

Module 1

An Introduction to the Study of Administrative Systems

Introduction

This module is an introduction to the study of public administration as a field of study in a global context. Public administration is a relatively new field of study even though the existence of a public administration as an arm of government has been around for centuries. It is a particularly interesting subject of inquiry because of its interdisciplinary nature, and because it applies theory to actual practice. Good public administration is not only important to the smooth functioning of government; it is a critical component of fostering democracy and social cohesion.

In this module we will set the stage for analysing existing administrative practices and creating new ones that promote societal goals. We will also look at the:

- history of public administration as a field of study
- contemporary context of public administration (a context that is changing rapidly with globalisation, economic integration)
- emergence of internet communication technologies (ICTs)
- growing importance of civil society (and in particular, global civil society).

The module concludes with a look at different aspects of the study of public administration, which includes comparative/developmental administration and policy development.

Upon completion of this module you will be able to:



Outcomes

- *critique* the assumptions that differentiate administrative theory.
- *identify* the major changes to the global environment in which public administration is practiced and *discuss* the implications of these changes for public administration.
- *explain* the difference between government and governance.
- *debate* the merits of the ideological and pragmatic shift away from administration toward governance.
- *differentiate* between approaches to policy and analysis and *explain* how these are applied.

Terminology



Terminology

Governance	As the public sphere contracts, sharing of decision-making between public and the private and non-profit sectors results in the blurring of boundaries among them.
Welfare state	In response to the Great Depression and World War II, western governments became active in providing economic stabilisation policies and providing a social safety net.
Globalisation	The growing interconnectedness on an international scale and the declining relevance of international boundaries. It has many dimensions including economic, political, social, cultural, environmental and communications, the latter of which involves the compression of time and space (in other words, geography becomes irrelevant with instantaneous communication).
Neoliberalism	An ideology highly critical of the welfare state and 'big government' because of its interference in the free market. It involves a shift in decision-making power from the state to the private market.
Civil society	The space between public life (the government) and private life (the market and the family).
Non-governmental organisation (NGO)	Organisations that serve either the public or a defined membership whose goal is not profit-

making but rather to serve the public good.

E-governance

Government employment of digital technology to communicate and interact with citizens.

New Public Management (NPM)

A package of technical innovations to public sector management that are tied to neoliberal ideas of the lean state that facilitates free market activity.

Public administration as a field of study and as practice

Public administration is not a new concept; it has been in existence for millennia. One need only look at the empires that existed in ancient world – Persian, Macedonian, Egyptian, Roman and Mauryan to realise that such large governing organisations needed some sort of bureaucracy to function. Rajeshwar Trikha (2009) notes that bureaucracy refers to

...the way legal rules are socially organised. Four structural concepts are central to any definition of bureaucracy:

- a well-defined division of administrative labour among persons and offices
- a personnel system with consistent patterns of recruitment and stable linear careers
- a hierarchy among offices, such that the authority and status are differentially distributed among actors, and
- formal and informal networks that connect organisational actors to one another through flows of information and patterns of cooperation (Triksa, 2009).

Bureaucracies of some sort exist within all large organisational structures, regardless of whether they are in the “public” or the “private” sector. Public administration, however, is more than just a bureaucracy because of its relationship to the political system.

Public administration has long been a function of political systems. Politicians make decisions that by definition are political. Turning these decisions into policies, that can actually be implemented, remains the domain of public administration. As a field of study, however, public administration has come about very recently. The systematic study of public administration started in Western Europe about the eighteenth century with thinkers like John Stuart Mill. It took hold in the United States in the latter part of the nineteenth century; the influence of American scholars in the development of the study in this area has been substantial.



Public administration is currently a well-recognised area of study, either as an area of study within the field of political science or as its own academic discipline. Despite growing research in public administration over the last decades, there is no consensus on the scope of this field of study, or whether it should be applied or academic in focus. As a consequence, there is no short and easy explanation or definition of the field. But clearly, if theory is to be helpful to practitioners, it must conceptualise as theory for practice. In the same vein, an applied approach to practice will prove inadequate in dealing with moral-ethical concerns that are more abstract. This course argues that both approaches to the study public administration are important.

Similarly, the natural, intellectual home of public administration provides good basis for debate. Some argue that the distinction between public and private management is so minimal, that the emphasis should be on management. As such, public administration belongs in business schools under the title “public management.” Others argue that the public nature of government management underscores its inherently political nature. Thus, the study of public administration is most naturally done within the discipline of political science. While this debate remains unresolved, public administration is distinct because the consumers of its policies are citizens within a political community, as opposed to simply being customers of a service.

