country. At the same time, the transitional space between "ultra-macro" management norms and macro-management principles, the relatively independent transitional space between macro-management principles and micro-management standards, could be further distinguished into "contract-based discretionary space" and "collaborative discretionary space".

Although posterity has criticized the comprehensive social contract theory because of its philosophical basis as agnosticism, its maximum universality and strong operability make it have relatively tenacious vitality. As for public management philosophy, modernization is not a single moment (Chowdhury et al., 2019). It is a process from the micro-stage to the "ultra-macro" phase. Referring to the classification criteria above, the modernization of public management philosophy could be distributed into micro-stage, the first transitional period, macro-stage, the second transitional period and the "ultra-macro" stage.

### **2.3 Dialectical principle of internal and external causes: reasonable interpretation**

Internal factors drive the development and change of things, while External factors are indispensable conditions (Martynshyn, 2020). In China, a new idea of "circular inquiry" and the national "dynamic cycle within macro-stage" should be regarded as the main body and centre of

public management philosophy because the emotional cycle within the macro-stage has played a crucial role in promoting its development. While giving priority to the development of a series of studies around the "internal dynamic cycle of Chinese macro-stage", more scholars should also be encouraged to carry out tentative exploration on "how to participate in the external dynamic cycle reasonably" and "how to coordinate the relationship between the internal and external", to more scientifically and reasonably promote the development of the modernization in Chinese public management philosophy.

### **3. Endogenously driven force of modernizing public management philosophy**

With the continuous change of public management activities and managerial theories at the international and domestic level, modernizing public management philosophy research faces unprecedented new challenges and potential opportunities. The key to declining barriers and seizing chances is building an endogenously driven force by casting the market demand, enhancing the subjective driven force, and cultivating the institutional advantages.

#### **3.1 Cast the objective needs**

The endogenously driven force for further development of public management philosophy lies in the objective needs. In China, the government has the responsibility to tap the objective needs and its potential by reasonably guiding various industries to create more job opportunities and specific jobs related to public management philosophy. In this way, the barrier-free circulation and circulation of knowledge and talents in "government management—social users—enterprises—universities—scientific research institutions" are entirely open (Qian et al., 2020). In addition, based on appropriately improving the treatment of researchers and practitioners of public management philosophy, the evaluation mechanism for practitioners should be adjusted promptly. Such as gradually tilting the evaluation mechanism from mainly relying on scientific research results or theoretical achievements to "transformation of practical achievements".

#### **3.2 Enhance the subjective motivation**

The endogenously driven force for the sustainable development of modernizing Chinese public management philosophy strengthens the subjective driven force by further strengthening students' ideological and political education in colleges and universities, especially students majoring in public administration philosophy, cultivating the sense of mission and responsibility, stimulating the enthusiasm and initiative of students in related majors to engage in public management philosophy research and relevant work. At the same time, paying more attention to students' independent creativity and encouraging them to reflect, discuss, and interpret the management theories that guide public management activities from a philosophical perspective. In addition, we should keep an eye on importing proper scholarship systems to strengthen the subjective driven force.

#### **3.3 Cultivate institutional advantages**

The endogenously driven force for the scientific development of modernizing Chinese public management philosophy lies in cultivating institutional advantages. Building a sound system to encourage and support the study of public management philosophy will mobilize the enthusiasm and initiative of all potential individuals and gather strong synergies, inject vital creativity and vitality to promote the new idea of research on public management philosophy. "Studying for whom" and "how to link research with practice" are two core issues waiting for further discussion. Firstly, the study should serve the fundamental interests of the public. It is not a "self-entertaining dialogue" in the field of public management philosophy. In carrying out modernization, we must prioritise "research for the public good, research for a better practice". Secondly, although the study should maintain its consistent academic nature, it should also closely connect with the public

management practice. Because theory comes from practice, practice is the main criterion for testing a theory's correctness.

#### **4. Methods for modernizing public management philosophy**

With the rapid development of artificial intelligence technology and its wide application in national governance and enterprise management, the pace of modernization has been accelerated to a large extent. At the same time, research on "management modernization" is developing in-depth. At the beginning of this century, academic communities have carried out a series of explorations on the evolution of management philosophy and have achieved many constructive results. However, as an emerging interdisciplinary discipline in management or philosophy, public management philosophy has not yet received enough attention and development (Chi, 2017). The present studies focused more on enterprise and industrial management philosophy, while research on public management and global governance philosophy tends to be less active. Therefore, it is increasingly necessary to explore the framework of management philosophy in public management or global governance.

##### **4.1 Explore the internal cycle mainly**

Based on the current development status of public management, micro-stage and their main problems, it is possible to seek solutions in the theoretical and practical dimensions. The first method is to take "exploring the dynamic cycle" as the main body. The virtuous circle and interaction (between the internal and external micro-stage) is the main component and core driven force. Promoting positive interaction within the micro-stage is regarded as the primary task. The key to promoting internal circulation is strengthening the positive interaction inside the macro-stage. Macro-stage is composed of the domestic micro-stage, so the benign "self-circulation" within the micro-stage and the delicate "mutual-circulation" within the macro-stage are organically combined to form a dynamic cycle of public management. The benign "self-circulation" is the premise of the internal dynamic cycle, which should be paid attention to and promoted first. The virtuous "mutual-circulation" is the core of the internal dynamic cycle, which should be highly valued. However, the construction of the linkage system within public management has been neglected and needs to be further improved. Based on this, it can be boldly speculated that the construction of a linkage system for strengthening the positive interaction will become a new research direction in public management philosophy.

##### **4.2 Investigating the external environment partly**

The second method is to actively participate in the "external circulation" and attach great importance to it. Taking part in the "external cycle" is not equivalent to taking part without principles. According to the primary conditions of the country and its development status, defending the fundamental interests should be regarded as a bottom line for every participant. Although many "hyper-macro" management norms constrain governments' behaviour worldwide, their combined force is usually minimal and often becomes a tool of hegemonism. Therefore, the commitment to research "how to strengthen the combined force of 'ultra-macro' management norms" has become an urgent problem to be overcome in front of public management philosophy. For now, overcoming this problem is not something that can be done by one country, and it requires international coordination and joint exploration of ways to solve it.

##### **4.3 Analyze the interaction between inside and outside simultaneously**

The third method analyses the benign interaction between the internal and external cycles. The interaction generates an influence that cannot be ignored, and this influence will rely on the internal circulation of the "ultra-macro" stage to achieve a direct or indirect, positive or negative impact on public management in various countries. Therefore, coordinating the relationship between the

internal and external cycles is essential, followed by encouraging a series of exploration activities theoretically or practically, summarizing a set of breakthrough guidelines conducive to safeguarding the country's fundamental interests.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper explains the modernization of public management philosophy in the order of theoretical basis, endogenous driven force and research methods. Firstly, the theoretical basis of modernizing public management philosophy is elaborated in more detail from the following aspects: direction guidance, primary structure and reasonable interpretation. Secondly, the endogenously driven force is more comprehensively analyzed through three different levels, namely objective demand, subjective motivation, and institutional advantages. Finally, combined with the endogenous logic of Chinese new development pattern and the development status of public management philosophy, the methods of modernizing public management philosophy are expounded as follows: exploring the internal cycle mainly, investigating the external environment partly, and analyzing the interaction between inside and outside public management simultaneously.

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