

FLEXIBILITY IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION THROUGH GOVERNANCE AND GOVERNMENT

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ABSTRACT

Today people want to to adopt new Governance as compared to traditional Public administration because of more flexibility and ease, due to which More and more public administration and management scholars have referred to the “new governance” and argue that the focus of the study of public administration today should be on governance, rather than government. The research discusses what is governance and how governance terminology changes the research focus of public administration. It highlights what is encompassed on the study of governance and how it has or has not changed the field of public administration.

Key words: Governance, government, public administration

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INTRODUCTION

The Governance for sustainable development should include an Integrated approach in view not only the equality of life that has to be offered to its citizens but also an equal distribution of it with social equity as its goal. The 21st century witnesses aggressively the use of governance terminology in an increasing number of countries worldwide. Times have changed, technologies have advanced and alongside them human thought and behavior and so has government. “During the past century, American governance has been transformed fundamentally. The scope of government action has increased at all levels of the federal system. Moreover, the means through which government addresses public problems have changed radically” (Jensen and Kennedy, 2005: 1). What are we really dealing with? The top-down Weberian bureaucracy is no longer what he had described. Governmental actions have been farmed out, privatized, devolved and delegated to agents. The act of governance is in many hands that operate in large networks. What implications does such a structure have for public administration discourse? What happens to accountability? Responsibility? Control? Democracy?

How far removed has government become in this new day and age from the sovereign- the people? This paper will present the current conversation about “new governance” by finding the current definition, some description of the phenomenon. It discusses the thought about the meaning for the future of public administration.

Meaning of governance

Governance describes the mechanisms an organization uses to ensure that its constituents follow its established processes and policies. It is the primary means of maintaining oversight and accountability in a loosely coupled organizational structure. A proper governance strategy implements systems to monitor and record what is going on, takes steps to ensure compliance with agreed policies, and provides for corrective action in cases where the rules have been ignored or misconstrued.

The meaning of governance has shifted in the last couple of decades. To public servants it used to be the definition of what they did, exercise public authority to fulfill a public purpose, the term used to encompass administrative techniques and management approaches and a political sense.

Governance implied statesmanship not just shared goals of citizens and organizations, who may or may not have formal authority and policing power” (p.548). Governance is ultimately concerned with creating conditions for ordered rule and collective actions. The outputs of government and governance are products of different processes.

A generally agreed upon definition for the term posits that governance refers to “development of governing styles in which boundaries between and within public and private sectors have become blurred. The essence of governance is its focus on governing mechanisms which do not rest on recourse to the authority and sanctions of government...it’s an interaction of a multiplicity of governing and each other influencing actors” (Stoker,1998: 17).

Governance in public administration

As far Governance and Public administration is concerned Frederickson (1999) claims that the decade of the 1990s produced a strong cohort of theories influencing public administration and making it newly self-aware, richly empirical, and theoretically robust. Public administration says Frederickson is repositioning itself to deal with the “daunting problems associated with the disarticulation of the state” (p. 702). Kettl (2000) claims that the transformation of American government has had two effects;

First, a heavy reliance on non-traditional players, and the changes have layered new challenges. Secondly, the basic governmental structure of the New Deal era, where government was driven by functional specialization and process control are challenged by new place-based problems. Consequently, government has new responsibilities and no capacity for effective management (p.488).

Perhaps to understand the changes referred to previously, it would be fitting to describe the paradigm associated with where government and governance were created. As times changed from the days of the Framers of the constitution, government has grown and is more and more complex. A new wave of “Reinventing government” and New Public management have ensured that government is run like a business, as Wilson had wished, but is that a good way or not such a good way?

Governance as opposed to government illustrates the changes that have taken place. The desire to take functions away from the government and contract out to private entities and non profit organizations, believing that these “players” would run things better and more efficiently has essentially made government even more complex.

Neo managerialism in the form of New Public Management or “Reinventing Government”, inspired by Osborne and Gaebler’s book (1992) gained prominence during the Clinton Administration. These two movements are similar in ways (Rosenbloom and Kravtchuck, 2002) in that their assumptions are rooted in market theory, economic decision making, public choice, principle agent theory programmatic structures, administrative rules and guidelines, and institutionalized rules and norms – which in combination establish the ends and means of governmental activity. (p. 1-3). The origins of the etymology of the term governance the authors claim are of two traditions, the study of institutions (multi layered structural context) including Public choice, the second tradition is network theory (role of multiple social actors in networks). As O’Toole (1997) has shown, the phenomenon of networks has added inter subjectivity, interdependence and a need for collaboration among actors with differing and at times conflicting interests and motivations (Frederickson, 1999; O’Toole, 1993).