That said you can consider public administration as a particular subset of the more general concept of administration. Administration has been defined as “determined action taken in pursuit of conscious purpose” (Marx, 1963). This conceptualisation also assumes that administration involves more than one person and that there is a need for co-operation among individuals to accomplish the goals or objectives. More precisely, “administration is concerned with a means to the achievement of prescribed ends” (Heady, 1996).

Separating politics from administration

As noted earlier, public administration takes place within a political setting. It is primarily focused on carrying out public policy decisions made by decision-makers through the political system. In the early days of the study of public administration, there was an attempt to make a clear distinction between those who made the policy decisions (politicians) and those who implemented them (the public servants). The politicians were held accountable to citizens for these decisions through the processes of voting; while their specific expertise in a policy area, it is their role to figure out what the public interest is. Because governments often change, politicians come and go. Public servants, on the other hand, represent stability; they are professional administrators who have specialised expertise in a particular area. They are hired on the basis of

merit as opposed to political connections; they remain in their positions when their political masters change. Unlike politicians who take both the credit and the blame for government policy, administrators remain in the background and are shielded from the changing tides of public opinion. At the higher levels of administration, their role is to provide advice and guidance to politicians; at the lower levels their job is to implement policies.

This neat and tidy view of the division between creating and implementing policy does not, however, reflect the very untidy process of running a government. The dominant view today is that public administration includes not only policy-making (the formulation of public policy) but also the implementation or execution of that public policy. While the politician perched at the top of the organisational pyramid sets general policy, the creation of the actual policy occurs at lower levels of the public service. Policies are evaluated and modified through a complex public administration system. Factors acting on the public policy process include legal, personal, institutional, political, and environmental realities. As such, small decisions that are made in the course of figuring out how to implement policy can in fact be considered to be policy decisions themselves. Thus it is difficult to clearly delineate between policy-making and policy-implementation. This conceptual fuzziness has recently been exacerbated by the fuzziness around who undertakes activities that have traditionally been the exclusive preserve of the state.

Governance, civil society and non-governmental organisations

In recent decades, the term governance increasingly is used to describe the activities of government. With respect to theories of public administration, governance de-centres “the state” by removing it from the position of having a monopoly of social control (exercised using defined structures) that enables it to “steer” the direction of society. Governance recognises the plurality of rules and actors that influence society; societal “steering” thus becomes a networked process of negotiations amongst societal units whose position in the power structure is not fixed. Actors exchange information and negotiate rules and processes for managing common affairs.

Governance does not suggest that groups within society have equal access to societal resources, and, to power. It does, however, acknowledge that in a networked world, the state does not have a monopoly on social control. Where once civil society (defined as the network or relationships that exist outside the state, market, and family) was not considered important politically, now it is recognised that the associational relationships that exist in this arena are part of a dense thicket of relationships that influence the direction of the policy process.



Typically, civil society consists of organisations such as of trade associations, employer’s federations, professional associations, NGOs (non-governmental, non-political organisations that bring people together for a common cause), CBOs (community-based organisations or grass root organisations), and religious communities.

The growing importance of civil society groups is not seen in a negative light, indeed, as we will see in module two, states actually encourage “citizen engagement” to help them navigate the complex terrain of civil society. More complex social problems in an increasingly politically plural world mean that the activities of the state are increasingly horizontal in nature, and, these activities are occurring within partnerships with private and not for profit organisations. International not-for-profits, or as they are more commonly called, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have become prominent as a conduit for aid and development. The term governance underscores the blurring of the lines delineating the boundaries of the state, the private sector, and civil society.

NGOs in Britain first emerged as a response to the poverty created by the dislocation of the industrial revolution. Charitable groups emerged that sought to provide support for the “deserving poor:” widows, orphans, etc. As such, the alleviation of poverty was aimed at the symptoms of social dislocation as opposed to its root causes. Notions of social justice, equality and redistribution did not enter the conversation.

With the growth of the welfare state in the West after World War II (WWII), the charitable function of these groups was increasingly taken over by governments. This is not to suggest that the numbers of NGOs decreased after WWII. Indeed, the opposite is true, particularly in the 1990s: the numbers of NGOs in western democracies dramatically increased and they assumed an important advocacy role. In contrast, the Communist bloc and totalitarian countries suppressed the advocacy role of NGOs; NGOs were more or less extensions of the state. This legacy has resulted in far less NGO presence in those countries than in the West. The most dramatic growth in NGOs, however, has been in the global south.

The growth of NGOs can be attributed to the fact that civil society is increasingly viewed as not only a government watchdog; it also acts as a social partner in governance. At best, it is actively involved in policy development and implementation, as well as acting as a stabilising force among government, business, and citizens. The growth of NGOs in the global south is a result of the emphasis that international development and aid agencies, such as the United Nations Development Programme and sister organisations such as the World Bank put on partnerships between civil society organisations and governments. These partnerships

are seen as being in the interests of good governance. These international organisations link economic and social stability to the increasing role that non-governmental organisations play in development. In fact, assistance offered to nations may even be dependent on steps taken to strengthen the civil society organisations and their level of participation in democratic government. These international development organisations often directly work with civil society organisations in such countries. Essentially, active citizen participation in the affairs of the state is seen as an indicator of a healthy polity.

