

Article review on problems of municipal administration

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



Jane Addams. Problems of Municipal Administration. January 1905.

Thesis: According to Jane, the problems of municipal administration, and the shame of the cities in America is a result of the reformers' persistent and over-reliance of outmoded ideas of the eighteenth century. The reformers have no or little faith in the people; hence rely on these ideas used in the ancient times. The author views those who draft the state constitutions and municipal regulations as the kind of authority who loves the people without seeking to know them.

“ A man of this generation easily discerns the crudeness of that eighteenth-century conception of unprogressive human nature..” .(32)

“ A little examination will easily show that, in spite of the fine phrases of the founders, the government became an entity by itself away from the daily lives of people”. (33)

This article provides insight to the management of an organization; prior to carrying out any reforms at the work place, they should take into account the welfare of all stakeholders. Such reforms should not rely on old ideologies, to promote democracy at the work place.

Louis Brownlow, Charles E. Merriam and Luther Gulick. Report of the President's Committee on Administrative Management. 1938

Thesis: According to Louis, Charles, and Luther, the effectiveness of American democracy depends on public administration management. The authors outline some recommendations such as strengthening the budgeting and planning processes as key to achieving effectiveness in management. They also propose an overhaul of too many departments and their consolidation into the major branches of the government. This eases

processes such as budgeting in public administration, hence promoting democracy.

“ The efficiency of government rests upon two factors: the consent of the governed and good management”. (91)

“ Administrative efficiency is not a matter of paper clips, time clocks, and standardized economies of motion”. (91)

“ The development of administrative management in the Federal Government requires the improvement in administration of managerial activities”. (94)

Management should ensure efficiency in their duties to promote democracy at the work place. They should outline the responsibilities charged to employees to avoid conflicts at the work place. They should also consider consolidating departments whose activities are closely related for easier monitoring of operations. This further promotes democracy at the work place.

Martin Landau. Redundancy, Rationality, and the Problem of Duplication and Overlap. July 1969

Thesis: According to Martin, the government system of the United States of America is built on redundant structures. The author explores various definitions for redundancy and notes that all of them have a negative connotation. Such redundancy is explained by the overlap in the intelligence agencies and the branches of the government. According to Martin, redundancy and duplication, however, are crucial for the lengthy functioning of the government given that the authorities swing around the pendulum of power.

“ It is, however, the lexical evaluation of redundancy which prevails in public administration”. (282)

“ Thus it is that the removal of redundancy is rarely, if ever, challenged in the technology of public administration”. (283)

“ That which is redundant is, to the extent that is redundant, stable”. (287)

The management of a given organization should weigh the benefits of redundancy at the work place to ascertain whether it is beneficial or disadvantageous. They should understand that there are benefits that accompany redundancy. Similarly, unnecessary redundancy ought to be eliminated for better coordination of activities.

Graham T. Allison. Public and Private Management: Are They Fundamentally Alike in All Unimportant Respects? 1988

Thesis: According to Graham, management in the public and private sectors has both similarities and differences. The differences, according to him, are more significant than the similarities. Managers in the private sector are competent than those in the public. He urges those in the public sector to emulate the attributes of their counterparts in the private sector. This is because those in the public sector have been affected by the definitions of terms such as policy and resource management. Management in both sectors, however, is relevant in the face of public administration.

“ Such terminological tangles seriously hamper the development of public management as a field of knowledge”. (396)

“. there exists no ready data on what public managers do”. (397)

“ The paucity of data on the phenomena inhibits its systematic empirical

research on similarities and differences between public and private management”. (397)

Managers should strive to understand the terminologies used in managerial theories. This is because they have been found to inhibit their performance. Managers in the public sector should also emulate the positive techniques from those in the private sector. This ensures they keep up with management trends.

Ronald. C. Moe. Exploring the Limits of Privatization. 1987

Thesis: According to Ronald, privatization lobbyists view the private and public sectors as being similar. They, therefore, are less concerned with the legal structures in an organization or institution and are only alarmed by the work done. Their concern is what sector performs duties most efficiently. The author suggests that public administration is passive in recognizing the limits of privatization; public administration has forsaken intellectual ability stipulated in the public law.

“ Privatization has its intellectual roots in free market theory and its promoters have a world view that admits the limitations of public administration”. (469)

“ Exploring the limits of privatization should not be constructed as tantamount to hostility towards the concept of privatization”. (469)

“ The larger issue facing the American political economy as it enters the 21st century is the issue of organizational management”. (476)

There is a need to explore the structure of a given organization before judging the work they do. An organization’s management should use public

administration theories and laws so as to gain knowledge on privatization.

They also should establish the sector in which they operate using public law.

Mark H. Moore. *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government*. 1995

Thesis: According to Mark, the principal goal of management in the public sector is creating public value. Managers can show their worth by generating public value through management approaches instead of relying on old doctrines about policy analysis and program evaluation. The author analyzes case studies of managers in both local agencies and the government to show the significance of strategic management in the creation of public value.

According to Mark, public value's definition should incorporate what the public views as valuable.

“ As a starting point, let me propose a simple idea: the main aim of managerial work in the public sector is to create public value..”. (549-550)

“ Because individuals do not choose individually to purchase or contribute to discrete governmental activities, we cannot be sure they want what the government supplies”. (550)

“ In the end none of the concepts of ‘ political neutral competence’, ‘ policy analysis’ or ‘ program evaluation can banish politics in defining what is valuable in the public sector”. (555)

The management should strive to ensure that their activities generate value to the public. They can do this through customer satisfaction. They can also use public value as the basis for the evaluation of their organization's value.