According to Lynn et al. the logic is understood at three levels (Frederickson, 1999). The first level is the institutional level, where stable formal and informal rules, boundaries, procedures, regime values and alike are found, this level is associated with the policy studies approach and it addresses the problematic changing context of administration. The second level is organizational or managerial. Where the bureaus, departments, executive branches and such reside along with the lateral nongovernmental contractual entities linked to government. At this level the issues of incentives, administrative discretion, performance measures and civil service functioning become crucial. The popular theories associated with this level are principal-agent theory, transaction-cost analysis, network theory and theories of leadership. The third and final level is where the primary work of governance occurs, carrying out of policy at street level, issues of professionalism come into play, motivation, technical competence, accountability and performance. Useful theories for this level of governance are measures of efficiency, organizational culture, leadership, accountability to name a few (p. 706). What does all this mean? Now that we have used some literature to try and decipher what governance is all about, it is

time to assess what the implications for public administration are. The account of the three levels mentioned previously and carefully studied by Lynn et al(1999) illustrate that governance is tied and examined from many different angles. Public administration as a field is responding to the changes that have taken place in its structure and processes. Bureaucracies are open systems, responsive to a wide range of competing environmental pressures. Bureaucracies juggle many different forces and, therefore, respond to them strategically on basis of signals received and personal judgment.

The complex, interwoven, huge “monster” that is the administrative state exists and bureaucrats are a group of unelected, long serving individuals who are experts, with a long institutional memory, and a lifetime commitment to care for the public good. As times changed from the days of the Framers of the constitution, government has grown and is more and more complex. The information response, delivery, authority in this spider web, no longer and evaluation of public policy or exclude citizens from

self-governance” (p. 39)Box further advocates for the instrumental position subordinate to the larger sphere of governance, where professional public servants, citizens, and elected officials are joined in the creation and implementation of public policy (p. 40).

In this case, with the complexity and paradigmatic difficulty of governance in our times there is a definite call to widen, broaden and continue the discourse of governance in the field of public administration. Stoker(1998) claims that governance is date and place specific.He hopes that the perspective will evolve and develop to capture processes of adaptation, learning, and experiment that are characteristic of governance. The changes are occurring rapidly and the study of governance must follow, inquire, question, and address the new needs. Practitioners must be taught how to ensure accountability, and good practices across diverse service units in dispersed locations.

The “research agenda should encompass both positive research concerned with empirical contents and implication of normative propositions. Both kinds of knowledge can prove usefulness in the analysis and design of governance systems in areas such as public education, health care, and public assistance (Lynn et al., 2000:236). “Public affairs education needs to broaden its perspective to the emerging tools of government action and to the transforming environments in which managers use them” (Kettl, 2000: 495). Advocates of new governance

seek to combine new and old ideas to end up with a comprehensive approach centered on collaboration, flexibility, results and engaging citizens rather than announcing (Dewitt et al., 1994).

Governance, control and public administration

In his book, *Discipline and Punish* (1975), Michel Foucault presents a genealogical study of the development of the modern penal system through shedding light on the old history of the penal system where torture was exercised by the sovereign's power personally as a way of eliminating a transgressor who challenged his laws and basis of control providing an example to the spectators in the community. The book aims to expose and explain that power and knowledge are intertwined. Foucault finds in the history of the development of penal systems the emergence of a form of power-knowledge that has application across a large number of other domains in Western Societies. Although, his work examines the penal system and the prisons, it certainly provides insight about our society and its institutions/ organizations and the method of controlling them. Public administration is a field of control; control of The research argues that we can critically assess

bureaucracies as organizations with similar elements to western thought (Zanetti and Adams, 2000: 549). It "seek[s] to predict and control both human behavior and the behavior of organizational subunits because of the focus on executive decision making and policy implementation" and furthermore "bureaucratic control is essential to this model" implying "conscious self interested human behavior" (Ventriss, 2000: 510). Hood (1991) states seven major aspects of the NPM, among them are: "professional management," "explicit standards and measures of performance," "emphasis on output controls," "competition in the public sector," and "private sector styles of management," (p. 4-5). Regarding the control of public administrator, State Agent Model can be found greatly in literature coverage and it concentrates on the street level workers and how they apply the state's laws, regulations, and rules while dealing with the cases of the needy people. This model was mentioned by Meire's and O'Toole's book, *Bureaucracy in a Democratic State (A Governance Perspective)*. The bureaucrats are the state agents who were delegated power by the legislators to serve the people. Of course, the

bureaucrats' behavior is difficult to control simply because their work and performance are not governed only by the rules, norms, and regulations.

