

The Relevance of the New PA in Philippine Public Administration

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The relevance of New PA may be assessed at two levels, the conceptual and the technical. Conceptually, New PA appears to be compatible with the development goals and aspirations of the country. Rather than promote only efficiency, economy and effectiveness, New PA seeks to change administrative structures and processes to advance also relevance, social equity and client welfare. At the technical level, many of the administrative methods, tools and techniques in current use find their roots in New PA. The search for alternatives to bureaucracy, e.g., the IAD approach, analytic tools like cost-benefit analysis, and sensitizing techniques like OD comprise a response of administrative technology to the demand of the day — producing an administrator who is managerially effective, committed and sensitive to others' needs.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to assess the relevance or appropriateness of New Public Administration (New PA) concepts to the administrative problems and needs of a third world country like the Philippines. Its relevance shall be appraised at two levels: the *conceptual*, i.e., its underlying philosophy, content and purpose, and the *technical*, i.e., its operationalization in terms of processes and techniques which are potentially, if not actually applicable in the Philippine administrative context.

New PA: The Concept

Perhaps the distinguishing characteristic of New PA is its normative orientation, meaning its advocacy of, or commitment to *social equity* and

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the enhancement of *quality of life*, two phases that have acquired the character of slogans in the Philippines' development efforts. Purposively, it "seeks to change policy and structures that systematically inhibit social equity"¹ and to reduce human suffering, particularly those that arise from existing, oppressive administrative arrangements.

New PA can best be appreciated by contrasting its premises and content with those of "old" or classical/conventional public administration. Table 1 summarizes these contrasting qualities.

The Environment

New PA proceeds from a basic assumption that the increase in the rate

¹H. George Frederickson, "Toward A New Public Administration," in Frank Marini (ed.), *Toward A New Public Administration: The Minnowbrook Perspective* (Scranton: Chandler Publishing Co., 1971), p. 312.

Table 1. Classical and New PA Premises and Content*

	Classical/Conventional PA	New PA
Environment/ Value Premises	Stability, Predictability, Orderliness in Environment Assumes a Mechanical Model of Man Belief in Primacy of Organiza- tion Goal (Internal orientation)	Turbulence, Temporariness Uncertainty Assumes an Authentic and Humanistic Model of Man Belief in Primacy of Socie- tal/Individual Goal (external orientation)
Values	Efficiency Economy Effectiveness	Relevance Social Equity Client-Orientedness
Structure	Bureaucratic	Non-Bureaucratic
Processes	O & M Personnel Fiscal	Distributive Integrative Boundary-Exchange Socio-Emotional

*This matrix was developed by the author for a seminar marking Commencement Week festivities at the UP College of Public Administration, 26 March 1976.

and magnitude of environmental change has rendered the precepts of classical/conventional PA obsolete. Today, we are increasingly faced with complex problems, (e.g., pollution, urban blight) and yet we deal with these problems with yesterday's tools. This assumption draws support from an accompanying body of literature dwelling on the impact of technology on society, notably the works of McLuhan, Toffler and Bennis, among others, as well as the so-called "modern" approach to organization and management, the systems approach. The first chronicles the changes in the physical and social environment as occasioned by technological breakthroughs and suggests concomitant changes in organizational forms, e.g.

*ad hoc*cracy. The second approaches organizations as open, living, organic systems in constant interaction with their environment. The survival or death of organizations is a function of their relevance or mutually reinforcing relationship with their supra-system (the environment).