The growth of NGOs worldwide coincided with the thaw of east-west relations, a time that also coincided with globalisation and the retraction of the welfare state. NGOs became increasingly active internationally, as advocates in the area of human, gender, and indigenous rights; as well as important organisations in the sphere of development and aide distribution. Domestically, governments were looking for ways of downsizing and outsourcing; much of their service capacity was contracted to NGOs. This coincided with dramatic reductions in grants to NGOs and increasing demands for closer scrutiny with respect to how government money is spent. As NGOs began to rely increasingly on contracts as opposed to grants for revenues, the reporting and accountability requirements have become an increasing burden, given that most suffer from chronic underfunding. Thus NGOs are caught in a difficult situation; they have had to deal with the loss of revenue when state's cut grants by relying more heavily on contracts for service that require more agency to time to fulfil audit requirements, thus increasing the need for revenue. While NGOs might be providing some of the service functions of the state, it does so with distinct disadvantages.

Neoliberalism and sectoral convergence

Governance relates not only to the increasing fuzziness between the public and NGO sectors, but also to the blurring of the boundary between the public and private sectors. It also relates to shifting ideologies about how to best achieve the public good. Keynesian economic ideas came to prominence in the latter part of the Great Depression in the 1930s and held sway until the stagflation of the 1970s. According to Keynes (1936), there was a place for the state to intervene in the economy, particularly in times of recession. This assumption led to the post-war expansion of the welfare state. By the 1970s, the inability of governments to manage stagnating economies beset by inflation led to the growing popularity of neoliberal thought. Increasing economic integration, globalisation, and transnational companies and regulatory bodies also posed a challenge to governments as the sovereignty of the state diminished. The focus of neoliberal thought meshed well with the globalisation phenomenon; both focus on the individual, who is connected to others as an individual, as opposed to through a third party.



Neoliberalism is based on the assumption that the collective good is best achieved when the freedom of each individual to maximise his or own private good is protected. The ascendance of neoliberalism resulted in the retraction of both the size and the activities of the western welfare state. The current importance of NGOs with respect to the service delivery function of the state is a consequence of three decades of neoliberal thought that put the welfare state in retreat, in favour of smaller and leaner government. NGOs often stepped in to fill the void – or in some cases, were pushed into that role. Specifically, as government grants dried up, NGOs began to rely on government contracts as an important component of their revenue streams.

The changing role of government that has been brought on by globalisation can be understood as the “hollowing out” of the nation-state. These new neoliberal states are ceding power to lower levels and supra-national institutions of governance, as well as to private and non-profit groups. As a result, the tools available to states to make and implement policies contract, and as such, many observers argue that public policies of various states can be expected to converge.

On the political front, there has been a huge growth in the numbers and activities of international agencies, such as the United Nations (UN), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and regional bodies such as the European Union. These bodies have transnational regulatory authority. This authority also encourages policy convergence.

On the economic front, the power of the state is increasingly challenged by transnational business for which national boundaries are increasingly irrelevant. Many of these multinationals have bigger budgets than states, and as such, can have great influence on the direction of national and regional economies. The power of the state is also challenged by market power, as decision-makers increasingly grapple with globally-focused issues such as how to make their economies competitive on the international stage. States are made more vulnerable to these supra-national forces because of the speed with which financial capital can move from one country to another. States become less able to control their discrete national economies as these economies becoming enmeshed in the global networks. Again, these phenomena further encourage policy convergence.

These developments are part of a new trend that sees states focusing on new priorities and assuming new roles; in the process they are being transformed from the post-WWII welfare state to the “national competitive state.” As Joachim Hirsch (1997, p. 45) observes “This type of state concentrates on the mobilization of all productive forces for the purpose of international competition, setting aside the former politics of materially based social and political integration”. In other words, the

politics are being taken out of government as the focus is on efficiency defined in economic terms.

This type of state focus is part of a larger ideological change that sees the proper role of government being restricted to activities that are apolitical or technical. This necessarily downplays a role for the in facilitating social construction that promotes inclusion, equity and equality. Instantaneous communication, the transnational character of most economic and political functions, the emphasis on a smaller, learner bureaucratic state combine to produce a new approach to public administration, encapsulated by what is referred to as the New Public Management (NPM). This idea of administration in the public sector is premised on the idea that small government is good government, and relies heavily on management insights from the private sector. Briefly, this approach emphasises productivity through competition that is achieved by contracting out service provision to the private sector or to non-profit organisations. The strengths and weaknesses of the NPM will be discussed in considerable detail in module three.