There is also discretion and huge autonomy that they enjoy while implementing their work. Thus they become very influential and powerful as they exercise the discretion and they became the policy interpreters simply because the rules do not clarify everything while implementing the work. In addition, the front line bureaucrats are often driven by (1) getting the job done and (2) by doing it fast. They try to follow the rules as much as they can to avoid the punishment and to transfer the paper works (productivity) to the others. Both Meier and O'Toole argue that a top-down political control of the bureaucracy has only a limited effect on the actions of bureaucrats. In addition, they believe that democracy is unable to ensure the responsiveness of bureaucracy within the framework of democracy. However, they believe that "Shared values and commitment to democratic norms, along with political control, produce a bureaucracy that is often responsive to the American people" (Meier and O'Toole, 2006: 19-20). Frederick argues that through the bottom-up strategy of controlling public administration, there is no way to force or compel bureaucrats to follow the laws and rules in this way. He clarified that laws and rules are not always clear and the judgment should control the actions of the bureaucrats. Frederick favors the internal check through popular sentiment and ethical professionalism. On the other hand, Finer (1941) argued external checks and balances were the only way to ensure subordinations of bureaucrats because internal power of control would, ultimately, lead to corruption. In Finer's view, some form of electoral or legislative review was the only possible way to avoid abuses of bureaucratic power"

Much of Public Administration literature focuses on bureaucracy and its ability to control the behavior of employees and thus ensure predictable outcomes. It is said that control mechanism of bureaucracy, such as the chain of command, definite position descriptions, rules, regulations, the keeping of records that document behavior, and so on, rationalize the actions of public organizations and ensure accountability to citizens and their representatives. Yet there seems to be a gap between what bureaucratic model promises and the actual performance of bureaucracies on the ground. For example, new public management (NPM) is based on scientific-analytical and technical-rational modern. Frederick argued that the behavior of administrators should be controlled by professionalism as well as standards and codes. Finer argued that their behavior

should be controlled by the legislative body and popular control. Both agreed that institutional controls and professional codes are objective (externally derived) and that the moral basis for action derives from sources external to the public servants (law, edicts, moral values that are learned and internalized). One might say that Foucault attracted our attention to the kind of society we live in; a society that is controlled through power-knowledge relationship, rules, regulations, norms and other methods that guide our lives and thus there is a very narrow space for other things, if there is any space at all.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has an objective in trying to highlight some problems caused due to insensitive use of Natural resources, Government responsibility is also trifling in solving the critical issues more over what governance, and specifically new governance means and its significance to the field of administration. What is pertinent to remember is that the ruling managerial paradigm couples with the consequential new structure of network governance exists, grows, and morphs more and more with time where administrators need to learn how to adjust and function in this new structure, and the field should discuss what are the best methods and courses of theory and action would best suit our times. Caught in this tight web are the bureaucrats, the career civil servants who must make sense of all the needs, requirements, rules, regulations, priorities of all the different forces to which they must answer. Lest we forget, that bureaucrats are people, human beings, and not as Taylor thought, automatons. The bureaucracy is an organization made up of many individuals who have a culture, who have ways of operating and interpreting all the demands set upon them. In light of Foucault and Farmer (1995) and McSwite (1997), which represent the postmodern view, perhaps we need to put on different sets of glasses, turn administration to a different angle and start developing away to read between the lines and tease out systematically patterns. All the themes and thoughts are connected somehow, as Foucault claims everything exists in relationship to other things. Maybe we need to change the way we think about ourselves as individuals and ourselves as professional, as administrators and so on. The question is not what should we be talking about more but rather how should we be talking about issues on a time continuum where events happen and alter what we have seen and understood in the past. In conclusion, this paper invites theorists of public administration to research extensively and the terminology of new governance.

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