

# [Article analysis: philippine public administration](https://assignbuster.com/article-analysis-philippine-public-administration/)

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Corpuz, Onofre. (1986). “ Is There a Philippine Public Administration?”. Reprinted from Philippine Journal of Public Administration 30 (4) (October 1986): 368-382.

An Article Critique

In his article entitled “ Is There a Philippine Public Administration?”, Dr. Onofre Corpuz attempts to explain and define the scope of government as he believes that this is crucial to establishing the scope of one’s personal life, which ought to remain private and “ inviolable from public invasion”. He writes, “ The fact that the scope of government has not been discussed is not strange”. As such, the article focuses on the role of government and its scope in an effort to answer the fundamental question concerning the existence of a “ Philippine” Public Administration. Although the essay has no explicit “ yes” or “ no” answer to the question at hand, it goes without saying that there is indeed a Philippine Public Administration inasmuch as there are major Philippine institutions that shape such, to wit: education, politics, and government.

By looking into the logical development of the ideas presented in the article, it can be said that the author’s way of putting his message across is descriptive, historical, and discursive. In explaining the transition of each Philippine institution, the author employs details of different regimes in Philippine history and links them to the question at hand. It is also discursive because the author spends a lot of time dealing with several details that are only slightly connected with the article’s main thesis.

On Philippine education, he asserts that history and science are the weakest aspects, which I think is evident in the status quo. The book of Ferdinand Marcos entitled “ Tadhana”, which was written in 1976, is also mentioned in the article. Corpuz implies that the latter is not reminiscent of the true history of the Filipinos inasmuch as its main characters are foreigners and majority of the people that it features are Spaniards. He describes the Filipinos’ lack of a sense of history as “ fateful” and the sense of nationhood in the civil service as “ fuzzy”. He also mentions how media continues to influence a large number of audience at present, laments over the way we treat standards of precision and quality, and explains the repercussions of the government’s act of neglecting the Bureau of Standards. He writes, “ It is the same reason for the fantasy of having many intellectuals in the country”.

On Philippine politics, the author briefly reminisces the Filipinos’ past experiences under the Spanish regime. During this period, the author writes, “ The Filipinos were deprived of any meaningful experience in the politics of civil government”. The gobernadorcillos or town mayors, who were chosen from the upper class, were nothing more than figureheads of the Spaniards. Yet, beyond the politics of civil government, the local upper class developed its own politics, which was the pueblo religious fiesta. Members of prominent pueblo families competed for a post called “ hermano mayor”, the one who sponsors and presides over the celebrations. Efforts and personal expenditures were necessary to achieve this in exchange for few days of personal glory.

The author argues that the main objective of the politics of civil government is to serve the general welfare of the community, which is far different from the politics of the fiesta that only seeks personal success and that of the family, after one prevails over his opponents. In other words, the goal of the former is entirely public, while the goal of the latter is clearly private. The author argues that this kind of politics, which is only contested by the people of the upper class as it keeps average people out, remains evident at present and even became the basis during the American period.

On Philippine government, the author describes the quality of public administration during the American period as manifested by the way equipment, from tables and tools to books, were kept by property officers. However, the American regime was only limited as its only purpose was to govern the country as a colony, thereby maintaining “ US presence” in the East. During this period, not all levels of education were funded by the national government. For example, elementary schools were run by municipal governments. Despite all these, the traditional structure of Philippine society remained with the principalia on top and the common people below them. Because the Americans have introduced the concept of “ popular elections”, they thought they have already established a “ working democracy”. The achievement of autonomy in 1935 marked the emergence of Filipino concepts of politics and government. The author mentions the expansion of the national government as it has taken full control of Philippine educational institutions. The author also talks about how “ connections” between private businessmen and politicians developed during the time when private enterprises were regulated by the government. The author writes, “ Even in the best of times, public administration cannot perform its roles well”.

In his immortal argument, the author asserts, “ The period of nationhood is much shorter than the history of colonial experience”. Despite this, the author still believes that the kind of public administration that exists in the country is truly Filipino, citing the concept of political padrinos and the one-man leadership in political parties. Furthermore, he talks about the Civil Service Commission and the defects inherent in this constitutional commission. He argues that problems related to public administration remains pervasive as our political culture has failed to regard civil service as the “ foundation of government”. He even compares the civil service to the Pasig River, which, as we all know, is biologically dead. In the end, the author implies the need to improve the public administration in the country as it is the only way to attain development for the people. According to Corpuz, the only good thing is the fact that the entirety of the people’s lives is not yet covered by the scope of government, which means that we can still pursue our personal interests privately. He ends his article with a goal, “ to have a public administration that is an image of higher ideals and values”.

Overall, it can be said that this article has contributed a lot to the present state of Philippine Public Administration as it provides a clear background of the major institutions that continue to influence this field. According to Brillantes and Fernandez (2008), this is one of the two essays used in the introductory course in Public Administration both at the graduate and undergraduate level; the other essay is that of Dr. Raul De Guzman. This alone proves the fact that indeed, this article serves as a major reference of almost all researches or studies in the field of Public Administration at present, which is why Dr. Corpuz is considered an eminent scholar of the said field.

Although the author has properly substantiated his claim regarding the existence of a Philippine Public Administration, it can’t be denied that he has not clearly answered all the major questions raised at the beginning of his essay. As I have said earlier, the article seems to be discursive because it deals with a lot of things that are not relevant to the main thesis. I have also observed the lack of a smooth transition between paragraphs in the article. It appears as if every sub-heading was not connected to each other as they were discussed independently. Even in the article’s concluding statements, the scope of government, which the author ought to define, remains unclear, although the question regarding the scope of private life was partly addressed. What readers are sure about is the fact that the public administration that exists in the country is indeed Filipino.

To improve this article, it would be better if answers to the questions raised in the introductory part were explicitly given, not implied. Also, I think that the use of figurative language (I refer to the choice of words) is counterproductive insofar as comprehensibility is concerned. In other words, I think there is a need to simplify the article in order to easily put its message across various readers. It would also be better if the author defined the scope of every institution as basis for the scope of the entire government, which remains poorly defined, so to speak.