

Public administration- theoretical framework of f.w riggs essay

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A polarized model is inadequate in depicting the characteristics that contribute to a developing country's administrative system. As a result, Riggs abandoned models that differentiated between agrarianism and industrialism. Rather, Riggs opted to create a more diverse, yet simplified model, namely, the "fused-prismatic-diffracted" model or what I have chosen to call a "prismatic" model.

The formulation of the prismatic model was primarily based upon the extent to which a social administrative system undergoes functional differentiation. The model is appropriate for studying three societal types: highly developed Western industrial societies and traditional agrarian societies, as well as developing societies. Each society has its own social, economic, politically symbolic, and communicative attributes, as well as its own political system and concepts of individual rights. Yet, these attributes as a whole eventually develop into different administrative systems. Riggs believed that the degree to which each component of a society differs from another in function is measurable, and that measures of functional differentiation can be used to locate the three societal types along a continuum. Simultaneously, Riggs believed that his theoretical model can be used to compare the fundamental structure of various societies. Through his model, one is therefore able to comprehend each country's administrative attributes and differences. Riggs' own analysis of public administrations primarily relies upon a functional structural analytical approach.

He refers to structure as a society's pattern of activity, while function is considered to be the outcome of a pattern of activity. Given this analytical approach, one discovers that traditional agrarian societies, highly developed
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industrial societies, and developing societies are functionally and structurally distinct. Such functional and structural attributes can be further examined by using a biological approach, that is, via a spectrum. Taking a traditional agrarian society as an example, say a traditional Thai society, one notices that various social functions and social structures are highly functionally diffuse, that is, there is no organized division of labor. This analogy serves to demonstrate the consequences of an unorganized functional and structural system in a traditional agrarian society. But, should a white ray of light be beamed through a prism, it would disperse into a wide range of colors. Riggs uses the word “ diffract” to refer to this phenomenon (different than its meaning in physics) as a metaphor for the functional and structural system that is highly functionally specific, as found within an industrialized society. However, Riggs believes that there is a third scenario in addition to the two diametrically opposed extremes.

That is, one must also contemplate the condition of the white light during the process in which it is being beamed through the prism itself. Specifically, the white ray is just starting to be diffracted, but the diffraction process has yet to be completed. (the inaccuracy of this metaphor from the perspective of physics aside).

Social differentiation, hence, cannot be successfully achieved overnight.

Likewise, social transformation does not progress at a consistent speed. The question thus remains, how does a traditional society become modernized?

Moreover, how does a fused society become a more diffracted society?

Between the two extremes of a “ lack of division of labor” society versus a

diffracted society, one may ask, what other possibilities are there. Through his model, Riggs suitably and thoroughly addresses these questions.

Riggs first tackles these issues by describing how a ray of light passes through a prism: when a fused white light is beamed through a prism, the white light is subsequently diffracted into a rainbow of colors. Riggs further conceptualizes the diffraction process itself as creating a continuum. This conceptualization can be also applied to the real world such that a prismatic society can be theorized as a continuously expanding and developing system. Riggs' concept is illustrated in the following 1- Riggs' " Fused-Prismatic-Diffracted" Model Process Riggs' believes that when analyzing prismatic societies, most social scientists fail to understand how they essentially function. More significantly, they are unable to fully understand the conditions under which a society experiences diffraction. That is to say, such social scientists only grasp the concept of a specialized structure, and are not able to conceptualize the entire social structural system. Taking a family ousehold as an example, in a fused society the family is the model by which politics, the administrative system, religion, and ethics are judged. In contrast, in a diffracted society, the family household's influence on other social structures is negligible.

Yet, in a prismatic society the degree of influence lies within these two extremes. In other words, a family household's influence on various other social structures is less than in a fused society, but more than in a diffracted one. The study of economic behavior can be applied in the same manner. In a prismatic society, should one ignore the interrelationship between political,

administrative, social, and economic factors, and limit one's analysis to economic behavior alone, one not only fails to fully grasp the larger picture, but more importantly, misunderstands the role of economic behavior as well.

2-A unilinear path prismatic model: Riggs himself admitted that the model's reasoning was faulty and would lead to misleading thinking; therefore, within the "unilinear path" concept Riggs added a "degree of conformity" axis.

In contrast, the "bilinear path" proposes that a prismatic society is not determined by economic development, nor by achieving modernization alone; rather, it can be found in different societies in various degrees of differentiation. Consequently, prismatic societies are not limited to underdeveloped countries. More precisely, the more differentiated a society is, the greater the need for conformity in order to reach a state of diffraction; however, the social risk is also greater, as is the likelihood of disastrous consequences, including prismatic breakdowns. Riggs' theory is based on nonconforming behavior as found in Western societies—including metropolitan crises, ethnic riots, student boycotts, social distancing, as well as "the hippy phenomenon"—characteristics particular to prismatic societies in highly developed countries. The abrupt rise of the Nazi and Fascist movements in Europe, as well as the Great Depression of the 1930s represent two vivid examples. Figure 3, below, illustrates the "bilinear path" model 3-bilinear path prismatic model. Riggs uses the three prefixes of "eo", "ortho", and "neo" to establish six new forms of social phenomenon.

This distinction allows for greater descriptive flexibility, as well as a finer understanding of the dynamics of change. From Riggs' introduction of these

three phases one realizes that “ present-day Riggs” is in fact the most blunt and harshest critic of “ former Riggs. ” Yet, despite the fact that Riggs continuously modifies his theory in order to create the perfect model, Riggs’ critics are endless. Prethus, for instance, regards Riggs’ model as too broad and abstract.

Arora, in a quite lengthy article, analyzes the “ negative character” of the prismatic model. Specifically, he argues that the model holds a Western bias, and moreover, the terminology used to describe the particular characteristics of the prismatic model are value-laden, and consequently, tend to emphasize the negative characteristics of prismatic societies. Monroe also considers the prismatic model a reflection of Western standards, and urges Riggs to study prismatic phenomena within American society in order to improve his model. As to Riggs’ promotion of “ formalism”, Valson and Milne raise several points of contention; namely, the terminology “ formalism” constitutes the disparity between that which is “ formally prescribed” and that which is “ actually practiced. ” It follows that the advantages and disadvantages of “ formalism” cannot be broadly encapsulated, but rather are determined through context (Heady, 1979: 73). Undoubtedly, these criticisms have contributed to the adjustments made in Riggs` model, such that many points of contention have already been clarified within his book Reexamining Prismatic Societies. However, in order for Riggs’ model to have an even more concrete influence, it must have more solid impressions. Braudy uses Riggs’ theory to study Japan’s legislative proceedings.

In his study, Braudy's findings were that practical applications and conclusions drawn from the prismatic model can be broadly utilized; however, it is more difficult to compare factors and conditions within the model, for one may not find every factor listed within the model in Japanese society itself (Braudy, 1965: 314-324). It can therefore be stated that given the challenges and adjustments Riggs' model faces, its structural path must be predicated on resolving these issues in the near future. If maladjustment is equated with stress, then it is an aversive psychological state that will create negative evaluations of and negative affect toward the stimulus that created it. Moreover, the lack of a large number of negative feedback events may also cause the expatriates to ignore cues about behavioral appropriateness.