

# Management and public administration

[Business](#), [Management](#)



POSDCoRB is a mnemonic term developed by Luther Gulick in 1937 to represent the functions of the executive. “ These essential functions- Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Coordinating, Reporting, and Budgeting-provide a sort of administrative prescription which should be followed by any competent administrator. ” (Blumberg, p. 247)

These functions compose a single aspect of the author’s Notes on the Theory of Organization, which discusses the elements necessary for an organization to perform its activities efficiently. After focusing on the Division and Coordination of Work, Gulick reflects on how the organization should be Organized. In order to organize the role of the executive, Gulick asks “ What is the work of the executive. What does he do? ” He then presents us with a list of activities-POSDCORB: “ Planning, that is working out in broad outline the things that need to be done and the methods for doing them to accomplish the purpose set for the enterprise; \* Organizing, that is the establishment of the formal authority through which work subdivisions are arranged, defined, and co-ordinated for the defined objective; \* Staffing, that is the whole personnel function of bringing in and training the staff and maintaining favorable conditions of work; \*

Directing, that is the continuous task of making decisions and embodying them in specific and general orders and instructions and serving as the leader of the enterprise; \* Co-ordinating, that is the all important duty of interrelating the various parts of the work; \* Reporting, that is keeping those to whom the executive is responsible informed as to what is going on, which thus includes keeping himself and his subordinates informed through records, research and inspection; \* Budgeting, with all that goes with

budgeting in the form of fiscal planning, accounting and control. " (Gulick, p. 13) These defined functions were inspired by Henri Fayol's earlier work in the study of management theory, wherein he describes 5 functions: Planning, Organizing, Coordinating, Commanding, and Controlling. POSDCORB became an important tool in the scientific management movement both in business and the public administration.

Though it helped to establish a foundation for the creation of principles by which management should operate, it has met with some opposition in the field of organization studies. Criticism Prior to the release of Notes on the Theory of Organization, Dr. Lewis Meriam, wrote: " The most important thing that has been omitted from that fascinating word 'POSDCORB' is knowledge of a subject matter. You have to plan something, you have to organize something, you have to direct something... Intimate knowledge of the subject matter with which an administrative agency is primarily concerned is indispensable to the effective, intelligent administration of that agency. " (Meriam, p. 2-3).

In the book, Organizations, Herbert Simon and James March suggested that POSDCORB contributes to the creation of a " machine model" in administration. Their claim was that " the scientific managers have regarded man as a machine rather than as a human being. " Pfiffner writes that social scientists, like Simon and March, " decry the gods of efficiency and condemn the goals of productivity as ends in themselves. " (Pfiffner, p. 110) Recalling a conversation with Dr. Gulick, Stephen Blumberg writes: " It is because of the absence in POSDCORB of things such as values and ethics and cooperation

that he says that we need to bring to our focus of attention some new guidelines.

He feels ‘ that we’ve got to think of our economic problems in terms of human values’ and that because ‘ we are going to recognize that public administration deals with human beings,’ we will have to incorporate much more of behavioral thinking into public administration. ” (Blumberg, p. 247)

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