There are at least two related assumptions of the New PA in contrast to the old. One is that man as either organization member or external client is a whole, complete, authentic human being. As an organization member, the full range of his needs must be taken into consideration - not only the rational, and the economic but the non-rational and social as well. As an object of the organization's programs and activities, man

must be regarded as a whole, in much the same manner that we talk of a "total package of development," or the "eleven basic needs." The other assumption is that societal and individual goals take precedence over organizational goals which conventional PA used to emphasize. This thought is conveyed in a number of works, among them by Bennis which contrasted "mechanical" with "organic" or client-centered organizations.²

Values

The goals of public administration are inextricably interrelated with the values it pursues. Conventional PA sought "good government," as operationalized in the criteria of efficiency, economy and effectiveness. Frederickson reiterates that the three Es are still worth pursuing, but they are not enough, arguing that even the most efficient, economical and effective governments have systematically discriminated against some underprivileged sectors of society.³ Beyond the three Es, New PA pursues the values of relevance, social equity and client-orientedness. The test of good government is not so much its internal efficiency as its capability to advance social equity through relevant programs and projects which bring perceivable benefits to specific target clients.

Structure

The organizational form which New PA prefers is non-bureaucratic. This is ostensibly a renewed expression of the mounting disenchantment with bu-

reaucratic slowness and non-responsiveness, including its pathological consequence upon human behavior as expressed in the works of Warnotte, Dewey, Selznick, Thompson, and others (e.g., trained incapacity, professional deformation, bureausis). Contemporary works of Toffler, Bennis and company talk of adhocracy, of temporary organizations such as the matrix, task force, or project team variety.

New PA assumes that non-hierarchical organizations are more responsive because they are temporary, problem-oriented, flat in structure, simple, unobtrusively led (because the leader operates from a position of expertise, not authority), and in intimate interaction with their target clients. By contrast, bureaucratic structures are handicapped by rules, formalism, ritual, and organization members' interest in status, authority, and power.

Processes

New PA calls for a shift in interest from the traditional managerial processes of organization and management, personnel and fiscal administration (the hallowed triptych of conventional PA) to the distributive, integrative, boundary-exchange, and socio-emotional processes.⁴

By *distributive* is meant "the process of externally allocating resources, goods, and services for the benefit of clients." Who benefits and how well they benefit from governmental services become the focus of inquiry.

The *integrative* process seeks to modify bureaucratic, hierarchical structures. The matrix organization, task force, or project team and decentralized structures are suggested as effective

²Warren G. Bennis, *Organization Development: Its Nature, Origins and Prospects* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1969), p. 15.

³Frederickson, *op. cit.*, p. 311.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 317-328.

integrating mechanisms or "alternates" to the bureaucratic structure.

The *boundary-exchange* process highlights the relationships, interaction, or linkage between the public agency and its reference groups, publics or clients. Enhanced client involvement is suggested to enable "distributive decisions that support the interest of deprived minorities even if these decisions are difficult to justify in terms of either efficiency or economy."⁵

The *socio-emotional* process complements the three other processes by bringing to bear a change in administrative behavior that is "sensitive" to emotions, conflicts, and risks. This is purportedly the antidote to bureaucratic insensibility and nonresponsiveness. Put in another way, administrators need not be neutral, unfeeling policy implementors. They can feel, their hearts can bleed for, and they can even speak in behalf of their clients. Sensitizing techniques become the main concern here.

Combined, these processes are expected to advance the values of relevance, social equity, and client welfare.

Is New PA Relevant?

The relevance of a concept or technique might be measured by the extent to which it is timely, appropriate, adaptable, or compatible with the situation to which it is applied. There has been much unhappiness about public administration theories, models, concepts, and techniques because they are obsolete and of foreign origin. Thus, there is now much interest in "indigenous" concepts. This is indeed a welcome development. How-

ever, in order to seriously pursue the task of developing indigenous models, there apparently is a great deal of work to be done. External help may even be needed since PA is not an island unto itself, having borrowed concepts from other fields. After all, which theories and practices in business administration, law, medicine, and engineering are not foreign? Which concepts and tools in political science, economics, sociology, or psychology are not alien?

Meanwhile, that the shift from foreign models (which tend to be regarded as of low relevance) to indigenous ones has not transpired, existing models may be continually appraised and subjected to close scrutiny.

This paper argues that in the absence of an indigenous model of public administration, the New PA may be a worthy alternative.