The emergence of ICTs and e-governance

Another profound change in public administration in the last few decades is the popularity of digital governance, or e-governance. Internet communication technologies (ICTs) not only enhance the efficiency of government by delivering information and services to citizens quickly, easily, and cost-effectively, it has the side benefit of enhancing transparency and engaging citizens by soliciting their input. Most importantly, it can cut through unnecessary bureaucratic delays and decrease corruption by empowering citizens in their interaction with government, particularly with respect to accessing information. These themes will be covered in more depth in module 4.

Some countries such as India have embraced the benefits of e-governance by providing legal recognition for transactions involving the exchange of electronic data. The *Information Technology Act of 2000 of India* has been described as "...a watershed in conceptualising administrative reform in India." (Chakrabarty and Bhattacharya, 2008, p. 52). Because citizens can now view various acts online, and they can connect with the bureaucracy via email, transparency and citizen input can be seen as being bundled up into one model, thus allowing citizens to serve as 'watch dogs' of government activities. Unfortunately, the applicability of e-governance in the global south is limited by citizen access to the internet. Wholesale adoption of ICT-based procedures would effectively marginalise those who do not have access to technology.

ICTs are also changing the nature of bureaucracies themselves. Because they facilitate communications, ICTs increase the span of control. For those people in the lower levels of the organisation, however, ICTs



provide an important tool for exchanging information. An important feature of the traditional bureaucratic structures is the ever increasingly concentration of institutional knowledge as one moves up the pyramid. The ease with which ICTs allow the sharing of information makes the control of information much more difficult.

Finally, ICTs have had a profound impact on civil societies, particularly in the global south. In the past, only the small ruling elite in these countries sought to emulate the lifestyles of those in the global north. In combination with increasingly international mobility and education, ICTs allows the spread of western thought and consumption patterns. The latter focus on consumer goods has fuelled rising expectations amongst those within the global south. As Trikha (2009) explains: “Some of the most intractable problems facing developing countries have involved attempts to eliminate basic inequalities, and inequities in society. Thus, considerable attention has been given to developing mechanisms to deal with competition among groups for wealth and participation in decision – making” (p. 91).

The proceeding overview of the contemporary environment in which public administration operates illustrates some of the causes of the dramatic changes in both the theory and practice of public administration in the last few decades. Economic integration, globalisation, ICTs, and the rise to prominence of neoliberal ideology have caused us to rethink the relationship between the state and the civil society in which it is embedded. With respect to practice, the most tangible output of public administration is government policies; this area is another field of studies within public administration which will be taken up at the end of this module.

Toward an understanding of administrative studies

Comparative/development administration

Another way of understanding public administration is by comparing and contrasting the study of administration across national borders. Comparative administration focuses on a more comprehensive view about the scope of public administration than was commonly accepted in the United States pre-World War II.

After the war, Americans became more interested in administrative structures elsewhere due to their concern over the spread of communism. Moreover, Robert Dahl (1947) argued that for public administration to be considered a science, it would be necessary for a set of propositions, assumptions, or generalised principles be made about administrative behaviour, that transcend national boundaries. The demand for a more scientific inquiry meant that a comparative study could no longer be limited to America and the European nations. Instead, formulating

general principles about administration had to include the diversity of national systems such as a number of newly independent nations and administrations in former and current Communist countries.

The post war period saw many countries around the world throw off the yoke of imperial rule, becoming independent sovereign nations. Post-colonial nations in the global south were categorised as “the third world,” whose development needed urgent changes to administrative structures, processes and behaviours. The focus of change was on the administrative state, because development was conceived as being state-led.

Development administration was focused mainly on stimulating and facilitating programs designed for social and economic progress. In 1976 Rogers argued that development could be conceived as a “...widely participatory process of directed social change in society intended to bring about both social and material advancement including greater equality, freedom and other valued qualities for the majority of the people through their gaining greater control over their environment.”

While the goal of progress through change might be common to all countries, each and every country has its own problems to address given its particular context. Generally speaking, however, the change would come through planning economic growth in order to expand national income. Change was not limited to the economy, however, it also included the political, social and cultural; it is a process of social change.

Comparative public administration became synonymous with development administration. The term development administration is typically attributed to being first used by the Indian scholar U.L. Goswami in 1955, though the elaboration of the concept was undertaken by the American scholar George Grant. According to Grant (1979), development should be thought of as a relative condition, where no country ever qualifies as being fully developed. In this course, the term “global north” is used in place of “developed” or “first world” and “global south” is used to describe the “developing” or “third world.” While these terms may not be completely geographically accurate descriptors, they reinforce Grant’s understanding that development is an ongoing process. It also reflects the fact that the post-war binary categories of “developed” and “developing” do not reflect the complexities of an integrated and global economy that is changing rapidly, particularly with respect to the distribution of political and economic power (Shrivastava & Stefanick, forthcoming 2014).

