

# Business administration and public administration in context



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Public Administration as a discipline in Context World over, the concept of public administration has been with us as far as from the time when there existed governments. There has always been demand for public administrators as long as Emperors, rulers or Kings sought the services of architects, treasurers and pages to carry out the day to day government business. The birth of the idea of public administration can be attributed to the fact that it is closely related to the politics in any given society across the globe. Hence, in most cases, it has been closely linked to the politics.

Boje, (2008), argues that indeed public administration is usually brought to the fore through the translation of politics in relation to the government of the day. In this regard, it usually results to the translation of reality from politics to reality. Therefore, a lot of emphasis is normally placed on the reality as is perceived on daily basis by the citizens of the government of the day. In a nutshell, public administration is interlinked with the concept of public employee as it has been put forward by Box, (2003) and Milakovich and George, ( 2008).

Against this backdrop, a public employee is in otherwise a public administrator. In this regard, such administrators are indeed public servants who are charged with the duty of attending to the needs of a public at all the levels of government. The government is usually represented in agencies or departments in relation to provision of services to its citizens. Thus, public employees, more often than not are unelected individuals charged with the responsibility of being public administrators. According to Milakovich and George, ( 2008). some of the public employees under the in the United

States of America system of government include, police officers, human resource benefit administrators as well as cabinet secretaries.

In addition, analysts within the census department and municipal financial analysts are public employees. As it has been captured above, it is clear that public administration serves to act as a government extension. Perhaps it is imperative to note that public administration was not viewed an academic discipline until the 1880s according to Boje, (2008). In particular, this was given the much needed impetus by like minded academics and civil servants; for example Woodrow Wilson. The said persons were especially concerned with bringing about reforms in the American civil service.

On a positive rejoinder, is of the view that the modern public administration in America has been brought about by democratic governance. In particular, this was justified by both liberal and classic philosophers from the western world during the post 1880 period. Individuals such as Thomas Hobbes, John Stuart Mill, and John Locke in addition to Aristotle are remembered to have instigated this metamorphosis of public administration. As a result, public administration was viewed in the context of being an academic field and thus it assumed a multi-disciplinary perspective. However, it is during the 1880s period that this idea of public administration was born. The said perspective eventually led to the conceptualization of public administration in terms of human resources, character, organizational theory, statistics and policy analysis, ethos and budgeting as it is stated by Milakovich and George, ( 2008).

According to Box,(2003), the conceptualization of public administration as an a discipline was given strong consideration by Loren Von Stein in the year 1855; who was at the time a professor at Vienna. Thus, Stein is often regarded as the father of public administration as a science in several parts across the globe. During Stein's time, public administration was viewed as to being administrative law in nature. However, Lorenz Von Stein held the view that the conceptualization of public administration as administrative law was very restrictive. Lorenz therefore taught that public administration is greatly dependent on pre-established academic disciplines.

The said disciplines include but are not limited to; political science, public finance, administrative law as well as sociology. In this regard, public administration was considered to be an integrating science. Secondly, Lorenz was of the view that public administrators should seek to strike the golden balance between practice and theory. In particular, the practical aspect of public administration ought to take center stage. Nonetheless, it is imperative for any public administrator to underscore the fact that the said practical aspect is founded on theory.

Hence, theory served to provide a framework for the best of practices in the field of public administration. Lastly, Stein held the view that public administration is indeed a science owing to the fact that knowledge is usually evaluated upon generation based on a stipulated scientific method. Indeed there is a general consensus among scholars of the time in relation to the fact that Lorenz provided a foundation upon which subsequent discourses on public administration would be built. Woodrow Wilson on the

other hand is considered to be the founding father of the conceptualization of public administration as a discipline with particular reference to America.

His first formal recognition of public administration as a discipline came through his article in the year 1887. In the said article; Wilson is noted to have argued that it was an element under the broader topic of administrative study. In particular, this study is founded on the tenets of investigating what the government can do both successfully and properly. In addition, this study is concerned with how the respective government can ensure that it's ' things' are done properly. For this goal to be achieved, Wilson argued that it had to be founded on the principle of efficiency with respect to the energy as well as cost used in the long run. It is worth noting that Wilson came to be more influential as compared to Von Stein in relation to this topic of public administration as presented by Milakovich, and George, (2008).

This was greatly attributed to the fact that his 1887 article advanced four fundamental concepts under the science of public administration. One of the named concepts was the clear-cut separation of administration from politics. Secondly, Wilson brought to the fore a comparative analysis of private organizations and political entities. The third concept as advocated for by this scholar was the need by governments to improve efficiency in relation to public service. To achieve this, Wilson was of the conviction that public administration could only improve on its efficiency through embracing business-like attitudes as well as practices for the daily operations.