Relevance to Theory

The relevance of New PA concepts may be regarded in terms of their compatibility with the context or environment, as well as the convergence between the content and intent of new PA with the goals, purposes, and aspirations of the country.

New PA theory is compatible with the environment of Philippine PA. New PA is assumed to operate in a disturbed, turbulent, and unpredictable environment. The dizzying rate of change in a Western high-technology society is certainly not equalled in the Philippines. Nonetheless, a dualistic character of change may be noted in the Philippine environment. The urban centers like Metro Manila approximate their western counterparts, but with *unique* problems of their own. An unexpected downpour of less than an hour's duration paralyzes the metropolis through floods and massive

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 324.

traffic jams. Conflagrations of the Harrison Plaza proportions render protective services helpless.⁶ Slums, garbage, potted roads, and crime in the streets continue to faze administrators. Serious water problems plague the cities of Baguio and Cebu. These problems notwithstanding, city dwellers are still better off than the rural folks who live in an environment which experience very little change.⁷ The farmer's lot has to be upgraded, requiring government to deliver a total package of development.

The two-pronged challenge to Philippine PA therefore, is to grapple with and temper the forces of change on one hand, and to stir, to stimulate change where necessary. This challenge is met by New PA which proposes a "pro-active" mode of administration. Pro-activeness is a benchmark of New PA which is based on the phenomenological-existentialist notion of the intentional mind. The intentional mind wills, intends, creates its own reality (indigenous?), and not just passively processes external reality (foreign).

The content and intent of New PA converge with emerging theories of development. The advocacy of social equity by the New PA finds parallel in the recent reformulation of theories of development, particularly from the *dependencia* stream which seek direct responses to the three primary problems of underdevelopment: poverty, unemployment, and inequality.⁸ A

⁶Involving hundreds of millions of pesos.

⁷Gelia T Castillo, *Beyond Manila: Philippine Rural Problems in Perspective* (Ottawa: International Development and Research Centre, 1979), pp. 9-15.

⁸Dudley Seers, quoted in Michael P. Todaro, *Economic Development in the Third World* (London: Longmans Group, Ltd., 1977), p. 61.

holistic total approach to individual and societal development is upheld both by New PA and new theories of development. The "basic needs" approach now finds reflection in Philippine development plans and programs, captured in such slogans as "the 11 basic needs of man" or "*Ang Tao Higit sa Lahat.*"

New PA suggests that the student's interest should be shifted from the traditional auxiliary staff processes of O & M, personnel and fiscal administration to those that advance social equity. For instance, an analysis of the *distributive* process should yield much needed information on who benefits and suffers from the operations of government. If millions of lowlanders are supposed to benefit from an all-purpose dam, how do the sufferings of a few thousand affected highlanders figure in the development equation? The *boundary-exchange* process calls attention to a neglected but critical aspect of administration. Traditional PA has paid sufficient attention to top-level management (e.g., executive development) and auxiliary staff functions. New PA now calls attention to the field, the line where real action takes place. What happens across the counter, across the table? How does the client rate in relation to the administrator/bureaucrat/technocrat? Is the public servant lord or servant?

Relevance to Practice

Theories, concepts and models are meaningless if they cannot be applied or adapted to problematic situations. New PA has been criticized as high on rhetoric, low on technique.⁹ To some

⁹Robert T. Golembiewski, *Public Administration as a Developing Discipline, Part 1: Perspectives on Past and Present* (New York: Marcel Dekker, Inc., 1977), pp. 135-141.

extent, New PA has been vindicated by recent developments, sufficiently to hazard the following statement.

Current tools and techniques are intended to advance social equity, and therefore, the New PA. Contemporary policies and programs have incorporated organizational and managerial strategies, techniques and tools, *vis-a-vis* innovations in academic and training programs.