Originally, development administration focused on the support and management of development separate from the administration of the rule-of-law and its application (Grant, 1979). Grant also indicates that development administration is to be distinguished from, although related to, other aspects of public administration. According to Trikha (2009):



... a shared colonial legacy has given global south nations a shared commitment to three goals:

1. Survival of the state, strengthening economic and political independence.
2. Modernization of the economy through industrialization, the application of science and technology, changes in socioeconomic relations/behaviour.
3. Increased participation in institutions of government with the goal of promoting political equality and collective and individual rights. (p. 91)

The central problem becomes, how does a nation achieve these goals? For those studying public administration, what are the independent variables to be studied that might shed some light on what makes nations successful or not? Ferrel Heady (1996) argued that the best framework for comparing and analysing public administration in different countries included the following:

1. the characteristics and behaviours of public administrators, including their motivations and conduct of behaviour throughout the administrative process;
2. the institutional arrangements for carrying out large scale government organising and action;
3. the relationship of an administrative system to the political system from which it stems.

From 1962 until about 1972, the comparative administrative movement was at its peak. The Comparative Administrative Group (CAG) was funded from the Ford Foundation through a grant to the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA). The primary interest of the Ford Foundation was on administrative problems faced by global south countries. The CAG was expected to study these problems in the context of the socio-economic environmental factors that existed in those countries. The Ford Foundation had a strong development administration focus and was interested in transferring knowledge to these countries through technical assistance projects and domestically-based development within targeted countries.

Several studies carried out during this time were based on regions, such as Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Other studies were based on themes, such as urban studies, international administration, and comparative legislative studies. At the same time, many of these studies were being published and taught in seminars by the CAG. There was also an increase in university and college course offerings in comparative and development administration, in both the United States, and elsewhere.

The comparative administrative movement continued the expansion of what was started post World War II. This is most clearly seen in the enduring influence of the large-scale post-war effort to export administrative knowledge through both unilateral and multilateral technical assistance projects. The CAG inherited this legacy and continued it, along with a host of other nations from Europe and elsewhere.

The most important trait of comparative administration literature during this period was the focus on the continued search for a comprehensive theory, based on an inter-disciplinary approach. A criticism of public administration as a whole is that it had failed to establish itself as a field of study with an accepted range of topics to be looked at. In addition, the lack of focus for the field resulted in the inability to empirically test existing theories.

It should be noted at this juncture that comparative public administration really meant comparing countries around the world (“the other” to the American system. This comparison was based on western assumptions. As Trikha (2009) notes: “...efficiency is culture specific, and modernist-secularist, Weberian, linked to the advancement of production.” The American system of government is premised on the diffusion of power through the creation of a “checks and balance” system. The separation of power amongst the legislative, executive and judicial branch is enshrined in the American constitution. Yet this notion is diametrically opposed to the experience and needs of many, if not most, of the countries in the global south. The notion of the benevolent ruler who rules with the help of principled officers fit well with both traditional and colonial styles of administration. Control and stability are emphasised over equity and citizen engagement.

The legacy of the “strong leader” proved to be enduring, as institutional capacity is critical for any modernisation project, and the strongest institutions in many global south nations were the military and public administration. Given the overwhelming need and inadequate resources, a strong state was seen as critical to facilitate societal transformation and nation building. Hence the building of a strong state was seen as more important initially than the building of societal institutions.

Unfortunately, the demands on the fledgling states were such that this often resulted in an imbalance between state and societal institutional capacity. Without strong societal institutions to act as a counter balance, resources tend to concentrate within government, and the executive tends to dominate the legislatures and the judiciary, often to the point that constitutions are overridden.

Between 1970 and 1980, there was a decrease in interest and support for comparative public administration. The Ford Foundation grants to



American Society for Public Administration ended and no substitute financial sponsor in the United States materialised. In 1973, the CAG ended as an organisation. In general, there was a dramatic decrease in attention devoted to public administration as a category of technical assistance and aid. For example, by the 1970s, the United States reduced its public administration aid to less than half of what it had been in the mid-1960s. Instead, both international and American technical assistance shifted from administrative reforms to complex programs with an economic orientation to encourage indigenous economic growth, largely through policies developed jointly with domestic and foreign international agencies.

Reappraisals of existing comparative administration research also occurred during this time and focused on the results of a quarter century of research. Critics stated that comparative administration lagged far behind in using systematic research processes. Other closely related fields, such as political science and public administration, were more advanced in their research methods.

