Introducing The Study of Bureaucratic Reform by Comparing Problems and Solutions: Example of Government and Governance[**]

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Abstract

This paper aims to study theories regarding Bureaucratic Reform by Comparing Problems and Solutions to understand appropriate bureaucracy for different social contexts since Bureaucratic Reform concerns many aspects, such as social environment, norms, and people's behavior. In that regard, no theory can fit every situation; therefore, the researcher considers the comparative method to understand the conditions behind each Bureaucratic Reform theory. This paper uses examples by comparing the concept of coordinating between Government and Governance theories to show the difference in the conditions of people, environment, aims, and modus operandi in periods before the 1900s and 1990s and each theory's suggestions in problem-solving which

bring to the paper conclusion as studying these conditions will give comprehension and contribution to the theories and giving means to connect theories with actual practice in the environment of multiple-theories.

Keywords: Bureaucratic Reform, Comparative study, Governance

Introduction

The study of "Bureaucratic Reform" is what public administration after the 1900s has always been focusing on and prioritizing. The social, economic, and political changes require governments to adjust their roles to be more in line with social reality by shifting from the perspective of the government, which aligns with Max Weber's ideal type of bureaucracy (1992) such as hierarchy, division of labor, and rule orientation, to that of governance, which focuses more on collaboration between the public sector and other sectors in society, for example, the private sector and civil society. Nicholas Henry (2015) has categorized the development of public administration knowledge by using a "paradigm" or what society regarded as right at that time and defined the study of public administration after 1990 as the sixth paradigm that prioritizes the study of governance.

However, the study of bureaucratic reform to answer the question "What does a good bureaucracy look like?" struggles to turn the general rule type of knowledge into science to explain, predict, and control the phenomena that happen even with the differences in the aspects of time and space, which in this case is the question whether there is a bureaucracy that "works best" or not. Pollitt & Bouckaert (2011) noticed that after the 2000s, knowledge about bureaucratic reform lacked the mainstream concept. Even though the majority of the concepts share the common goal, which is rejecting the traditional bureaucracy and trying to solve all the problems arising from those concepts, such as New Public Management (NPM), New Public Governance (NPG), and Neo-Weberian State however, the solutions each of the concepts suggests are different especially, NPG which has multiple-interpretation (Rhodes, 1996)

What is mentioned above complicates the study of bureaucratic reform, making it hard to understand and use in actual practice. This research, thus, is required to present a study methodology called "Comparative Bureaucratic Reform" to study "conditions" of bureaucratic reform theories through the question, "In what situations or conditions should we use the concept or theory?" This is a comparative study of the problem--the initial assumption of the concept--and the suggested solution to the problem. The author believes this study will help explain the balance between many theories, concepts, models, and the state a

society is in, including differences in places and time. This will play a huge role in furthering already existing knowledge and connecting theories to actual practice.

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The case study chosen for this comparative study is "coordinating." It is, by Gulick and Urwick (1937), the heart of the organization theory and a critical point that differentiates the paradigms of the classical and the new public administration theory. Henry (2015) defined "governance" as the paradigm of the sixth era because of one significant reason, the shift from the government--focusing on controlling--to collaboration.

Problem and solution of government

"Public administration" has existed long before "the study of public administration." Ruangwit Kes-suwan (2003) stated that public administration was born at the same time as the governing of human society, since the agricultural society 9,000 years ago. The need to store food and protect themselves against natural disasters brought about the division of labor, with a leader as the one in power assigning tasks and coordinating. An example of public administration in this period includes the system of democracy used in Athens, Greece. There would be no

permanent government or public servant positions. Instead, they would hold a public meeting to elect an ordinary person as 'the government', such as soldiers and ministers. Another example is a royal court, where a king appoints or assigns administrative power to the people close to him or the royal family members. This royal court is responsible for everything from sourcing goods and services to taxation, finance, military, and adjudication.