Lastly, Woodrow Wilson advanced the concept of improving public service effectiveness by civil servants training, management supplemented with merit-oriented assessments conducted on regular basis. As it was anticipated, Wilson's separation of public administration and politics generated heated debate. Hence, subsequent discourses on this dichotomy have generally contributed to the differentiation of the nature of the two ideas as presented by Von Stein and Woodrow Wilson. Consequently, different generations of public administration have been born with each striving to voice pertinent issues under the above stated difference of thoughts. In this regard, the 1940s public administration in America was dominated by separation of public administration and politics as presented by Woodrow Wilson.

This was later to be challenged by other generations in late 1940s, a move which started a back and forth discourse of what really constitutes public administration; with respect to the said separation. Eventually, this gave birth to the concept of new public management in America witnessed in the 2000s. The idea of 'New Public Management' was actually advanced in the late 1990s by Robert and Janet Denhardt. The two scholars argued that there was need to replace the concept of public administration with new public management. Under this framework, Americans were to be instead viewed as 'citizens as opposed to the usual position of 'customers'.

Hence, Americans were charged with the responsibility of assuming an active role in government by being involved in the entire policy process.

Against this backdrop, public administration, as a discipline is founded on

five major principles or tenets. According to Boje, (2008), one of the said <https://assignbuster.com/business-administration-and-public-administration-in-context/>

principles is captured through Human resource management. This, as a pillar of public administration, refers to a clearly articulated structure which provides the condition for ethical standards, unbiased treatment; in addition to the promotion of system which embraces values.

In the academic context, human resource management carries out a range of functions; for instance, employee benefits, compensation and health care services to the public employees. The other pillar studied under this discipline is organizational theory. This area is mainly concerned with the study of government entities in terms of structure as well as the various elements that are inculcated within them. The third academic tenet of public administration is focused on the ethics as argued by Farazmand, (2007).

This is mainly concerned with the study of normative approach to the whole issue with respect to decision making within the public sector. Policy analysis is the other element of this discipline, which is concerned, with the use of empirical framework during decision-making. The last pillar of this academic field as advanced by some scholars of new public management is public budgeting. The study of public budgeting with respect to this discipline focuses on the manner through which any central government allocates its otherwise scarce resources to meet its unlimited needs or demands.

In America, this academic field has been noted to draw many of its principles from the field of law as well as political science. This can be attributed to the fact that an effective and efficient public administration is intertwined in the broader area of democratic values. In this regard, public administration is studied from the standpoint of improving justice, equality, effectiveness,

security and efficiency of the delivery of public services to the people in the end. For this to be achieved, it is usually done in a non-profitable way. The above scope is best explained through the theory of public administration with a lot of emphasis on the meaning of government, budgets, governance and public affairs.

In the recent past, public administration has been skewed towards modern philosophies and critical theory with specific relevance to power, governance and the government. As a result, a lot of emphasis has been put on bureaucratic organization, constitutionality and services among other aspects. Business Administration in Context The recent development in the field of public administration has led to an overlap into the field of business administration. In particular, the proponents of the concept of 'New Public Management' have brought this. This has been occasioned by the fact that business administration is primarily focused on the implementation of issues based on sound decision-making. From the above discourse, it is evident that it draws heavily from the field of public administration.

Nonetheless, business administration has managed to stand out as an academic discipline despite the existence of this synergy with public administration. This has been brought about by the fact that this field is particular to the business fraternity; majority of whom are found within the private sector in America (Guthrie, Christina and John, (2007). Therefore, within this context, business administration is the study of how various aspects pertaining to the business are actually managed. Hence, it has tended to focus on just how the various aspects relating to the business entity are performed.

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In other words, such can only be achieved through the actual management of business operations. Management as an integral aspect of business administration relies on decision-making or the actual implementation of such decisions as argued by Farazmand, (2007). The major element of this field is that it is built on the idea of administration. Administration entails the organization of both resources and people within a business entity in a manner that is effective and efficient. The result of such process is usually captured through the realization of the stipulated objectives and goals.

Perhaps the confusion surrounding these two disciplines can be attributed to the continuous perception of management as a component of administration. This has been by a number of scholars in the area of organizational analysis who have continued to imply that administration is dependent on management as one of its elements. However, in the business world, the word administrator bears a wider meaning since it refers to a general manager supervised by the company's board of directors in the corporate arena. This term may also refer to the company secretary who in most cases is usually the general manager charged with the responsibility of ensuring the realization of stipulated goals. Henry Fayol who argued that administrators are normally charged with five major duties first advanced the concept of administrator.

The first of these duties is planning which is concerned with deciding well in advance what is to be done and how. In so doing, it also stipulates who ought to carry out the task based on the stipulated goals. Secondly is the aspect of organizing through identification of the particular responsibilities to

be performed in a coordinated manner. This is normally achieved through commanding individuals within the business organization.

Commanding in this respect refers to the aspect of leading people towards the company's goals while at the same time allocating resources for the same. The third element of being an administrator as presented by Fayol is staffing; which is basically concerned with hiring the right individuals to facilitate the realization of the company goals and objectives. In order to ensure that the company has the right persons, the administrator is usually comes up with job descriptions bearing in mind then requisite technical skills subject to the market needs. Controlling is the fourth aspect of being an administrator, which is concerned with quality evaluation in all the aspects of the business entities. This ensures for the high-performance by an organization in terms of satisfactory results with respect to market needs.