Criticism was also lodged against the underlying assumptions in development administration. These criticisms concerned the ability of governments to strengthen administrative capacities and carry out developmental objectives. The critics suggested that development should not be administered, since this is contrary to the important value of individual human choice as an alternative to intervention by the government. Other criticisms of development administration accused the CAG of over-identification with the development administrator and over-involvement in development programs. Also, some suggested that the true aim of administrative reform in the context of development administration was not really administrative reform, but rather political reform.

By the 1980s, the world system changed dramatically with the collapse of the USSR and the Eastern Bloc. The end of the cold war coincided with a brash enthusiasm for capitalism, and the simultaneous backlash of criticism directed at the state. In particular, critics decried the state's big, expensive bureaucratic structure that they claimed led to overdependence of the individual on the state for personal wellbeing. Neo-liberal notions of downsizing government became popular as a technique from freeing both citizens and the market from the yoke of the state. During this period, both environmental management and managerial decentralisation gained prominence.

Neoliberal ideas took hold within international institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). As key donor agencies for global south development, these institutions were anxious to "do something" with respect to encouraging economic development within

the global south, thereby reducing the possibility that those countries would default on huge accrued debts. In order for countries in the global south to be eligible for financial assistance, they were required to realign their socio-economic and political goals to those prescribed by the World Bank and other international agencies. These institutions touted the free flow of funds, goods and services as the best means to facilitate economic development. The emphasis on market solutions to economic problems requires depoliticising goals by obscuring the power differentials among societal actors.

Given the current dominance of the governance paradigm that emphasises the importance of non-state actors, it would seem that the traditional bureaucratic model of public administration is becoming less and less salient. Specifically, where the public service was organised around core public administration values in the 20th century; the 21st century's public service model centres on the networked organisation that embodies neo-liberal values. As Chakrabarty and Bhattacharya (2008) observe: "Globalisation has led to a "marriage" between corporate discipline and entrepreneurial spirit, with the government discarding its traditional image of "a doer." (p.19)

Seeking to accommodate the market impulse, the government has become an enabler. Indeed, some observers describe the state in even weaker terms: "the state has become a differentiated, fragmented, and multi-centred institutional complex that is held together by more or less formalised networks." (Sorensen & Torfing, 2007, p. 100)

The difficulty with this new conception of the networked state is that the complexity hinders transparency, and particular interests may have an advantage that is not easily seen, never mind acknowledged.

Some countries in the global south have done well in this deregulated environment; so much so that they are challenging the economic and political hegemony of western nations. There can be no doubt that the rise of China, India, and the "Asian tigers" (Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore and Hong Kong) marks a significant shift in the global political economy. Recently, the biggest concern with crippling government debt is with respect to the world's only superpower: the USA, which narrowly avoided falling off of the "fiscal cliff" in 2013. With annual deficits of over \$1 trillion per year for four years, the world watched while Barak Obama marshalled support for increasing taxes on the wealthy in order to lower the annual US deficit. As noted earlier, the binary conceptions of countries belonging to either the first world or the third world is becoming increasingly obsolete. With capital flowing fluidly around the globe, some sectors (and the people within them) in the first world global north are very economically depressed. Conversely, some sectors in the global south are very economically buoyant. Often, economic and social



stratification within a country far outstrips the differences amongst global south and north states (Shrivastava & Stefanick, forthcoming 2014).

What is also clear, however, is that the new world order works better for some countries than others. It is equally clear that the recent convergence of thought behind the benefits of neoliberal reform of institutions is in reality one more chapter in the history of public administration as an academic discipline. As Chakrabarty and Bhattacharya note, public administration "...was born with a bias toward change and reform." (2005, p. x). The documentation of these efforts to improve the performance of public sector institutions can be seen as systematic efforts by public administration scholars to conceptualise, categorise, and build theories of administrative reform. Comparative Public Administration of today thus does not look much like its post war cousin. Previously it could be described as being a top-down American-dominated scholarly analysis where reform ideas moved from "developed" to "developing" countries.

Today, development and reform is closer to that described by Grant. It is an ongoing process for all countries wherein they can learn from each other regardless of their place in the world's hierarchy of nations (Bowornwathana, 2010, p. 87). Scholars focus on the diffusion of reform ideas; they include practitioners and consultants and scholars from around the world within their ranks.

Studying policy development

In the 1960s, policy development emerged as a field of study with its own set of models and theories emerged as a response to increased interest and demand for policy analysis. Critics worried that the western governments' response to chronic problems was inadequate. In response, academic disciplines began to supply structured policy analysis.

Even as governments in countries such as the U.S. and Britain intervened through the development of policies and programs to remedy social problems such as poverty, it became obvious that there were no clear answers or simple solutions to developing effective policies. Given the increasingly dynamic and complex environment that policy-makers were expected to operate in, it became difficult to diagnose and define the problems. The policy development process was changing.