One common characteristic of public administration before the study of public administration arrived is using "values", which leads to problems and difficulties in government. Plato criticized the Athenian democracy that used "popularity" among its citizens to choose who gets to be a public servant or has administrative authority. He believes it to be one of the root causes of the problems and disasters in the state. He compares the public sector work process to sailing in the Republic, saying that only those with knowledge and expertise in sailing can sail well, not those who are popular among the crew. This leads to an argument about the required qualifications for anyone who wants to be in all the other positions. For example, a wise ruler is a good ruler, or a brave soldier is a good soldier.

In the same sense, using "personal relationships" and the "consanguinity" of those in power to choose who gets to be public servants or administrators in the royal court also leads to problems. For

example, uncertainty and disunity within the government parties happen because a king cannot effectively care for everything due to feudal lords holding too much power. This caused the division of labor, especially with the finance sector separated from the royal court and instead assigned directly under the king's authority. This is the king taking back all the power that used to be in the hands of the feudal lords, which gives birth to and strengthens the bureaucracy in the absolute monarchy era (Ruangwit, 2546, pp. 4-5).

Apart from ruling a country with popularity, personal relationship, and consanguinity, other values such as culture, traditions, feelings, preferences, and beliefs are also used as the core of public administration. This characteristic continued to be till the 1900s, a period when "the study of public administration" was born. Most classic public administration theories then still discuss the problems caused by using such values in administrative work. For example, the concept of the politics-administration dichotomy suggests that politics should never interfere with public administration because politics is all about values (Wilson, 1887; Goodnow, 1960; White, 1926). Weber's ideal type of bureaucracy (1947) proposes that administrative authority should never rely on a person or tradition because they destabilize their power. Taylor (1911) points out the flaws of following rules of thumb and using traditions as norms of working.

Therefore, administering by the method of government proposes that we follow these principles in public administration:

1. Hierarchy of Command. A bureaucracy is a large organization filled with many people. To make sure that whenever a decision is made, it will be strictly followed with no confusion throughout every section, the organization needs to establish a hierarchy of command. With this, the decisions made by the high-level executives can be passed down to operative staff effectively. Several concepts of administration also follow this idea. Gulick and Urwick (1937) propose that the heart of the organization theory is coordinating, which can be achieved by building a controlling mechanism within an organization using the principle of span of control as the foundation. Unity of command aligns with what Mooney (1947 referred to Bowornwathana, 2012, p. 38) said--the principle of coordinating is the same thing as the unity of the chain of command, and it is the most crucial thing in an organization. Fayol (2016) highlights the importance of unity of command and the chain of command. Follett (1926) also talks about the significance of commanding in "The Giving of Orders."

2. Division of Work. Diving tasks to each role with clear responsibilities and impersonality can help boost the collaborative nature within a huge organization needed to achieve the expected goals. Defining the authority and responsibilities of

people in an organization needs specialization, which leads to the accumulation and development of specialized skills and knowledge.   This brings about the development of the organization's overall productivity and makes it easy to control because it can identify the person responsible for each task.

3. Rule Orientation.   This will help large organizations with complicated work processes and several workers stay honest, organized, and clear. They will be able to move toward the same goal with no ambiguity or confusion. Rules and processes of work need to be based on rationality or scientific principles. The rules and work process must also be written down clearly to help everyone in the organization be on the same page.   Rule orientation needs neutrality from public servants. In other words, the people working in bureaucracy cannot work according to their values, such as emotions, feelings, preferences, beliefs, cultures, and traditions. They need to stick to rules and work processes.

Problems and solutions of governance.

Changing coordinating characteristics is one of the main points that Nicholas Henry (2015) and several other scholars use as a mark that separates the classic public administration from the new public administration. This research will use the word "governance" in the meaning of the sixth paradigm of public administration defined by Nicholas

Henry (2015, pp. 47). It is broadly defined as the public administration that works differently from the "government" style. It shifts from controlling citizens and having the state as the main responsible person for public service management to focusing on connecting, having flat organization, and collaborating with other sectors in public service management. It is hard to clearly and specifically define the word "governance" which is the mainstream concept in bureaucracy reform after the year 1990. This can be seen in scholars' variations in interpretation and governance models. However, even though the definitions and details of governance are different, there is one common point that most of the concepts agree upon: reducing control and trying to build connections and collaborative networks with other sectors such as operative-level public servants, the private sector, or civil society.