The fifth component of administration as argued by the scholar is budgeting which incorporates all the other aspects in line with the business plan. This usually calls for the incorporation of administrative functions by putting in place control measures. Though these elements are best captured through the study of public administration, business administration on the other hand seeks to focus on administration within the confines of generating taxable profit. The noted similarity is occasioned by the fact that the realization of taxable profit is greatly dependent of governance, accountability, clientele and decentralization of operations as presented by Boje, (2008) and Milakovich and George, (2008). Difference between the Two Academic DisciplinesAs I had promised during the previous class, I have collected some

literature that seeks to differentiate the two disciplines despite being closely related.

Perhaps it is important for me to reiterate your concern by agreeing to the fact that these two academic fields are indeed closely related. This relationship has further been complicated by the fact that business administration draws heavily from public administration. Nonetheless, there exist differences amongst the two academic fields. From the above discourse on public administration, it is evident that it is exhibited in terms of implementation, development in addition to the study the various policy branches within the government.

Indeed, there is a consensus among the scholars across the globe that its emphasis is usually on the realization of the greater good of the public. To achieve this, issues of social justice and civil society are normally given a lot of weight. Simply put, it is centered on both non-government and government organization as put forward by Farazmand, (2007). Business administration on the other hand is focused on the management or performance of a business entity.

Issues to do with human resource organization as well as other resources usually take center stage in relation the company's profitability in the end. The second difference is that public administration deals with the study of how best the public would be served. To the contrary, business administration is focused on reaping profits from the people. From this standpoint, the third difference between these two fields has to do with the overall objective in relation to the people.

Public administration would hence be concerned with just how justice, equality, security, efficiency and effectiveness of the public employees. Business administration on the other hand is much more focused on the dominant factors upon which the profitability of the business greatly depends. Employees of such organizations, despite being the major stakeholders of the profits are relegated to 'playing second fiddle' according to Milakovich and George, (2008). The fourth difference is related to the number of discipline incorporated into each one.

As it has been discussed above, public administration heavily draws on the concept of 'New Management' after undergoing a series of scholarly metamorphosis. In this regard, it is a multi-disciplinary field within the academic fraternity. This school of thought is relatively new despite several attempts to divorce it from politics. Business administration on the other hand has been with us since time immemorial in the American cash economy system.

Although this is the case, it is not multi-disciplinary as compared to public administration according to Guthrie, Christina and John, (2007). The fifth difference is in terms of the techniques and methods of evaluation. Business administration concentrates on the evaluation of its sectors from the standpoint of deriving profits; and thus focuses on standards that are economic in nature. Public administration on the other hand does not rely on economic criteria solely.

Instead, the welfare of the public is factored. The criterion of making decision is the other difference when studying these two disciplines. Owing to the fact

that public administration is closely linked with social and political considerations, decisions are usually made through the framework of lengthy discussions and deliberations. This implies that decisions are not the made by one person as opposed to business administration. Therefore, the study of these disciplines usually takes divergent perspectives on the issue of decision-making process. As it is evident from the above presentations, these differences are founded on the manner in which they are applied within the society.

Hence, the seventh difference between the aforementioned fields has to do with the responsibility within the two sectors. In implicit meaning responsibility has been taken to mean to the extent or degree to which an organization or institution that is responsible to the people in terms of performance. The study of public administration is thus built on an understanding that it deals with just how public administrators are accountable to different entities, which are in turn accountable to the public. This is normally enforced through a legislative framework that is properly designed hence the need to study law when dealing with public administration.

In this way, issues related to governance, accountability, justice and efficiency are given serious consideration as opposed to business administration; whereby the major factor is the profitability. Therefore, the study of business administration is focused on how best to be profitable from the people subject to the market needs. Such needs are responsible for the type of management that would be put in place through the employees

(Guthrie, Christina and John, 2007). Conclusion That the two academic fields are closely related is an open fact going by the above discussion.

At the same time, it is evident that these disciplines are extremely important on their own merit. In addition, it is clear that public administration is primarily concerned with wider public while business administration is focused on just how private entities come into their respective markets to meet a certain need. Though this need is met, the major driver is usually profitability in the long run. Unlike business administration, public administration has undergone numerous changes based on the ideologies of different scholars of the time. From its conceptualization, public administration was closely related to the politics. However, subsequent years saw concerted efforts to divorce public administration from the politics with the main emphasis being on the inclusion of citizens as stakeholders of the whole process.

Therefore, this led to the re-definition of this discipline leading to the incorporation other disciplines. Of importance to note, is the fact greater good of the public was upheld nonetheless. Business administration, though borrows a lot from former field is concerned with profitability in all its operations. This academic field is thus inclined to elements of public administration that would result to sustained profitability in the long run as argued by Milakovich and George, ( 2008).

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