The public policy development process evolved within the context of various interacting elements. These include:

- an increased number of people involved in various stages of the policy process (e.g., various levels of governments and interest groups);

- the length of the policy process or cycle, (i.e., at least ten years from the emergence of a problem to the implementation and then evaluation of a program that results from a policy);
- different levels of government (federal, state/provincial, local) that must implement a given policy;
- hearings and debates that expose disputes in the course of developing legislation. These can be very technical in nature but very important in informing decisions;
- disputes over policy, often involving deeply-held beliefs, values, special interests, large amounts of money, and authoritative coercion in an increasingly diverse society.

The policy process requires knowledge of the goals and values of numerous participants as well as technical, scientific and legal issues over an extended period of time. During this time, the policy-makers themselves or their positions could change. Given the complexity of the process, a policy analyst must find methods to simplify and organise information about an issue or situation in order to understand it.

In 1960s, there was dissatisfaction within some academic circles with the limited contribution made by the social sciences to problem solving, and by extension, the policy process. Critics Hogwood and Gunn (1984) considered both research and teaching in this field to be overly academic and inward-looking—with more emphasis on method rather than on outcomes. This approach was seen as irrelevant to real and ever-changing social problems.

According to Hogwood and Gunn (1984), weaknesses in particular disciplines within the social sciences emerged:

- ***Political Science***
In political science, higher levels of generalisation in theories were being made at the cost of real problems. As such, some theories were irrelevant or out of touch with the reality.
- ***Public Administration***
Public administration was considered a stand-alone area of study (usually with a strong management bias) rather than a multi-disciplinary subject.
- ***Economics***
The concern in economics was the portrayal of the field as “scientific.” Academics developed abstract models to explain economic issues. Many of these abstract models ignored data from other social sciences that could provide them with information about the complexities of the real world and improve the usefulness of their models.



- **Management Studies**

Management studies were regarded as similar to business studies. This created an assumption that business models could be used to solve problems or improve efficiencies. However, such an assumption neglected the impact of political settings and underlying processes and human behaviours.

Today modern policy analysis involves a more applied and interdisciplinary approach to research, teaching, and training. That said, however, different people study public policy for different reasons. Broadly speaking, there are three approaches:

1. **the “social science” approach**, which is useful for explaining why a particular policy was developed. This approach is characterised by neutrality on the part of the social scientist with respect to the actual content of the policy; one does not have to agree with the actual policy to accept the explanation of why it was produced,
2. **the Normative Approach**, which is one that provides an assessment of the public policy in terms of such criteria as “fairness.” Social advocates and political philosophers use this approach, and
3. **the Policy Practitioner and Expert Perspective**. The goal of this approach is not to judge the policy based on a particular set of values, the goal is to make “good” decisions based on criteria derived from a particular area of expertise – be that scientific (e.g. what level of toxins hurt fish?) or managerial (e.g. do we have sufficient resources?).

Thus, to engage in policy analysis, one needs first to determine for whom and for what purpose the analysis is being done.

Module Summary



Summary

This module introduced you to public administration theory and practice. It traced the evolution of efforts to separate politics from administration, the growing importance of non-governmental organisations, the rise of neoliberalism and the contraction of the welfare state, the emergence of ICTS and e-governance, and the convergence of the public, private and not for profit sectors.

The module then reviewed the emergence of comparative/development administration and some of the critiques of the same. It also reviewed the influence of neoliberal ideas on international institutions, public administration, and the global political and economic systems. The module concluded with a discussion of public policy development.

Although public administration has long been a subset of political systems, it has only recently begun to take shape as an independent field of study, emerging out of an increased need to develop policies to solve social and other far-reaching problems. You should be aware that public administration as a field of study is interdisciplinary in its approach. The importance of defining the scope of study in public administration, which is constantly evolving, is particularly important today, as the public, private and not for profit sectors converge as a result of the contraction of the welfare state and the ascendance of neoliberalism.

Assessment



Assessment

Answer the following questions with reference to both the larger global context, as well as your local context. Ensure that you provide examples to illustrate your points.

1. Public administration is defined as both a political exercise and a managerial exercise. As such, discuss what the natural, intellectual home for public administration is.
2. Is the involvement of civil society in the making of public policy a positive or negative development for public administration?
3. Is the collective good best expressed through the market or through the state?
4. Has the rise of ICTs been a benefit to public administrators, or, the bane of their existence?
5. Can the modernisation of the institutions and economies of the global south occur without a “strong leader”? Can it be done without strong societal institutions?
6. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the networked state form. Is there any other option to this state form in a global, networked world?
7. Explain what is meant by: “to engage in policy analysis, one needs first to determine for whom and for what purpose the analysis is being done.”