Peters & Savoie (1995, pp. 299-291) state that one of the reasons that public administration needs to shift from "government" to "governance" is the difference in public administration in the past and now caused by globalization. The examples are as follows.

1. The administrative sector gains more and more roles in setting policies in practice because of globalization. It increases the details and quantity of the public sector work and makes it more complicated as a society, economy, and politics change. This leads to the administrator sector, which oversees executing the

policies, especially the operative staff, possessing drastically more knowledge and skills than those on the political side, whose role is to set the policies in its broader sense. The group who believes public administration is politics, such as Appleby (1949), realizes that the administrative sector has a massive role in deciding the details of policies because the political section can only set general policies.

2. The changes in the environment. There are always changes and complications in social, economic, and political aspects, which means that sticking to the structure, hierarchy of command, and rules cannot solve the issues in society,

3. The development of citizens in general. The advancement in science, education, and technology, especially in communication, helps spread information and news rapidly throughout every part of society. This affects the growth of the private sector and civil society in the same sense as what happens to the operation staff; that is, the citizens whose lives will be impacted by the policies have more information, knowledge, and expertise in what involves them.

4. Social issues in the present relate to values. The summary of the academic conference on the topic of "New Public Administration" says that public administration needs to prioritize social justice and social equity (Bowornwathana, 2012), including social equality

or ethics, especially access to public services for the underprivileged. Governmental officials must also consider values when deciding and executing according to their policies to answer the needs of the people.

The mentioned changes, therefore, make it hard to control people in the bureaucratic system using structures such as institutions, the hierarchy of command, and rules and force them to do as assigned without interfering with policy making. They become difficulties in public administration, making it impossible to follow plans effectively. In many cases, the administrative concept is not practical.

In summary, the social, economic, and political changes caused by globalization render "the best" decisions for public administration by top-level officials meaningless in reality. Apart from its inability to meet the needs of society, the effort to force an organization to embrace the method leads to several problems, such as the lack of sufficiency in working (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992, pp. 325-328). Therefore, the new public administration or most of the bureaucracy reform models, such as the concept of new public management, the concept of new public service, or good governance, share the same conclusion in that they want to limit the growth and decrease the size of the public sector. They also suggest that the public sector changes its status from being the "boss" who controls everyone to the "partner" who collaborates or the "committee"

who facilitates the work with means like delegating power to the operative-level staff, decentralizing power back to the civil society, and transferring missions to the private sector. This is because they recognize that the other sectors can better choose the right "method" for each situation.

Comparison between problems and solutions

After having studied the problems and suggested solutions from the initial assumptions of the classic and new public administration theory, we are, in this section, comparing problems and solutions to find the right bureaucratic system for different environments. The study shows that humans, environment, goals, and methods are the key factors contributing to the suggestions on "government" and "governance" problems and solutions in coordinating. Each factor is also related and affects each other, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: factors contributing to the concept of bureaucracy reform.

	Government	Governance
Human	Negative	Negative and Positive
Environment	Steady / Routine	Unpredictable / Complicated
Goal	The best method / Reason	The right method / Value
Method	Unity	Flexibility

In the human aspect, the classic public administration perspective on problems is based on the idea that humans are naturally bad, whether it be the top-level executives, public servants, or the country's citizens. This is the critical factor that affects the solution suggested by the concept. It believes that allowing public servants to use their values as working principles, such as popularity, personal relationship, culture, tradition, feeling preference, and belief, would most likely lead to many problems. For example, it can lead to disqualified candidates being accepted into the organization, corruption, and slacking off. The distrust in humans leads to the classic public administration theory, influenced by the concept of unity, proposing that public administration must be free of values and use logic and scientific principles instead.

Making possible public administration, which involves many people, with most of them tending to be corrupted, suggests that an organization needs a "structure" such as an institution or rules based on logic and scientific principles to help guide the behaviors and relationships of its staff. This method is believed to simplify the administration because these structures will be the "cause" that helps predict the "effect." In other words, everything will happen according to the model of causal relationship that has regularity. Weber (1947) discusses the particular characteristics of organizations that operate according to the ideal type of bureaucracy, saying they will be "correct and certain." This makes it easier to find flaws and improve them, whereas organizations that follow values that lack certainty find it impossible to identify defects and, so, impossible to improve work processes.

If we consider the state in which the society was in the 19th century (around 2,400B.E. or the era of King Rama IV and V), people with access to education, which is one of the key factors to understanding rationality and scientific principles, are those with high social status which are just a tiny portion of the entire population. Therefore, to solve the problems brought about by using values as a measurement in public administration, the early stage of the public administration study focuses on building the right structure with the good minority. Then, it uses this structure to "control" the majority. Wilson says that responsibility will

happen when an organization becomes centralized. Decentralization will lead to irresponsible work culture (Ostrom, 1974) because most people do not have scientific knowledge and often opt for values as work principles rather than reasons.

On the other hand, the new public administration believes that trying to control people with structures, whether institutions, a chain of command, or rules and regulation, which is the solution suggested by the classic public administration theory, is the cause of new problems in two aspects. The first one is that it is "impossible" in practice. People are complicated and have illogical sides. As the theories in the crisis of identity period have stated, the structures cannot wholly control people as intended. No matter how perfect a structure is designed and built, there is no guarantee that the outcome will be as perfect because human behaviors do not depend on these factors.

In the second aspect, the belief that controlling people with structures is "futile" is linked with the next factor, the "environment." Since the changes in the environment of the new public administration are dynamic and highly complicated, it is impossible to predict and control any phenomena. This is different from the classic public administration, where most work has routines and is stable. The reason is that globalization and communication and transportation technology advancement have not happened yet. In other words, the difference is

the environmental shift from a closed system to an open system. This shift also contributes to the third factor, which is the goal of public administration. The goal is to change from trying to find the "best method" based on rationality and science that can be applied anytime, anywhere, and in any condition, such as creating sufficiency for administrative work (using the least resources to get the most results), to trying to adjust to new changes--finding the "right method" for each situation--instead. Simon (1946) points out that humans have bounded rationality. To make a perfect decision, we need all the information and know all the choices and outcomes. However, that is impossible in a modern society where the environment constantly changes. This means that the structures such as institutions, orders, and rules designed by the minority may not be the best option or suitable for a specific situation and reality because of their limited information and knowledge. The more work we have and the more complicated the work is, the more chance the structure leads to new problems.

Therefore, the solution to the concept of the new public administration starts to prioritize humans or "agents" more. When it realizes that it is impossible to stop people from incorporating their values into work, it suggests that a support system should guide people on using those values correctly. This leads to the last factor, the method to achieve goals. It changes from trying to build "unity" in work by forcing everyone

to work in the same direction, the best method, to building "flexibility" by broadly defining structures like duties, chains of command, rules, and work processes. This gives the other sectors with more information the freedom to show their talents and creativity. They can also take part in making decisions for their situation. All these are expressed in the proposal for public administration to employ various models of "coordinating" from the governance concepts.

Summary

The Study of Bureaucratic Reform by Comparing Problems and Solutions on the topic of coordinating between the government paradigm that prioritizes controlling and the governance paradigm that focuses on collaboration finds that the differences in factors like humans, environment, goals, and methods between the society before 1,900 A.D. and the present day are what affects the initial assumption of the results from each concept's solutions. If those factors change, the suggestions may not lead to the desired outcomes. The classic bureaucracy cannot work effectively and causes problems in today's world because the factors have all changed, making the bureaucracy system not fit for the situation. Still, this is a matter of whether the concept fits the situation, not whether the concept is wrong. The same goes for the new bureaucracy. If it is used in a situation where some factors are different from the ones in the initial

assumption, there could also be some problems arising as well. In conclusion, a bureaucratic system that works in one society may not work in another society (Jirarungruangwong, 2021). Studying these conditions will help us understand and push the existing knowledge even further while also connecting information in theory to actual practice.

This study suggests one elementary way to study Bureaucratic Reform and needs to cumulate through many studies conducted in the future comparing other agendas such as division of labor, responsibility, and human resource management in other Bureaucratic Reform approaches; furthermore, using the knowledge from those studies about condition and restriction can gain more pragmatic use of Bureaucratic Reform in reality.

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