Emphasis on *analytic* skills and tools to diagnose complex problems and find viable solutions are illustrative of the policy sciences/policy studies interest in the *distributive* process. The institution of the policy studies program (policy analysis, program administration, project development and management) as an area of concentration in the MPA curriculum at the College of Public Administration, University of the Philippines (CPAUP) and the inclusion of policy science in the regular course curriculum of the National Defense College of the Philippines (NDCP) are two instances which have enhanced interest and research in delivery systems (health, housing, etc.), policy impact and outcomes. This development is paralleled in other academic disciplines which have instituted multi-disciplinary undergraduate and graduate programs in development studies (e.g., at UP College Manila and Baguio), environmental planning, regional studies, etc.

World Bank-financed projects almost invariably require an integrated area development (IAD) structure which is highly reflective of New PA's disdain for bureaucratic structures and a preference for *integrative* devices. Current experiments in "area management" in the Metropolitan Manila Commission and the autonomous regions in Mindanao, and the rural development approach are indicative of the increasing practice of New PA.

The quest for "alternatives to bureaucracy" continues.

Concurrently, academic and training programs in management seek to upgrade management skills in planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies, programs and projects. The hardware and software of computer technology, quantitative tools of decision-making, and other analytic devices such as a cost-benefit analysis, problem analysis, client analysis, systems analysis, etc. have become salient features of academic and non-academic programs in management.

Perhaps reflective of the religious revival -- Christian, Muslim, Zen Buddhism, or otherwise -- there appears a resurgence of interest in *ethics and morality* (even transcendental meditation) all in the name of sharpened awareness and sensitivity, responsiveness, responsibility, and accountability of public servants. One indicator of such resurgence is the continuing study of graft and corruption over at CPAUP, and the study of poverty, subversion and government credibility over at NDCP. To carry the point further, at least two doctoral candidates at CPAUP are contemplating their dissertations on church administration and PA. Too, the fascination with *citizen participation* and *rural development* are indicative of the renewed concern with the *boundary-exchange* process.

Attaining synergy -- that elusive state or quality of interpersonal relationships which enable individuals (both organization members and non-members) to engage in productive work as a team -- is an expressed objective of the socio-emotional process. The behavioral sciences are the primary sources of techniques and tools applied to administrative situations which require "sensitizing" for indi-

viduals or group members alike. Among these tools, Organization Development (OD) looms as the most visible. OD has so captured the imagination of Golembiewski that he has proposed OD as the core of the discipline of PA.¹⁰ In order to sensitize organization members to one another, as well as their clients, OD offers a wide range of tools/interventions, such as counselling, team-building exercises, and confrontation meetings. Group dynamics, T-groups, and sensitivity training are commonly used. These can be supplemented by a growing number of techniques, applicable to individuals or groups. Personal awareness "trips," like transcendental meditation (TM); group exercises, such as transactional analysis (TA), or creativity exercises, like brainstorming might be tried as "tenderizers."

OD has had widespread application in business and public agencies in the United States, but few if any have been attempted in the Philippines. A likeness of OD methods is perceived in pre-training activities labeled as "unfreezing" or in religious charismatic meetings and *cursillos*. The appropriateness of OD and similar techniques must be studied particularly since Filipinos are emotional or sensitive. There just might more than enough emotion and sensitivity. The challenge to the *socio-emotional*

process in the Philippines is how to surface public servants' *commitment* to organizational and developmental goals. Whether OD and the other techniques can accomplish this, remains a challenge.

The foregoing leads to a conclusion that there are at least two clusters of techniques: (1) the highly scientific, rational, and mathematical tools used to measure the extent to which the distributive process promotes social equity; and (2) the behavioral techniques which are intended to increase sensitivity to social equity and client welfare. In order to meet the demands of the New PA however, the first cluster must transcend the purely rational, while the second cluster must suit the Filipino psyche and temperament.

Conclusion

This paper hopes to have illustrated the relevance of the New PA to the study and practice of public administration in the Philippines. Conceptually, the content and purpose of New PA are convergent with the goals of Philippine development. Technically, there appears a growing practice of tools and techniques that are supportive of New PA. In the absence of an indigenous model of public administration, New PA concepts provide a good beginning.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*