References



References

- Bowornwathana, B. (2010). The Study of Comparative Public Administration: Future Trajectories and Prospects. In R. O'Leary, D. M. Van Slyke, & Soonhee Kim (Eds.), *The Future of Public Administration Around the World: The Minnowbrook Perspective*. Georgetown: University Press.
- Chakrabarty, B. & Bhattacharya, M. (2005). *Administrative Change and Innovation: A Reader*. New Delhi: Oxford Press.
- Chakrabarty, B. & Bhattacharya, M. (2008). *The Governance Discourse: A Reader*. New Delhi: Oxford Press.
- Dahl, R. (1947). The Science of Public Administration: Three Problems. *Public Administration Review* 7 (Winter), 1-11.
- Grant, G. (1979). *Development Administration: Concepts, Goals, Methods*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Heady, F. (1996). *Public Administration: A Comparative Perspective* (5th ed.). New York: Marcel Dekker, Inc.
- Hirsch, J. (1997). Globalization, Capital, Nation-States and Democracy. *Studies in Political Economy* 54: 39-58.
- Hogwood, B. W. & Gunn, L. A. (1984). *Policy Analysis*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Keynes, J. M. (2007) [1936]. *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan
- Marx, F. M. (Ed.) (1963). *Elements of Public Administration* (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Rogers, E. M. (1976). Communication and Development: the passing of the dominant paradigm. *Communication Research*, 3(2).
- Rowat, D. C. (Ed.) (1985). *The Ombudsman Plan: The Worldwide Spread of an Idea* (2nd ed.). Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Shrivastava, M. & Stefanick, L. (2014). *Beyond the Rhetoric: Democracy and Governance in a Global North oil Economy*. Forthcoming Athabasca University Press.
- Sorensen, E. & Torfing, J. (Eds.) (2007). *Theories of Democratic Network Governance*. New York: Palgrave Mamillan.
- Trikha, R. (2009). *Bureaucracy and Public Administration*. Delhi: Mehra Offset Press.



Further Reading



Reading

- Almond, G. A. (1988). The Return to the State. *American Political Science Review* 82, No. 3: 853-74.
- Almond, G. A. & Coleman, J. S. (Eds.) (1960). *The Politics of the Developing Areas*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Farazmand, A. (Ed.) (2001). *Handbook of Comparative and Development Public Administration* (2nd rev ed.) New York: Marcel Dekker, Inc.
- Haque, M. S. (2000). Significance of Accountability under the New Approach to Public Governance. *International Review of Administrative Services*. Vol. 66.
- Heidenheimer, A., Helco, J. H., & Teich Adams, C. (1975). *Comparative Public Policy: The Politics of Social Choice in Europe and America*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Heady, F. & Stokes, S. L. (Eds.) (1962). *Papers in Comparative Public Administration*. Ann Arbor, MI: Institute of Public Administration, The University of Michigan.
- Kernaghan, K. & Siegel, D. (1999). *Public administration in Canada* (4th ed.) Scarborough, Ontario: International Thomson Publishing.
- Korten, D. C. (1980). Community Organisation and Rural Development: A Learning Process Approach. *Public Administration Review* 40(5), 480-511.
- Korten, D. C. (1990). *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda*. (4th ed.). West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press.
- Lee, G. (2011). Uncovering the Blurring of Sectors: A Comparison of Perceived Organisational Values between the Public and Non profit sectors. *International Review of Public Administration* 16(3), 1-23.
- Lewis, D. & Kanji, N. (2009). *Non-Governmental Organisations and Development*. London: Routledge.
- Nugroho, Y. (2008). Adopting Technology, Transforming Society: The Internet and the Reshaping of Civil Society Activism in Indonesia. In *International Journal of Emerging Technologies and Society*, 6(2),77-105.
- O'Leary, R., Van Slyke, D.M. & Kim, S. (2010). *The Future of Public Administration Around the World: The Minnowbrook*

Perspective. Georgetown: University Press.

Peters, B. G. (1988). *Comparing Public Bureaucracies: Problems of Theory and Method*. Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press.

Presthus, R. V. (1959). Behaviour in Bureaucracies in Many Cultures. *Public Administration Review*, 19(1), 25-35.

Pye, L. W. (1991). The Myth of the State: Reality of Authority. In Ramesh K. Arora, (ed.), *Politics and Administration in Changing Societies: Essays in Honour of Professor Fred W. Riggs*. New Delhi: Associated Publishing House.

Rathod, P. B. (2010). *Elements of Development-Administration: Theory and Practice*. Jaipur, India: ABD Publishers.

Taylor, D. W., Warrack, A. A., & Baetz, M. C. (1999). *Business and Government in Canada: Partners for the Future*. Toronto: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc.